

Two Kinds Of Freedom

By Rabbi David Wolpe

What gives us freedom? Sometimes it is the absence of restraint. Other times it is the presence of potential.

I am not free to do experimental physics or play the violin because I have never been schooled. When we place a child in a classroom it is in one sense a restriction of freedom; but in another deeper sense it is the cultivation of a broader freedom — the skills necessary to lead a life with choices and possibilities.

Drawing close to someone else always creates demands, whether in friendship or in love. Although that might seem at first to restrict freedom, it expands it. You can create a future together, or accomplish things with a friend that one cannot do alone. Every healthy limitation is also an expansion.

So the famous abbreviation now becomes clear. Moses did not say to Pharaoh “Let My people go.” But rather, “Let My people go that they may serve Me.” As the full sentence makes clear, Jews were not liberated to chaos but to spiritual fulfillment. The Torah would enable them to understand how to live, not as a restriction, but as a fulfillment of possibility. May this Passover bring you more freedom.