



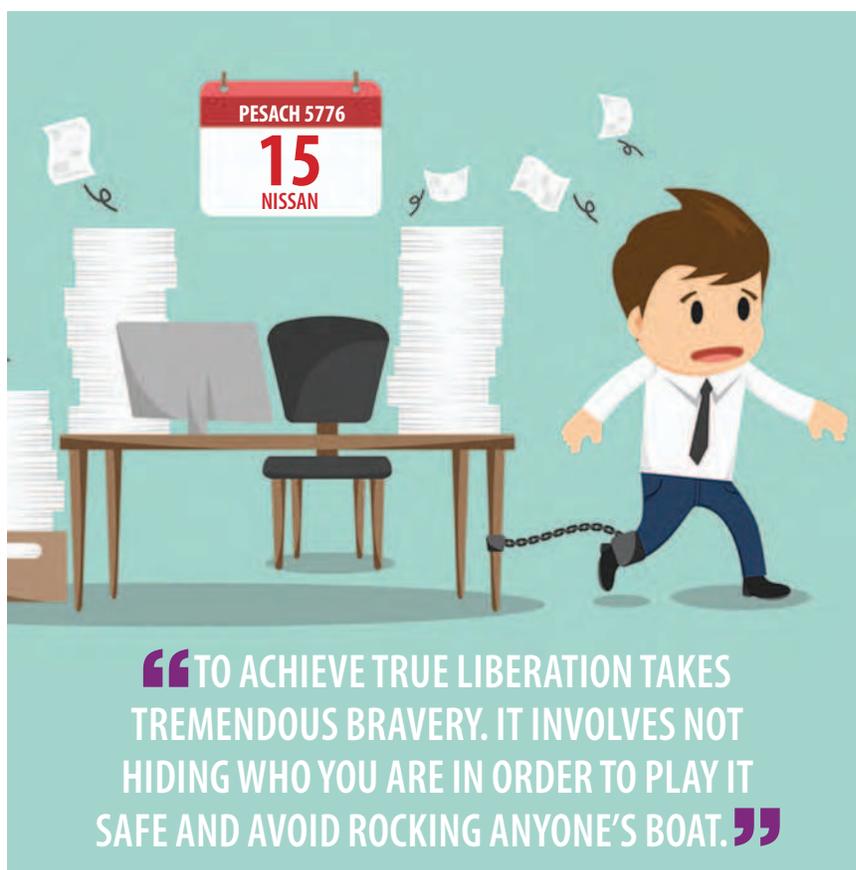
Leaving slavery **BEHIND US**

Becoming truly liberated through serving Hashem

BY LEONARD CARR

EVERYBODY WANTS TO BE A SOMEBODY, TO BE successful, and to make a name for himself. To most people, success implies being recognised, loved, and admired for one's own unique identity. This is the opposite of being a nobody. Slavery is the embodiment of being anonymous, worthless, and inconsequential. This is symbolised by being given a number instead of a name. The essence of what we are celebrating on Pesach seems paradoxical. We celebrate the liberation for Egypt through which we became free to be subjugated by Hashem and His commandments.

Many people become enslaved to achieving their particular idea of success. At the same time the idea of actually achieving that for which you most long is scary. Consequently, people also find themselves avoiding progress or even sabotaging their own progress. The obstacle to success is fear – both fear of achieving and fear of not achieving success. The fear of success is often the manifestation of a fear of exposure, which is an expression of the fear of vulnerability. At the root of the fear of vulnerability is the fear of shame, the feeling of being defective, damaged, not good enough, or not enough. The shame does not have to be based on a specific issue. The presence of the feeling of shame is experienced as shameful. The fear of people seeing our sense of shame is because we are scared that they might, if they see our shame, confirm through ridicule, criticism, or judgment the reason for it. This is why we so deeply fear failure. Many people do not achieve prosperity or accomplishment because they view success as a comparative



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measure. There will always be someone who is better than you or has more than you on any particular attribute. As soon as you engage in comparative thinking you create a sense of lacking which translates into a feeling of shame.

