

*Preparation for Pesach*

Year 3 - Vol. 27

Illustrating words that we merited to hear from The Spinka Rebbe Shlita

WAS IT CHATZOS YET?...

**1. Where is the Freedom?**

Everyone is busy with their own struggles in life, with their pains and hardships, with their limitations. Then comes the night of the Seder, and they are told—now is "the time of our freedom," now you are free...

**Me? Free? How exactly, with everything I am going through? Where is the freedom with everything I am going through in this life?**

Freedom, at first glance, means liberty — the ability to do what I want, how I want, and when I want, without anything limiting me.

**Well, is that the reality today? Does anything change on the night of the Seder? Do the troubles end? Does everything fall into place? Do hardships disappear?**

Why is it called "the time of our freedom" when nothing in our situation resembles freedom?

**2. From One Slavery to Another...**

This happens a lot with building contractors. One hires a worker for a day's labor, but at the last moment, a competing contractor arrives, offers the worker slightly better pay—and "steals" him for his project... Then, of course, an argument ensues between the two. Each insists, "He's, my worker! Let him go and let him work for me!"

**Does that worker feel like a free person? Not at all. What does it matter to him where he lays tiles? Either way, he remains a simple, unappreciated worker...**

Isn't that what happened in Egypt?

HaShem sent Moshe to warn Paroh: **"Let My people go, so they may serve Me!"**

**There was no command to set them free. The order was to release them—because they are My servants, not yours...**

And so, after many years, that same complaining person stands in the desert and asks himself: Wait, weren't we promised freedom? Didn't they tell us that's it, no more slavery? So why is that not the case? Why, instead of being set free, are we still working hard—just not for the same master?

"We remember the watermelon," he protests, "that we ate for free." Free from Mitzvos. **Back in Egypt—it was even easier! True, we were slaves—but we had some breaks, moments to breathe... Now? As servants of HaShem? There isn't a single moment of rest!**

So where is the freedom here?

**3. Is Freedom an Ideal?**

Before we try to understand what freedom is, we must ask:

**Is freedom even a good thing?**

Look around at the nations and groups that fought for "freedom," for total liberation—to be free of any burden, any obligation, any restriction...

**What's left of them? Nothing! If there is nothing binding, nothing lasts.** If there are no boundaries, no sense of duty—everyone drifts off in their own direction, and no one remains to enjoy that "liberation"...

When the Torah HaKedosha speaks of "freedom," it refers to something entirely different.

**Exile and redemption, it turns out, have nothing to do with chains and guard dogs.**

**4. What is the Direction of Your Life?**

Do you know people who wake up every morning with a new direction in life? **Every day, they try a new idea, a different theory, searching for happiness here and there, each time from a different angle...**

That is exile in its full force.

A person who is unanchored, not connected to themselves, is carried away by societal trends, changes based on their surroundings, the times they live in, and the people they meet.

**Each period, they redefine what success and failure mean to them. Their aspirations change constantly—today they want one thing, tomorrow another.**

Sometimes it's not necessarily external. There are people who outwardly are actually tuned to a certain goal without moving from it - but inside? Inside the heart? There, every day, thoughts change, they are carried away by their imaginations here and there...

This is what exile looks like.

And freedom?

**Freedom is the exact opposite.**

**A free person is someone with a clear direction in life, who does not deviate from it—neither in their heart nor in their actions. They are goal-oriented, seeking only that one purpose. No event, no place, no time, no person can distract or confuse them.**

### 5. The Dance of freedom in the prison cell

Every person, as we know, is made up of two opposing forces:

**Soul—ממש ממעל אלוהים an actual part of HaShem above,**

**And a body—which is entirely physical...**

A lifelong battle takes place between body and soul. Each pull in its own direction; each wants to dominate and dictate the course of life.

**A person's sole mission in life is to decide—who is in control: the body or the soul?**

When the body gains control—that is exile. Because the body shifts according to moods. Each day, it chooses to invest in something different. Life circumstances drag it along—sometimes toward anger, sometimes toward pride. Successes fill it with a sense of power, and failures? The body never takes responsibility — it always finds someone else to blame.

**It lacks focus. It dances to the tunes of its surroundings, people, places, and times.**

But when the soul is in charge, when a person is looking for connection - nothing can move them from the connection!

