

Pardes Yehuda

Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick

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שבת יוביה

פרשת האזינו תשפ"ז

The Gift of Speech and the Privilege of Praising Hashem

הָאֲזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאֲדָמָה וְתִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ אִמְרֵי פִי יַעֲרַף כַּמָּטָר לִקְהֵל תִּנּוֹל כַּטֵּל אִמְרֵתִי בַשְּׁעִירִים עָלֶי דָּשָׁא וְכִרְבִּיבִים עָלֶי עֶשֶׂב: כִּי שֵׁם ה' אֶקְרָא הֲבו גִּדְל לְאַלְקֵינוּ: י

"Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; and let the earth hear the words of my mouth. May my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distill as the dew, as the light rain upon the tender grass, and as the showers upon the herb. For I will proclaim the name of the Lord; ascribe greatness unto Hashem..

The basic human advantage over all other creations is the ability of speech. As Rabbi Azaria Figo notes in his classic work Binah Le'Itim (Drush 66), human speech is an elevated gift that demands explicit gratitude.

In the Sefer Avraham Anochi, Rabbi Avraham Palacci (son of the renowned Chida's contemporary, Rabbi Chaim Palacci) applies this insight to re-examine several verses from Tehillim and the Torah, revealing that King David was not merely praising Hashem with his voice, but praising Hashem for his voice: With this insight he interprets many psukim on this topic:

"I will thank Hashem greatly with my mouth, and among the multitude I will praise Him" (Tehillim 109:30): Meaning: "I thank You greatly, Hashem, for my mouth—for giving me the power to speak. Therefore, I will use this very gift to praise You among the masses." תְּהִלַּת ה' יִדְבֹּר פִּי וַיְבָרֶךְ כָּל בָּשָׂר שֵׁם כְּדָשׁוֹ. "My mouth shall speak the praise of Hashem, and all flesh shall bless His Holy Name forever and ever" (Tehillim 145:21): Meaning: "My praise to Hashem is that my mouth can speak. Because of this gift, all creation ought to bless His Holy Name."

"Hashem, open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Your praise" (Tehillim 51:17): Meaning: "You opened my lips so that I can speak; therefore, my very ability to speak will tell Your praise."

"Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; and let the earth hear the words of my mouth" (Devarim 32:1): Meaning: Moshe proclaims: "Listen, O heavens, to the fact that I am able to speak. I will make it known across the entire earth so that all creation praises Hashem for bestowing the gift of speech upon mankind."

In addition to thanking Hashem for the giving of speech itself, we must also recognize that being allowed to praise the Infinite Creator is also an act of divine favor. The Gemarra (Berachos 33b) relates that a Chazan, a prayer leader once rattled off an endless list of the Greatness of Hashem before Rabbi Chanina: "הַקֵּל הַגָּדוֹל הַנּוֹבֵר וְהַנּוֹרָא וְהַאֲדִיר

"The great, mighty, awesome, powerful, strong, fearless, and glorious Hashem..."

Rabbi Chanina stopped him, asking: "Have you finished all the praises of your Master? Were it not for Moshe who composed the standard three praises הַנּוֹבֵר הַנּוֹרָא וְהַאֲדִיר, and the Men of the Great Assembly who codified them into the Shemone Esrei, we would not be permitted to utter even those! How dare you try to summarize the greatness of the Infinite?" Reciting a prayer of praise does not enhance Hashem's honor.

Human words can never fully capture Hashem's infinite nature. Therefore, prayer requires specific divine permission and boundaries. Expressing gratitude "הַוִּדְאָה" however, is boundless—we are encouraged to thank Him infinitely. But, we must follow the direction of our sages and rely on them how to express our gratitude.

The Modim DeRabanan Prayer:

The previous insight sheds light on two key texts (as explained in Sefer Kaf HaKohen by Rabbi Avraham Yitzchaki, Livorno, 1865): We pray: "Al she'anachnu modim lach, Baruch Kel HaHoda'ot" ("For the fact that we thank You, blessed is the Hashem of thanksgivings"). The Insight is that: We bless Hashem for the very privilege He granted us to express our gratitude to Him.

"When I call out the Name of Hashem, ascribe greatness to our Hashem" (Devarim 32:3): The Insight: The fact that "I can call out the Name of Hashem" and offer Him praise is itself a supreme kindness. Therefore, "ascribe greatness to our Hashem" simply for giving us the capacity and permission to praise Him.

We can add to the Psukim: Moshe compares his teaching to rain כַּמָּטָר and dew טֵל. Rain and dew do not force growth through violence; they soften the soil, allowing seeds to germinate organically. Spiritual guidance structured with gentle words enters the human heart just as dew quietly revitalizes the grass.

