

Rabbi David Wolpe's

# *Off The Pulpit*

April 10, 2014

## **Darkness**

The first morning blessing thanks God for the ability to distinguish between day and night. The most immediate reference is to the dawn; the worshiper wakes and is grateful for the rising sun. But as Passover reminds us, there is a deeper meaning.

The penultimate plague was darkness. This is a powerful metaphor for the moral darkness that had enveloped Egypt. We know that the average citizen in an evil state does not believe it to be evil; the Soviet citizen of fifty years ago, or the North Korean of today, sincerely swears by the goodness of the wicked regime to which he is subject. The capacity of human beings to accept evil as good is one of the greatest mysteries and maladies of history.

But each morning we thank God for the "binah," the wisdom, to know light from darkness. We can indeed exercise our moral sense; dissidents throughout time have proved that not everyone can be lulled to complacency. It is not simple perception but deep wisdom that allows us to see light. While Egypt was enveloped in darkness, the Rabbis teach, the Israelites could still see. They had the wisdom to distinguish the dark from the light, and so they merited being free.

Am I An E-Slave?

Passover: Matzah, En Route To Freedom