And connection can be found in every situation!

**In successes?** We see HaShem's kindness.

**In failures?** We deepen our connection with HaShem.

**In uncertainty?** We strengthen our trust.

**When things are stuck?** We also have work to do there, שלא יהא ליבך חלוק על המקום so that your heart will not be divided against HaShem.

When a person seeks connection, Mitzvos gain meaning—and even the times when one cannot perform Mitzvos they are still moments of connection. Look at the story of The Rebbe Reb Elimelech and the Rebbe Reb Zusha, who were locked in a filthy prison cell and could not recite Birchas HaTorah. Instead of despairing over their low state, they danced with joy over the chance to fulfill the mitzvah of not speaking words of holiness in an unclean place. For both commandments came from the same Master of the Universe!

**When the goal is connection, there is no blame, no "other people" — only the One Ribono Shel Oilom who runs everything and controls everything!**

And when that is the case, nothing can steal my connection...

That is **true freedom!**

### 6. Success in the Egyptian Prison

Yosef HaTzaddik was a "man of success." Wherever he was, he succeeded. In Potiphar's house? When he was considered the trusted confidant of the minister? He was "successful." In the depths of the Egyptian pit, at the lowest point of human misery? Even there, he was "successful"...

**Why? Because, for Yosef HaTzaddik, success was not measured by money, honor, connections, or fame—but by how connected he was.**

And connection is possible from anywhere.

More than that: The Baal Shem Tov HaKadosh teaches that the success in prison is an even greater success! The proof for this is - **because there, that is where it is written: "HaShem made him successful!"** There, the connection was even more genuine!

Why?

Because when everything is dark, when you lose all human footholds, and the situation seems hopeless, you are forced to reach a much stronger inner peace than in times of success...

**Being calm when life smiles at you—that's not such a big "feat." But when you manage to stay calm and connected even when everything seems lost—that comes from a much higher and more powerful place, and it stays with you forever!**

## 7. The Final Understanding in Life

The final moments of Reb Akiva's life were also his most tormenting. With unimaginable cruelty, the Romans scraped his flesh with iron combs.

**And him? As he bled, his soul nearly departing the world from immense suffering, instead of crying out or trying to escape—he smiled in devikus.**

His talmidim stood by weeping: "Rebbe, even now?!"

Reb Akiva replied, **"Why are you crying? These are the sweetest moments of my life! All my days, I searched for the ultimate pleasure—and now, finally, I have found it!"**

Let's understand: Reb Akiva was a Tana Eloki. He had experienced both physical and spiritual delights. He had reached the highest levels—yet something was still missing...

**And precisely in those terrible moments, he found what had always been lacking?! What is happening here?**

In his last words, Reb Akiva revealed the secret of true freedom:

All my life, when I had physical and spiritual successes, I was indeed connected—but **somewhere, in the depths of my heart, there was still the feeling that perhaps there were other paths, that maybe pleasure could be found in success, that perhaps one could manage without the endless pursuit of connection...**

In other words, all my life, I was still in exile! Because my direction was not absolute!

**But in these moments, in this great darkness, when all human strength dissolves, when the needles bring**

**the suffering of Iyov, and nothing holds you up—you suddenly realize there is no other direction!**

And there, suddenly, nothing else matters, nothing else interests you—only the connection to HaShem Yisbarach...

That is true freedom!

## When is Chatzos by you?

Moments before Makas Bechoros, HaShem reveals to Moshe the secret of freedom:

**"!בְּחֶצְוֹת לַיְלָה אֲנִי יוֹצֵא בְּתוֹךְ מִצְרַיִם" "At about midnight, I will go out in the midst of Egypt!"**

When does HaKadosh Boruch Hu reveal Himself? When do we leave Egypt? **At midnight! At the darkest moments, when no light shines from any direction—that is precisely when liberation comes...**

And when does that happen? What is the darkest point in life?

The Rebbe said: It depends on you!

**The more a person realizes that there is no other direction, that he is truly stuck, and that without the Creator, he has no chance of rising — that is when he reaches his "midnight" and emerges into freedom!**

It can be in a tiny failure that happens to a person, and he understands the message, and it is also possible to go through many failures, and still try that option, that segula, the protektzia of that one - until there is no choice and life brings him to complete darkness, and then he must reach out to the creator and go out to freedom...

