



A Foundational Article on the intricacies of life, which we were privileged to hear from The Spinka Rebbe Shlita.

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO MOMENTS OF INSULT

❖ I. Initial Confusion ❖

An insult never arrives at the right moment.

I am calm, satisfied, sitting comfortably among friends, and suddenly it happens, without any warning.

Sharp, biting words—usually creative and full of the offender's self-importance—pierce my heart like arrows, undermining the remnants of my self-respect.

In the first moment, I am confused, dizzy, not knowing what to do with myself, still not digesting what the person standing across from me just said.

But after that first moment comes the second moment, and it is the most difficult of all.

Because truly, an insult is crushing. My personal honor has been dragged through the dust at this moment; I don't know where to hide. To run away? That would only project weakness and further shatter my "strong" image. To remain silent? I have no idea what the offender's plans are; perhaps he is preparing another serving for me.

Should I answer?

I must answer!

I have to respond. It is my only way to save my lost dignity!

The gears of my creativity begin to turn at two hundred kilometers per hour. I must find a biting response—one that will put him back in his place, restore my trampled honor, and silence him in a way that he will remember the most important message of all: don't mess with me...

The "Artificial Intelligence" of the brain generates a juicy sentence, based on all the stored information in my memory about him, his family, his past failures, and who and what he even is.

But then, a moment before the launch is initiated, a third friend stands up, approaches me, and shakes my hand:

"Give me a Bracha! No, you must give me a Bracha!"

And again, I am confused. Bless him? With what exactly? What do blessings have to do with anything right now?

"One who restrains his mouth at a time of conflict (Bolem piv b'sha'as meriva) — that is an immense power! You are now one of the Creator's beloved! Give me a Bracha!" he commands — and I feel all my lost honor suddenly return to me.

I close my eyes, give him a faint blessing—and jump at the opportunity.

I will remain silent.

I will restrain my mouth.

I will emerge a hero.

I will smile nonchalantly, as if the things he said did not hurt me at all. This way, I both achieve lofty spiritual heights in closeness to Hashem — and I leave him with his mouth hanging open. You tried to hurt me, eh? You won't succeed with me...

❖ 2. Internal Emergency Meeting ❖

I continue to remain silent, perhaps uttering a sentence to try and return to the routine, to the topic we were discussing just a moment before it all happened.

The conversation begins to smooth over, but inside me — a raging storm.

On the outside, I am a great hero, a lover of Hashem who holds up the world on his shoulders, even handing out *Brachos*. But on the inside? Inside the mind and heart? Better not to ask.

My internal cabinet convenes for an emergency meeting, analyzing what happened here in the last few moments.

"He is simply *chutzpah-dik*!" one "minister" bangs on the table in my heart.

"How does he dare shame you like that?" another emotion adds fuel to the fire. "He forgets everything you did for him!"

A third "minister" directs my eyes toward all those present, trying to see who is still staring at me, who is casting their eyes down at the table, who is ignoring it, and who is continuing to flow with the despicable offender.

"You mustn't stay silent; it projects weakness," one voice inside is fuming.

"What is the point of silence? Everyone might think he's right. Show them you know how to hit back, that you are a fighter for justice. Explain to them that it's not a personal matter — you simply want to bring justice to the world!" a sixth adds knowingly.

"REVENGE! REVENGE!" several "inner children" cheer as they approach the battle.

And one in the corner, the one responsible for the archives, doesn't speak much. He only pulls out the file with the offender's name on it and records everything that happened here just now, so that I won't forget what he did to me.

The day will come when he gets what's coming to him.

"Don't take revenge," another internal voice arrives, wrapped in a self-righteous *tallis*. "It's better to keep quiet. Let the Almighty take revenge on him. Don't worry, he will yet suffer for everything that happened here; he will pay

dearly. For sins between man and his fellow (*bein adam l'chavero*), one pays in this world... You just keep quiet and receive everything promised to those who remain silent!"

And all these voices mix into a jarring internal cacophony. Some demand revenge, others offer comfort. One cries out over my "spilled blood" in the public square; a second suggests I sip a bit of "victimhood" to strengthen my immune system — "See how miserable you are, how the world simply doesn't understand you." A third throws bitterness at me — "He just told you the truth to your face; it's hard for you, isn't it?" And the fourth — suggests letting go completely and feeling a powerful spiritual elevation.

And I, where do I go within all this jumble of voices?

3. And What Does the Neshama Say? נשמה

And between all the voices, suddenly a quiet voice breaks through — the voice of the *neshama*.

"*Lecha dumiya tehilla!*" (To You, silence is praise!)

The greatest praise for the Creator, the praise He has been waiting for since the creation of the world — is the *dumiya*, the silence, the biting of the lips! I hear this delicate and pure inner voice, but I don't know what to do with it.

Look, until this moment I am still silent — and yet, I don't feel that this is the "correct" silence.

