

Insights from the Meshech Chochma

רב מאיר שמחה הכהן מדווינסק זצ"ל

פְּרִשְׁת בְּשִׁלַח תשפ"ו

Shulie Plawes

אֶזְרָא וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לַיהוָה... (פרק טו' א)

Then, Moshe and the Children of Israel chose to sing this song to Hashem...

Interestingly, Rav Meir Simcha uses our pasuk as a platform for an essentially unrelated and more general topic.

He begins with the words of חז"ל in מכות יא. "Does this mean to say that every use of the word speaking (דִּבּוּר) denotes firm (קִשָּׁה) language?" The Gemara answers: "Yes, as it is written with regard to Yosef's brothers, **וַיְדַבֵּר הָאִישׁ אֲדֹנָי הָאָרֶץ אֲתָנוּ קָשׁוֹת** / *The man, the lord of the land, spoke harshly to us.*" In Midrash Toras Kohanim, דִּבּוּר is also described as a עֲזָז-לָשׁוֹן a strong speech, as we read in ה' במדבר כא' ... ובמִשְׁפָּה, **וַיְדַבֵּר הָעָם בְּאַלְקִים וּבַמִּשְׁפָּה...** / *The people spoke against G-d and Moshe...* and therefore, continues Rav Meir Simcha, we find that when Hashem commands Moshe to do something, He wants it done with alacrity, and so it is preceded with אֶל מֹשֶׁה ה' **וַיְדַבֵּר**; similarly with all the prophets in תנ"ך. It would follow then that **וַיְדַבֵּר** is not the type of speech that would be used when speaking to the מֶלֶךְ, as no human being would dare to confront Hashem in such a way. And yet there are exceptions to this rule and Rav Meir Simcha proceeds to explain each of them.

In **וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל ה' לֵאמֹר**, יפקד ה' אֱלֹהֵי הָרוּחֹת לְכָל / *Moshe addresses Hashem: "May Hashem, G-d of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the assembly."* How can he speak with עֲזָז and קִשָּׁה? Rav Meir Simcha tells us to look at the Yalkut Shimoni on this pasuk which elaborates as follows: "Nowhere else in the Torah do we find Moshe talking this way-ה' **וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל ה'...** (Using **וַיְדַבֵּר** here) is only to inform us of how praiseworthy our righteous (leaders) are. When they are ready to leave this world, they are not pre-occupied with personal needs but rather are concerned with the welfare of the *Tzibur*." Moshe was demanding Hashem to inform him as to who will lead the Nation after he is gone. And he did not stop pressing Him until He told Moshe: **קַח לָךְ אֶת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ** / *Take to yourself Yehoshua, son of Nun, a man in whom there is spirit.* Moshe was allowed to use **וַיְדַבֵּר** because there was no "me" in his request of Hashem.

He continues and says **וַיִּפְתַּח אֶת פִּי** and cites the pasuk in יא' **וַיִּפְתַּח אֶת פִּי** which says: **וַיִּפְתַּח אֶת פִּי** / *Yiftach spoke all his words before Hashem.* How does he have the impudence to speak with **וַיִּפְתַּח**? As Rav Meir Simcha just explained with regards to Moshe's **וַיְדַבֵּר**, so too was Yiftach asking Hashem to help the *Tzibur*. As he was accepting his role as the Bnei Yisrael's new leader, He was forcefully asking Hashem to show the people compassion and help them. Nothing personal here either. And perhaps Rav Meir Simcha saw this because instead of the pasuk writing **וַיִּפְתַּח אֶת פִּי**, it writes the more *tefillah*-like, **וַיִּפְתַּח אֶת פִּי**.

Next, he returns to Moshe and the pasuk in פט במדבר ז' אָטוּ, *When Moshe arrived at the Ohel Moaid to **speaking** with (Hashem)...* and tells us that this should not be understood as Moshe speaking with עַד and קָשָׁה to Hashem but rather, as he puts it, שְׂיִדְבֵּר לָזֶה i.e., the pasuk in fact means that when Hashem would speak to him in the Ohel Moaid, Moshe would spiritually prepare himself for such an awesome and lofty meeting!

Lastly, following Dovid Hamelech's Divinely orchestrated victories over his enemies, the *Navi* tells us in א' כב' א, שְׁמוּאֵל ב' כב' א, *Dovid **spoke** to Hashem the words of his song...* and similarly, in א' יח' א, תהילים יח' א, *(Dovid,) who **spoke** to Hashem the words of this song...* Rav Meir Simcha explains that these should also not be understood as Dovid speaking to Hashem but rather 'ה' לָה' as 'ה' לָה', a song composed as praise and thanks for all that He did. (Perhaps Rav Meir Simcha attached his piece to the opening of our שִׁירָה for exactly this purpose i.e., to show us the 'ה' לָה' expansion with regards to a שִׁירָה 'ה' לָה' שִׁירָה הַזֹּאת אֶת הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת 'ה' לָה' שִׁירָה!)

He concludes with וְיָמָה נִפְלָא i.e., are not the words of the Mechilta amazing, when it tells us that there were ten great שִׁירָה in Jewish history and the fifth was composed by Yehoshua: אָז יִדְבֵּר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ לֵה', בְּיוֹם תַּת ה' אֶת הָאָמְרִי לִפְנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. וַיֹּאמֶר לְעֵינֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: שֶׁמֶשׁ בְּגִבְעוֹן דּוֹם, וְיָרֵחַ בְּעֵמֶק אַיָּלֹן/Then Yehoshua spoke to Hashem on the day Hashem delivered the Amorites before the Children of Israel, and he said before the eyes of the Israel: "Sun, stand still at Gibeon, and Moon, in the Valley of Ayalon." How did the Mechilta know that this was in fact a שִׁירָה? According to Rav Meir Simcha, it is "pretty obvious." First, יִדְבֵּר cannot be Yehoshua speaking to Hashem, as no person would speak with עַד and קָשָׁה. So 'ה' לָה' must then be 'ה' לָה', as part of a שִׁירָה. And that would also explain why the pasuk begins with אָז. Now, Yehoshua's "speech" can take its rightful place with the other nine שִׁירָה. And Yehoshua's intention? As Rav Meir Simcha puts it, וְיִתְהַלָּל וְיִתְהַלָּל תִּפְאָרְתוֹ וְיִתְהַלָּל to augment and enhance *His* splendor and *His* praise! No me at all. And with this, Rav Meir Simcha ends with a very emphatic וַיִּבְרָר!

לזכר נשמת אבי מורי ר' ישראל מנחם בן ר' שלום ז"ל
לזכר נשמת אמי מורתי רחל בת ר' אלחנן אביגדור ע"ה
לזכר נשמת חמי מורי ר' יעקב נתן בן ר' ישראל שלמה ז"ל
ולזכר נשמת הרב יהודה בן ר' אברהם שמחה (קופרמן) זצ"ל
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