It is not without reason that the posuk says **בְּחֶצְוֹת** "about midnight" — because it is not absolute. Each person has their own midnight...

When a person realizes there are no other paths, that the only goal in the world is connection to HaShem—He goes out to freedom!

## 8. Why Doesn't the King Send Salvation?

In a distant kingdom, turmoil erupted in the palace one morning.

**One of the ministers appointed by the king had received a generous budget to carry out his duties, but he acted irresponsibly—and all the money vanished...**

And now, this minister stood there, not knowing how to proceed. Because without money—everything is stuck.

Does the king have a problem opening his treasury and covering the minister's debts? Of course not.

**But he won't do it. Because if he did—the minister wouldn't learn from his mistake, he would continue acting recklessly, and when he failed? — he would blame the king for delaying the funds...**

The first step toward correction is acknowledging the failure, recalculating the path—and then, all the necessary resources will come.

Reb Asher said: Does the Master of the Universe have any difficulty solving all our problems, pulling us out of debt, and raising us to the heights of success, health, and happiness? Of course not. His treasures are infinite.

**But if He gave us everything immediately and without delay — we would continue living in our illusions, blaming others, searching for new solutions, never acknowledging our personal failures — or the fact that we desperately need a connection with Him.**

But when a person finds himself completely powerless, when there is no other option — that is when he finally internalizes his mistakes, abandons all other paths, and truly connects to the King...

### 9. Freedom vs. The "Stained" Kittel

Finally, let's journey back in time—to that Leil Shimurim, when the Bnei Yisrael sat, their belts fastened, eating the very first Korban Pesach in history.

Based on the number of kezeysim there is in one lamb, it turns out that about sixty people sat in each house, eating the Korban Pesach with matzah and marror.

**Can we even imagine what that house looked like at that moment? Sixty people packed into a house not too big, forbidden to leave until morning...**

There is no stronger recipe for interpersonal friction and emotional outbursts!

Is this freedom?

Why not let them go out, take a farewell walk before leaving? Why not grant them the freedom to choose where to be and what to do that night?

**Why confine sixty people in a situation bound to create discomfort, tension, and stir up their weakest emotions?**

Because this is the beginning of redemption.

**HaKadosh Boruch Hu wanted to take them out to freedom—not to be dependent on places, time, or people anymore, so that they could live with Him in any situation and with any person.**

And back to the present:

The Seder Night has a fixed structure, an unwavering tradition, shared with people we do not always find pleasant to be with, in a place we might not have chosen to be.

**This packed night is always a source of unexpected events: a spilled cup of wine, a child disrupting the festive atmosphere, looking for *mochin* (elevated consciousness) but not getting there, burnt food, crowded tables, and more...**

Why? Why, on the night that symbolizes freedom more than any other, are we placed in a rigid framework that inevitably confronts us with challenging emotions?

**Because "the time of our freedom" is also in the present. Every year, on Seder Night, we receive the power to break free, to detach from all constraints of place, time, and people, to seek connection, and to find opportunity in every challenge.**

And this, **this**, is acquired precisely there—when the pristine white kittel is stained with wine, yet you remain calm, smiling, and connected.

**Because that is how you attain freedom!**

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Gedanken from the Spinka Rebbe Shlita

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Written entirely according to the writers understanding.

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A LESSON IN PUBLICIZING...

### 1. When Do You Grow Up?

Some people never truly mature.

Their bodies undoubtedly progress according to their age, **but their behavior? It remains stuck somewhere in the past.**

They appear to be respectable individuals, and usually, they conduct themselves with dignity in line with their age — until some "trigger" sets them off, and they react like small children.

How does this happen?

#### What determines emotional maturity?

And the most important question: How can we ensure that as the body grows, the soul grows as well?

**How can we make sure our soul can handle conflicts and not explode with childishness when things don't go our way?**

### 2. An opportunity in front of a delicious meal.

Chazal provided three ways to measure a person's "true age": **כוסו, כיסו, וכעסו** **Their cup (how they behave when drinking), their wallet (how they handle money), and their anger (how they react when provoked).**

These are three tests that bring a person into an uncomfortable situation. Something in the plans goes wrong - and it makes him angry. He is starving - and before his eyes is a steaming dish that he just wants to take for himself. Something happens with his money - and he goes on the defensive.

