

**Behalotcha**  
**Esther Wein**  
**17 Sivan 5782**  
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**Dedication:**

**Gittle Meressa for a refuah Shleima for her father in law-Yakov Tzvi Ben Esther**

**Rivki Jungreis for a refuah shleima for Godel Yehudah ben Roizel**

**Been There Done That- Watching Others Learn The Hard Way**

[Thehttps://aeon.co/ideas/tools-for-thinking-isaiah-berlins-two-concepts-of-freedom](https://aeon.co/ideas/tools-for-thinking-isaiah-berlins-two-concepts-of-freedom)

20th-century political philosopher Isaiah Berlin (1909-97) thought that the answer to both these questions was 'Yes', and in his [essay](#) 'Two Concepts of Liberty' (1958) he distinguished two kinds of freedom (or liberty; Berlin used the words interchangeably), which he called *negative freedom* and *positive freedom*.

**Negative freedom is freedom from interference.** You are negatively free to the extent that other people do not restrict what you can do. If other people prevent you from doing something, either directly by what they do, or indirectly by supporting social and economic arrangements that disadvantage you, then to that extent they restrict your negative freedom. Berlin stresses that it is only restrictions imposed by *other people* that count as limitations of one's freedom. Restrictions due to natural causes do not count. The fact that I cannot levitate is a physical limitation but not a limitation of my freedom.

Virtually everyone agrees that we must accept some restrictions on our negative freedom if we are to avoid chaos. All states require their citizens to follow laws and regulations designed to help them live together and make society function smoothly. We accept these restrictions on our freedom as a trade-off for other benefits, such as peace, security and prosperity. At the same time, most of us would insist that there are some areas of life that should not be regulated, and where individuals should have considerable, if not complete, freedom. A major debate in political philosophy concerns the boundaries of this area of personal negative freedom. For example, should the state

place restrictions on what we may say or read, or on what sexual activities we may engage in?

Whereas negative freedom is freedom *from* control by others, **positive freedom is freedom to control oneself**. To be positively free is to be one's own master, acting rationally and choosing responsibly in line with one's interests. This might seem to be simply the counterpart of negative freedom; I control myself to the extent that no one else controls me. However, a gap can open between positive and negative freedom, since a person might be lacking in self-control even when he is not restrained by others. Think, for example, of a drug addict who cannot kick the habit that is killing him. He is not positively free (that is, acting rationally in his own best interests) even though his negative freedom is not being limited (no one is forcing him to take the drug).

In such cases, Berlin notes, it is natural to talk of something like two selves: a lower self, which is irrational and impulsive, and a higher self, which is rational and far-sighted. And the suggestion is that a person is positively free only if his higher self is dominant. If this is right, then we might be able to make a person more free by coercing him. If we prevent the addict from taking the drug, we might help his higher self to gain control. By limiting his negative freedom, we would increase his positive freedom. It is easy to see how this view could be abused to justify interventions that are misguided or malign.

## A. The demand for Negative Liberty

### 1. Bamidbar: 11:4-5

וְהָאִסְפָּסֶף אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבּוֹ הִתְאַוּ תַאֲוָה וַיֵּשְׁבוּ וַיִּבְכוּ גַם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ מִי יֵאָכְלֵנוּ בָּשָׂר:

The riffraff in their midst felt a gluttonous craving; and then the Israelites wept and said, "If only we had meat to eat!

זָכְרֵנוּ אֶת־הַדָּגָה אֲשֶׁר־נֹאכַל בְּמִצְרַיִם חֲנָם אֶת־הַקִּשְׁאִים וְאֶת־הָאֲבֹטְחוֹת וְאֶת־הַחֲצִיר וְאֶת־הַבְּצָלִים וְאֶת־הַשּׁוּמִים:

We remember the fish that we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic.

### 2. Rashi:

אשר נאכל במצרים חנם. א"ת שִׁמְצָרִיִּים נֹתְנִים לָהֶם דָּגִים חֲנָם, וְהֵלֵא כָבֵד נֹאמֵר "וְתָבֵן לֹא יִנְתֵּן לָכֶם" (שמות ה'), אם תָּבֵן לֹא הָיוּ נֹתְנִין לָהֶם חֲנָם, דָּגִים הָיוּ נֹתְנִין לָהֶם חֲנָם? וּמֵהוּ אֹמֵר חֲנָם, חֲנָם מִן הַמְצוֹת (ספרי):

If you say that they meant that the Egyptians gave them fish for nothing (without payment), then I ask, "But does it not state, (Exodus 5:18): [Go, therefore, now, and work], for there shall no straw be given you"? Now, if they did not give them straw for nothing, would they have given them fish for nothing! — What then is the force of the word חֲנָם? **It means: free from (i.e. without us having been burdened with) heavenly commands** (Sifrei Bamidbar 87).