Is silence merely not speaking, while inside the heart one continues to nurture and inflate the anger and the desire for revenge? It doesn't seem so.

So what, is silence stopping all thoughts, ceasing to feel pain, telling myself that he actually complimented me? I don't know; I don't think the Creator wants me to lie to myself, to soothe myself with baseless, far-fetched explanations.

So what is it?

4. In My Distress, I Call Out

I continue to sit there. Everyone has already forgotten the incident, and only I sit somewhat hunched, agitated and angry inside, searching for a way out of the emotional thicket I've fallen into.

I feel how the words are on the tip of my tongue, how I am looking for him, the offender, in every word he continues to utter. I have no control over it; it is stronger than me.

Everything is stronger than me.

The internal anger, the desire for revenge, the loathing that suddenly awakens in me toward him, the old accounts that begin to grind for justice. I cannot calm them down.

I am not in control.

But the *Neshama*... the *Neshama* continues to whisper to me from within: Stop! Stop everything! Don't miss the opportunity to send a "crown of silence" to the Creator!

But how? My *Neshama*, how?! Don't you see that I am not succeeding? That I am not in control?

My breathing becomes heavy.

In my distress, I turn to the One who brought me into this situation and say to Him in a silent voice:

"*Ribbono Shel Olam*, I don't have the strength to go through this alone.

I cannot detach myself from the one who hurt me. I have no control over myself; I can't calm myself down. I am angry, I want to pay him back, I want justice!

In the choice between remaining stuck with the offender or connecting to You — I want to choose You,

But I am unable!

It is hard for me!"

5. The Hidden Diamond

It takes me a few more moments to grasp the diamond I discovered here.

I discovered a treasure! I discovered my truth!

I discovered that I am not in control, that I cannot succeed alone, that my anger and my corrupt *middos* are stronger than me! I discovered that I must have Hashem as my rock and my fortress to hold on!

I discovered that I am completely dependent on Him!

And what I mainly discovered — is that He is holding me all the time. Because look, the fact is, most times when I am insulted, I manage to move on with life...

Until this moment, I was sure it was me — that I am the perfect person, the "success story," the one who doesn't take things to heart, the one who knows how to let things slide and go with the flow.

Suddenly, it becomes clear to me that it is not so. It wasn't me; **for my part, I would have crashed by the wayside long ago due to all the insults hurled at me from my childhood until now.** It was only *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* who watched over me, gave me strength, and held me up so that I would not fall apart...

6. I have discovered you!

Another moment passes, and the friends around me move on to discuss another burning issue. I am still immersed in thought.

If this is true, and I cannot control my reactions and my *middos*,

If this is true, and the One who has protected me until now from seeking revenge or bearing a grudge is *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* Himself,

If this is true — then right now, too, I want Him to handle this! I want Him to help me get through this difficult moment!

I silence the medley of internal voices and begin to identify them:

Here you are, anger. Here you are, insult. Here you are, the desire for revenge. Here you are, the fear of being perceived as weak. Here you are, a lack of *emunah*. Here you are, hatred.

Do not blind me, all of you!

You are not truly anger, insult, and fear; you are merely bridges between me and the Almighty!

You are the keys to the barrier that stood until now between me and the simple truth. You have exposed my weakness to me — and Hashem's love and His protection over me!

And suddenly, as I think about this — they all fall silent, becoming somewhat irrelevant. I have exposed their truth, the truth that the *yeitzer* tried to hide from me.

My thoughts do not stop. I turn to observe that person, the offender.

Here you are, the offender.

Here you are, the one who, until a moment ago, I was certain that if he honored me — I would be honorable, and if he harmed me — I would be worth nothing.

You have no independent reality at all!

It wasn't you at all who said those sharpened words to me!

You were merely a trigger, you were only a "cause" from the *Mesovev Kol Hasibos* (the Causer of all causes). You were only a spotlight

that illuminated all my weaknesses within me and brought me to a renewed connection with the Creator.

I thought you were interfering with me, that I was standing on my own and you threw me into a whirl, but suddenly it becomes clear to me that you were the lever for my true connection to myself, to my truth, and to my Creator!

Until you hurt me, I was entirely consumed by my honor, my status, and my control over the situation. You came and trampled my imagined control and honor, and reminded me of the true Source of my life!

7. I have discovered You!

And then, when everything transforms from a "reality" into a "cause," **when it suddenly becomes clear to me that there is no independent reality in the world, and there are no "friends," and there is no real ego, and no control, and no personal honor — and that everything is just pathways between me and my Creator — the true silence arrives.**

I understand that I am not in control, that I am essentially like a *domem* (inanimate object), incapable of anything through my own strength.

This realization is the *Keser VehaKovod LeChai Ha'olamim*; it is the praise.

This moment, in which I stop being preoccupied with "me," and stop believing my internal voices — this is the truest and most sincere glory.

Gedanken from the Spinka Rebbe Shlita.

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