### How do we behave in these three situations?

Do we have the emotional maturity to withstand temptations, anger, and confusion? Or do these things throw us into turmoil?

**But in truth, these are not just three tests; they are three opportunities.**

Every conflict we face—whether related to drinking, money, anger, or any other challenge in life—is an opportunity for our soul to grow. How?

### 3. Why Are There Enemies in the World?

Every person has friends—and also enemies. There are people we enjoy being around, and others we try to avoid at all costs.

If we pay attention to our behavior around them, we will notice something amazing:

When we are surrounded by friends, enjoying good company and flowing conversations, we feel so uplifted that we forget about our enemies... **We feel like the most desirable and beloved people, everything is good, everything is rosy, everything is honey, and self-worth soars to the sky...**

But then, the moment the pleasant gathering ends, we may unexpectedly encounter someone who dislikes us.

They give us a harsh look, throw sharp words our way, or act distant and cold—and suddenly, we feel so small, insignificant, and empty.

**We forget that we even have friends!**

Why does this happen?

Why do we repeatedly forget, in pleasant moments - the enemies, and in weak moments - the good friends?

### **Why do we prefer to cling to the good feeling or the bad feeling completely?**

Because we struggle to handle conflict.

**We find it difficult to hold onto both extremes at once. Our mind demands a decision: Either you are lovable and valuable, or you are worthless.**

Our pride does not allow us to acknowledge both extremes at the same time. Either we are perfect, or we are nothing.

But if we allow ourselves to embrace both sides, we will see that both are important—yes, even the enemies.

**Because if we had no enemies, if everyone around us always smiled and accepted us, we would start taking our friends for granted and no longer care about treating them well.**

If life were always sweet and rosy, why would we make an effort in our relationships? Why would we think before we speak? Why wouldn't we act selfishly, knowing that everyone loves us anyway?

HaKadosh Boruch Hu created enemies for us, so that this magic carpet of good friends - would not blind us! **That our approach to every interpersonal relationship would be healthy and thoughtful, that we would not take anyone for granted - and so that we would truly connect with them and appreciate them for what they give us!**

#### **4. Distance yourself all the way to the extreme**

And that's how it is in everything in life:

**HaKadosh Boruch Hu brings us together with two extremes, with successes and failures, with beautiful days and dark moments, with times when emotions are jubilant and with those that we are enveloped in gloom.**

Usually, when we are in one situation, we prefer to completely erase the existence of the opposite situation.

When we are leaping upwards, when everything is flowing and succeeding and flourishing, when life is smiling at us – the difficult moments are automatically erased from our memory...**Who even remembers that there are difficulties? Why see bad? Why be pessimistic?**

But then, when the situation turns upside down, and everything goes wrong, we suddenly fall into such sadness! **We forget all the good things we have in life, the kindness that HaShem continues to do with us even in the dark.**

Why do we forget? Because pride is confused by these extremes. It prefers us to be short, it prefers us tall – the main thing is that we are not complicated!

**But the truth? The truth is that this is life, it is made up of successes and failures, because this is the secret of creation!**

The Zohar HaKadosh reveals this secret to us .

#### **5. This is the secret of creation.**

Think how nice it would be, if when we looked in the mirror, we would see a piece of Elokus.

**If this were the case, there is no doubt that we would live twenty-four hours with the Master of the Universe. We would never forget him, certainly not disobey his will.**

Well, why isn't that happening?

Why is it that when we look at ourselves – we see only a body, and not just a body – a complicated body, full of questions and intrigues, desires and wants, calculations and conflicts?

HaKadosh Boruch Hu, created the world, for what? For us to live with him, no?

**So why is it so hidden in this world? Why doesn't he hint to us where he is? Why is it that everywhere we go – we only see nature-nature-nature?!**

Because this is exactly the purpose of creation. HaKadosh Boruch Hu did not create the world just so that we would live with Him. The Malachim do it much better than we do.

He created the world – to make His name known!

