

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

From last week - Parshas Vayechei 5784
WHEN A FRIEND WANTS TO KILL...

What is your measure of self-worth?

Do you love yourself?

According to what does a person decide whether to love himself, whether to appreciate himself, whether to like himself? Usually, our measure is successes.

The more successful a person is in fulfilling himself and achieving his aspirations, the more he is considered, handsome, successful, and rich, the greater his love for himself.

But if this is the way we approach ourselves, there is a difficult problem here. A severe problem.

First of all, because in this way a person will never truly love himself. Every person has a dark corner of his heart where he remembers all the failures and disappointments, all the unfulfilled desires, all the things in which he stands far behind his friends.

And so, it turns out that people will always walk around with a sense of disconnection to themselves. If self-love is determined by the level of success, we can never love ourselves with absolute love.

The second problem with this way of looking is the great pride that there is fundamentally here.

Because if the level of self-love depends on successes, in other words we tell ourselves – the successes belong to us...

And where does HaShem come into this business?

When success is the measure of self-love, a person is busy all his life cultivating his personal idol and sweeping all failures under the couch, he tries to enlarge himself more and more – and never stops to connect with the One who brought him here and all successes belong to him.

Therefore, if we want to love ourselves correctly and perfectly, we must free ourselves from the love that is dependent on something else, and seek self-love that does not depend on anything...

It is not my successes that raise my self-worth, nor my beauty and money that increase my love and self-esteem.

So, what is?

The fact that I am part a חלק אלוך ממעל Chelek Elokah Mima'al.

Just that.

To truly love myself is to love the fact that I am part of the most powerful force in the world. All my successes belong to the same part, and all my failures belong to my ego and body...

No matter how many successes I have, how much external beauty and grace, how much wealth and honour I have been able to achieve, none of these, raise or decrease my attitude towards myself. Only the fact that there is a Chelek Eloki, eternal and powerful. That's the only thing I love, and not any other external ego!

That is why HaKadosh Boruch Hu, who is merciful and gracious and completely good, sometimes sends us failures, that is why we were not created perfect.

Because a person who does not sometimes find himself severely disappointed in himself, who has never met his helplessness, will continue to look at himself according to a measure of successes, he will live his whole life from external knowledge only and will never get to truly love himself, with love that does not depend on anything else!

Our failures shake the comfortable chair on which we have sat until now, forcing us to look a little deeper, to look for exactly who we love within ourselves, and why.

Our failures are what cause us to leave the cultivation of the arrogant personality and start searching for the HaShem that is within us...

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When does a friend's love begin?

The same question that we have asked inward into ourselves, we must now turn towards society, towards the people we are most comfortable around, the most important figures in our lives.

Why do we love our offspring, our best friends, our partners?

Here, too, there are two approaches to love. The usual and natural attitude with which we all begin any relationship, whatever it may be, the love that

depends on something. Interests, as Reb Asher would call it.

Every relationship we have is based on interest. Yes, even the deepest and most emotional connections, everything ultimately sits on ego, on an inner understanding that this connection is worth it to me. That I can derive special benefit from.

In this way, a person can live a lifetime alongside his friends and partners, and he convinces himself and those around him that he really loves them, and that he will be willing to do anything for them – when in fact this connection is just another secret of a way to fulfill the interests I have set for myself in life...

But then the person sends a tremor in the connection. Something that disrupts everything. An event or incident that contradicts my interest in this relationship.

The child needs to bring me satisfaction – and it just doesn't happen.

The members of the household are supposed to agree and compliment – but instead I am inundated with a flood of criticism.

The employer is supposed to be a source of livelihood – but it turns out that this is not quite so. People you thought were credible turn out to be subversives looking only for their own wealth.

Seemingly, in these cases, this is the point at which the relationship between us is supposed to end. I have been in contact with you based on interest. It turns out that I am unable to fulfill my aspirations through you – so goodbye and let us part.

But no. The Mitzvah from HaShem of ואהבת לרעך כמוך of 'Love your neighbour like yourself' remains in force, even now. Even when the interest is conflicting, the Creator requires you to love every Yid, and that includes him...

How is it possible? And what's the logic of that?!

Why love a person who caused me such distress?

Because that's exactly the point: why do you love the other, is it because it's like an ATM that provides you with what you need, that it's shallow love that depends on the thing—or because you share with him?

The reason HaShem wants us to love each other is because 'I am HaShem'. Every Yid is like a letter in a mighty Torah scroll. For everyone there is a special point of Chiyus and connection to HaShem. And the only way we can reach that Divine point is by connecting to that Yid.

When we love a Yid for this reason, it is love that does not depend on interest.

And here comes Reb Asher, and says the following sharp sentence:

Reb Asher said: As long as your friend doesn't want to kill you, you haven't reached true friendship yet...

What lies in this harsh sentence? Isn't that a bit extreme? What does Reb Asher mean?

The Rebbe said: True love between one person and another is built precisely in places where they do not get along. In the mutual disappointments. Because until then, love was built on interest alone, and it wasn't love. It wasn't a real connection...

The more the interest disappears, the more I have a chance to find the true, inner love, the love that comes from understanding that I need you to connect to myself and the Creator.

Therefore, when you reach extreme cases of conflict and friction with the other side, there is tremendous potential here for discovering love that does not depend on anything!

When you continue to love him, with full patience, despite the difficulty. When you leave the accounts of who is right and know that dealing with who is to blame and who is right will never help you connect to yourself and to HaShem – you connect to true and inner love, and this love can never be extinguished...

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Gedanken from the Spinka Rebbe Shlita

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8pm Israeli time (6pm GMT - 1pm EST)

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