The success that never brings satisfaction or true sense of accomplishment is success driven by a need to acquire, prove, or achieve something for self-serving motives like prestige, power, or physical indulgence. Freedom is also the licence to a

sense of belonging and to not feel like a burden or impostor or unworthy of having what others have by virtue of, for example, being born to the wrong parents or on the wrong side of the tracks or being unlovable. Feeling enfranchised to own and live your passion without feeling too small, inadequate, insubstantial, and, therefore, unworthy. People often feel compelled to work harder and harder to fill all the social and family vacancies in the vain attempt to prove your worth. You may have to believe

that perpetual business or compulsive control will keep you safe in life. This form of self-imposed tyranny stems from a childhood where you felt that parents were never there for you or emotionally engaged. Many people live in a drama where life is treated like a performance, designed to manipulate people into applauding, or being enamoured, or intimidated. They project onto others the things that they cannot accept about themselves. All defensive strategies are designed to avoid living in reality. It is very enslaving to have to live a defensive life where you are constantly hiding from your truth. Dropping your masks and surrendering your unique brand of schtick frees you to live in reality. Most of what we call personality is merely an elaborate set of defensive strategies designed to avoid rejection and win love and approval. Living in reality empowers you to operate effectively and to work with what you have, instead of conjuring up illusions to bluff yourself and others into believing that you are the fantasy representation of your true self.

Many get caught in the trap of believing that it is righteous to hold yourself back in life, to stay small. They confuse feeling insignificant and unworthy as the great virtue of humility. There is also implicit shaming in childrearing. Men, for example, are often taught to feel shame for their emotions or expressing vulnerability. Girls are implicitly shamed by, for example, the way boys are celebrated and welcomed in a culture where girls are not. When parents and teachers use criticism, ridicule, and shaming to motivate you, it creates a wound of shame that makes you contract in self-protection, thereby hiding who you really are, including your gifts and powers. The prerogative to be vulnerable is the freedom to fully come into your own magnificence and become your authentic self. It is the authorisation to full show-up and to be candid about your needs, feelings, brilliance, talents, shortcomings, and areas of your character that require work and growth in order to perfect.

It takes great courage to be vulnerable. Vulnerability is a huge source of strength and personal power. There is nothing more

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liberating than to have nothing to fear, hide, defend, or prove. It is the sanction to be wrong, make mistakes, be a learner, and not always an expert or know-it-all. When you have a healthy relationship with being wrong, you can get comfortable with shame. When you are able to live comfortably with your flaws and limitations, you can stop running. That means dropping the compulsion to strive to be someone else. This involves making peace with your limitations and not trying to be everything to everybody in order to prove that you're good enough. Hiding your shame takes a lot of energy, like a computer program running in the background stealing energy and resources.

The antidote of fear is love. Fear arises out of a sense of separation, born out of your belief that you become more of a person by differentiating yourself from others and being bigger or better than them. The paradox of success based on beating the competition causes you to become, in a sense, isolated and alone. Even when people seem to love you, you never know if it is you they love or they are merely attaching themselves to what you have. Love equalises and connects people.

To become liberated from fear means having the liberty to love deeply and to be willing and able to receive love in return. To achieve true liberation takes tremendous bravery. It involves not hiding who you are in order to play it safe and avoid rocking anyone's boat. The strength to do this can only be derived from the belief in yourself and your unique, Divinely ordained mission in the world. It's born out of the knowledge that you were created to make a difference to the world. You have, as a birth right, the sanction to wholeheartedly use your gifts for the betterment of others and in the service of Hashem. We learn from the King of all kings the secret of sovereignty. A sovereign is someone

who lacks nothing and is therefore able to give without the feeling of becoming diminished in the process. The freedom to love and contribute without limitation or reserve is the ultimate expression of personal sovereignty. When you are able to fully embrace and love yourself, you have reached the pinnacle and become a monarch in your own world.

The real sense of Shalom comes from being in balance between giving and receiving, loving and being loved, creating and surrendering. True sovereignty therefore is only possible through the desire and commitment to fully serve Hashem and to bring His glory into the world by making it a better place. It encompasses the freedom to radiate love, to pursue peace, to be beneficent and generous of spirit.

Faith frees you to trust Hashem and the process of life. This allows you to surrender to the knowledge that Hashem has given you all you need in order to create your best life. To fully manifest your gifts, you need to be deeply connected to the Source of your goodness and blessing. Giving from a place of connection to an unlimited infinite Source of goodness feels like redistributing resources, rather than losing anything. Living large means fully enjoying and benefitting from the world and the life that Hashem gave you. The slavery of Mitzrayim (Egypt) meant being denied access to, or enjoyment of, the benefits of the world. It meant living in a scarce, foreboding world, pre-occupied with mere survival. Leaving slavery means allowing yourself to sanctify Hashem by fully benefitting from the life that He gave you. It is also striving to ensure the well-being of others and that they enjoy success and the gifts of life. You can only achieve true success through contribution. It is only what you give that shows who you are and what you are really made of. **IL**