Before offering guidance to others, one must anchor themselves in the verse: "For I will proclaim the name of the Lord." The motivation must be entirely l'shem Shamayim—for the sake of Heaven, rooted in personal sincerity and practice. Only then can one fulfill the subsequent call: "הֲבו גִדְל לְאַלְקֵינוּ: Ascribe greatness unto Hashem." (Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

******The Kaliver Rebbe brings sight to a Choson under the Chupa******

Reb Moshe was a devoted Chosid of Rabbi Eizik Taub of Kaliv. Several times a year, he would make the pilgrimage to the court in Kaliv. Upon entering, he would hand over a kvittel—a petition inscribed with his family's names—asking for general blessings and success. Yet, whenever the Rebbe asked if he had a specific personal request, Reb Moshe, overwhelmed by awe and holy fear, could never bring himself to ask out loud. He would reply that everything he needed was written in the note.

Back home, Reb Moshe's grown daughter had reached marriageable age, but no prospective matches came her way. His wife repeatedly implored him to ask the Kaliver Rebbe for an explicit blessing for a match. Time after time, Reb Moshe visited the court, but his reverence paralyzed him, and he returned empty-handed. Finally, before one trip, his wife put her foot down: "If you do not bring back an explicit blessing from the Rebbe for our daughter's marriage, do not bother coming home!" Desperate, Reb Moshe promised he would find the courage.

Upon arriving in Kaliv with a heavy heart, Reb Moshe entered the Rebbe's room. When the Rebbe asked if he had a personal request, Reb Moshe burst into uncontrollable tears, unable to form words. The Rebbe asked: "Why do you cry so bitterly? Something is weighing on your heart, and you must tell me." Choked with emotion, Reb Moshe confessed everything—that his daughter was getting older, no matches were in sight, and his wife had forbidden him to return home without a direct blessing.

The Rebbe smiled warmly and said, "Your wife is entirely correct. It is time for your daughter to become a bride. Know that her soulmate is already prepared for her right here in the study hall of Kaliv. Go into the Shul, ask for a young scholar by such-and-such a name, and speak with him. He is the groom destined for your daughter."

Overjoyed, Reb Moshe located the young man. The scholar was remarkably handsome and immersed in his Torah studies with vibrant passion. When Reb Moshe engaged him in conversation, he found the young man brilliant, refined, and deeply wise. However, as they spoke, Reb Moshe noticed something heartbreaking: the scholar was completely blind, reciting every complex text entirely from memory.

Reb Moshe's spirit sank. As a loyal Chosid, he would never disobey the Rebbe, but how could he bring such

news home to his wife and daughter? When he returned home, his family eagerly asked what the Rebbe had said. Instead of answering, Reb Moshe wept. After composing himself, he explained that the Rebbe had identified her destined choson—a brilliant and holy scholar, but one who was entirely blind. A heavy silence fell over the house. Then, the daughter spoke up with unwavering faith: "We believe in the power of the tzaddik. If he says this is my match, I accept it wholeheartedly."

Moved by her faith, the family traveled back to Kaliv to finalize the engagement. The Rebbe called the young man into his room, poured the traditional l'chaim, and bestowed heartfelt blessings upon the couple. The Rebbe made one unusual request: the chuppah must take place at his court in Kaliv, and he would personally officiate.

News of the upcoming wedding spread and the town buzzed with anticipation, fascinated by the blind groom and the unprecedented fact that the Rebbe himself was officiating the ceremony. On the day of the wedding, a massive crowd gathered. As the hour approached, the crowd waited, but the Rebbe remained in his private quarters. After a long delay, the Rebbe finally emerged. His face was pale, and his body was drenched in sweat from spiritual exertion.

He stepped up to the couple under the wedding canopy and instructed that the cup be filled with wine. Yet, he did not recite the blessings. Instead, he stared intensely at the blind groom for a long moment. Silence fell over the crowd. The Rebbe broke the silence, not with a prayer, but with a question to the groom: "You are a scholar of Torah. You know the legal ruling that a man is forbidden to engage a woman until he sees her!"

The blind groom could not answer; he merely bowed his head in quiet submission. The Rebbe stood still, ascending into higher spiritual realms in deep meditative prayer. A few moments later, he asked the groom the exact same question. When the Rebbe asked the question a third time, a miraculous awakening occurred. Just as the groom nodded his head, his eyes cleared, his sight was restored, and he looked upon his bride for the first time. The crowd erupted in jubilation as the Rebbe began reciting the wedding blessings. The celebration was unparalleled in joy. News of the miracle spread far, drawing countless people to the Kaliver Rebbe for advice, while the young couple went on to live a long, blessed life together—a testament to their pure Emunah in the Tzaddik..

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