**And publicizing happens in places where it is not obvious!**

If I see in the mirror a piece of Elokus, then there is no reason why I should not live with Him, and what is the wisdom of living with Him? But when I see a piece of a body, and when this body attracts us to say that it is the one who controls, and that it is the one who decides, and that it is the one who determines, and we still say, 'No, it's not me, it's the Master of the world' – This is called publicizing!!

The Rebbe always says in the name of Reb Asher the statement: **"Every Tzimtzum concealment brings revelation!"**

HaKadosh Boruch Hu created us last in the creation of the world, He created us the most complicated, the most confused – because that's where our role lies.

In other words, the purpose of creation is revealed in two stages:

- 1. HaKadosh Boruch Hu, is concealing Himself.**
- 2. HaKadosh Boruch Hu, is revealed – within this concealment!**

## 6. Life on Wheels

The Zohar HaKadosh defines life – like a wheel. Take every point on the wheel, and start spinning...

**At first, the point goes up and up, moving towards the climax – but then the plot takes a turn, and the point plunges downwards, until it returns to the starting point, resets – and so on.**

This is how the Zohar HaKadosh says, HaKadosh Boruch Hu, takes us through the journey of life.

It starts one morning, we get up – and everything blooms and blossoms in front of our eyes. We succeed, we conquer more and more goals, we are happy and light and smiling, and as far as we are concerned – **may it be even better and better, and that this goodness will never end...**

And how annoying that always, somehow, it gets stuck.

**And suddenly everything starts to go down, down and down – until we feel like we've reached the starting point.**

And you ask yourself: If so, what's the point? Why did we go through this whole cycle if, in the end, we just returned to the same point?"

**If I gained a million shekels and lost them the next day, what do I have to do with it – other than pain for the shattered dream?**

We don't want life like a wheel. We just want to go up and up and not stop going up !

For our part, we would sign up for the 'five-year plan', plan all the steps for the next decade, and set out on a precise path – to conquer more and more successes.

**Why do we need all the explosions on the way? Why not always keep us on the wave ?**

### 7. That's the only way you grow!

And here, herein lies the answer to the question of mental growth...

**Because a person who always stays up, maybe physically he grows, maybe his ego develops, maybe his self-importance inflates to tremendous heights – but the soul?! It stays in the same state, because you never allowed it to advance!**

If we were only seasoned in successes – how likely would we be to recognize that they are not taken for granted? How likely would we be to remember that all the successes are only from HaShem?

**On the other hand, a person who allows himself to connect to the journey of life, to experience the ascent, to experience the descent, to go through the dizzying paths of life – is a person who allows himself to progress!**

Because really – this is the way of the wheel moving forward! The ups and downs, the ups and downs, these rounds – are what move him further on the journey! If we always stay on top – how will the wheel roll?

**HaKadosh Boruch Hu takes us on a journey of life, and in every moment and situation in life – there are crumbs of the soul that can be revealed, if only we agree to connect to them!**

Something went wrong along the way? This is an opportunity for mental growth, if we just give in to this path, and don't seek to stay on top – and get angry at everyone who is guilty and bothers us.

Because in fact, it is precisely in this wheel that we implement the purpose of creation!

On the one hand, restriction, everything goes wrong, everything seems hopeless, and where is the Master of the Universe?

**But on the other hand – publicizing! This restriction reminds us that basically everything we have is from HaShem, and not ours at all! That this body is weak and helpless and confused and hopeless, and that all success is only from Him!**

Then, when the wheel rises again, and success shines on us, we must take with us the insight we discovered in the days of darkness, and remember that nothing is ours, that everything is just HaShem.

And with a reduction that will come again? Not to break, to remember that HaKadosh Boruch Hu, gives us life, and that what we are going through is only to connect us again.

When a person agrees to connect to this path, not only does he not break and crash from the constant upheaval – on the contrary, he is built from it! His soul is connected to the journey, it is progressing at the right pace!

**Life is a constant journey! Sometimes the movement is physical – and sometimes, when the physical success stops – the soul begins to move!**

### 8. It's time to decide.

In conclusion, the Rebbe said:

The secret of life is in 'Don't Break'!

**At the breaking point, when a person is overwhelmed and upset and confused, he must decide: This is either me – or the Ribono Shel Oilom!**

Either I'm in control, and if so, I have to crash from what happened, or it's all Him, and this transition comes to teach me a lesson in connection, a lesson in publicizing.

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