את הקשאים. אָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן מִפְּנֵי מָה הֵמָּן מִשְׁתַּנֶּה לְכָל דְּבַר חוּץ מֵאֵלוּ? מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהָיוּ קוֹשִׁים לְמִנְיָקוֹת, אֹמְרִים לְאִשָּׁה אֵל תֹּאכְלִי שׁוֹם וּבָצֵל מִפְּנֵי הַתִּינוֹק, מִשָּׁל לְמֶלֶךְ וְכוּ', כְּדֹאִיתָא בְּסִפְרֵי:

R. Simeon said, "Why did the manna change its flavor into that of anything one wished (as the Midrash states) except into these vegetables here mentioned, the taste of which it appears not to have assumed since the people lusted for them? **Because they are injurious to nursing mothers.** So indeed people say to a woman: Do not eat garlic and onions on account of the baby.

### 3. H'Amek Davar-

א. ועליו התאוּו והתלוננו. והיינו על מה שהי' יורד בכל יום. ולא פעם אחת בשנה. ולא היו צריכים שהיו עיניהם תלויות אם ירד למחר. כדאי' ביומא דע"ו א'. זה הי' עיקר תרעומת. אלא שבּוּשׁו לומר שאין רוצין לתלות את עיניהם לאביהם שבשמים. מש"ה חפשו עלילה אחרת לומר שתאווה נפשם לבשר וכיב"ז. וזה כללו בלשון בלתי אל המן עינינו וכמש"כ הרמב"ן ז"ל:

Freedom from relating to Hashem

### 4. Breast milk

11:8

שִׁטּוֹ הָעֵם יִלְקְטוּ וְטַחְנוּ בְּרֹחִים אֹדְכוּ בַמִּדְכָה וּבְשִׁלּוֹ בַפְּרוֹר וְעָשׂוּ אֹתוֹ עֲגוֹת וְהָיָה טַעְמוֹ כְּטַעַם לֶשֶׁד הַשָּׂמֶן:

The people would go about and gather it, grind it between millstones or pound it in a mortar, boil it in a pot, and make it into cakes. It tasted like rich cream

## 5. Sifrei Bamidbar 89

Just as the breast (shad) is "primary" to an infant, and everything else, secondary. Variantly: Just as the breast, if an infant sucks it the whole day, it does not harm it, so, the manna; if Israel ate it a whole day, it would not harm them. Variantly: Just as the breast, which produces one kind, which changes into many kinds, so, the (taste of the) manna changed for Israel into any taste that they desired, except for that of the five kinds (viz. Ibid. 5). An analogy: (A doctor) tells a (nursing) woman: Do not eat garlic and onion for the sake of the infant. Variantly: Just as the breast, an infant suffers when it withdraws from it, so, Israel suffered when they withdrew from the manna, viz. (Joshua 5:12) "And the manna ceased the following day, when they ate from the grain of the land.

## B. Moshes "motherhood"

### 11:12

הָאֲנֹכִי הָרִיתִי אֶת כָּל-הָעָם הַזֶּה אִם-אֲנֹכִי יִלְדֵתִיהוּ? כִּי-תֹאמַר אֵלַי שְׂאֵהוּ בְּחִיקוֹךָ כְּאִשָּׁר יִשָּׂא הָאִמּוֹן  
אֶת-הַיֶּלֶד עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׂבַּעְתָּ לְאֲבוֹתָיו:

Did I produce all this people, did I engender them, that You should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom as a caregiver carries an infant,' to the land that You have promised on oath to their fathers

## 1. Shenei Luchot HaBerit, Torah Shebikhtav, Matot, Masei, Devarim, Derekh1. Chayim 5

Whenever we find Israel quarreling with Moses, such a quarrel can be viewed from two aspects, – negatively, that Israel was either ungrateful or too demanding, – or positively, that the very fact of Israel's constant demands represents a great compliment to Moses, for it showed that they looked upon him as a child does on his father, expecting the father to be able to fulfill every one of the child's wishes. As long as Israel did not refuse to go into battle after they had heard that doing so would hasten Moses' death, there was room to interpret their conduct in either direction. Now that they had refused to undertake a mission that would shorten Moses' life, it became clear that any negative character attributed to them was based only on their excessive expectations of Moses, whom they looked up to as a child would to his father

## 11:15.2

וְאִם-תִּכְכֶּה אֶת-עֹשֵׂה לִי הַרְגֵנִי נָא הַרְגֵם אִם-מִצְאָתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ וְאֶל-אַרְאֶה בְּרַעְתִּי: {פ}

If You would deal thus with me, kill me rather, I beg You, and let me see no more of my wretchedness

If You in Your perfection decided not to provide me with, **את עושה לי**, assistants in order not to belittle me in the eyes of the people, and You want to continue to lead the people in the manner which You have done so far so that You will be free to appoint someone else, **חן בעיניך**, someone, or several, who are able to lead the people more perfectly. This is reminiscent of what the sages have said about the prophet Samuel who died before his time in order to enable the Kingdom of David to become reality sooner.

the result of my inadequacy as a leader. If I had to witness this, **ואל אראה ברעתי**, this would be worse for me than dying at this time.

3. Jefferson's comment in *Notes on the State of Virginia*: "Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with his wrath?"

## C. Despising positive liberty from excess negative liberty

### 11:20

עַד חֹדֶשׁ יָמִים עַד אֲשֶׁר-יֵצֵא מֵאִפְכֶם וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְזָרָא יַעַן כִּי-מֵאִסְתֶּם אֶת- ה' אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וּתְבַכּוּ לְפָנָיו לֵאמֹר לָמָּה זֶה יֵצְאֵנוּ מִמִּצְרָיִם:

but a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you. For you have rejected ה' who is among you, by whining before [God] and saying, 'Oh, why did we ever leave Egypt!'"

### 11:33

הַבָּשָׂר עוֹדֵנוּ בֵּין שְׁנֵיהֶם טָרָם יִכְרַת וְאִף ה' חָרָה בָּעַם וַיִּךְ ה' בָּעַם מִכָּה רַבָּה מְאֹד

The meat was still between their teeth, not yet chewed,\* **chewed** Meaning of :  
blazed forth against the יהוה Heb. *yikkareth uncertain*. when the anger of  
.struck the people with a very severe plague יהוה people and

#### D. The shared responsibility of National “motherhood”

##### 11:17

וְיָרַדְתִּי וְדִבַּרְתִּי עִמָּךְ שָׁם וְאַצְלֹתִי מִן־הָרוּחַ אֲשֶׁר עָלֶיךָ וְשָׂמְתִי עֲלֵיהֶם וְנִשְׂאוּ אֹתְךָ בְּמִשָּׁא הָעָם וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא  
אֹתָהּ לְבַדְּךָ:

I will come down and speak with you there, and I will draw upon the spirit  
that is on you and put it upon them; they shall share the burden of the people  
with you, and you shall not bear it alone.

The beginning of collective leadership

The 70 elders

Eldad

Meidad

##### Ohr Hachaim

**are you jealous on my behalf?"** According to the view that Eldod and Medod  
belonged to the 70 elders chosen, we must explain the verse as follows: "Is  
your jealousy based on the fact that these men were unwilling to receive their  
share of prophetic insights from me rather than from G'd directly? I wish all  
the Jewish people had been endowed directly by G'd with prophetic insights  
instead of having to receive it from me as their intermediary." This is shown  
clearly by Moses using the words **מי יתן כי יתן ה' את רוחו עליהם**. In this manner  
Moses demonstrated his utter humility and total lack of a desire for personal  
honour.

According to the view that Eldod and Medod were the two men who had  
drawn blanks during the lottery among the 72 prospective candidates, Moses  
asked Joshua whether it bothered him that instead of 70 people having been  
endowed with Holy Spirit he now found that actually 72 people had received  
prophetic insights. Moses told Joshua that he, personally, wished that G'd  
would grant every Israelite prophetic insights. The reason Moses said: "may

G'd grant His spirit, etc," is that Moses viewed the 70 people who had received prophetic insights with him as the intermediary as being only the beginning. Now that G'd had shown that He had granted prophetic insights directly to two more Israelites, he could only hope that G'd would grant such prophetic insights to everybody. None of such additional prophetic insights would be a denial or diminution of Moses' own stature as a prophet.