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We Are Always In Hashem's Presence

The Sages say that every time it says the word "*melech*" (king) in the *Megillah*, it is referring to Hashem. Every time Esther stood in front of Achashveirosh and said the word "king", she realized that she was still standing in front of the King of all kings - Hashem. Even when she said the words "*HaMelech, V'Haman*" ("the king, and Haman"), when she mentioned Haman's name in the same as she said the word "*Melech*", she was referring to Hashem. Meaning, she was mentally speaking with Hashem, even as she stood before Achashveirosh.

When a person stands in the Silent Prayer (*Shemoneh Esrei*), there is a *halachah* that he must feel like he is "standing in front of the King of all Kings"; Hashem. During the rest of *davening*, [and during the rest of the day as well], there is no actual obligation according to *halachah* for one to feel like he is standing in front of Hashem.

Yet, although it is not an obligation according to *halachah*, there is still an inner kind of life we can have, in which we always feel Hashem's presence. We see this from the words of the *Rema* in the beginning of Shulchan Aruch: "*Shivisi Hashem l'negdi tamid*" ("Hashem is beside me always"), one has to always be aware wherever he is that Hashem is watching him. The *Rema* says that when a person is in front of a king, he should realize that he is in front of Hashem.

When one is in front of the king, not only should he feel Hashem's presence, but when he talks, he also needs to realize that he is *talking to Hashem*, as he talks. We see this from Esther. Whenever she said "*HaMelech*" to Achashveirosh, she was really thinking about Hashem the whole time and talking to Him.

The Gemara^[1] says, "If only a person would pray a whole day." How is this possible? And when is he supposed to learn Torah? The answer to this is because a person can always talk to Hashem throughout the day. In this way, a person can stand in prayer all day, in front of Hashem.

Feeling Hashem's Presence and Talking to Him

There are two levels. One level is called "*nochach p'nei Hashem*", where a person feels Hashem's presence and that he is front of Him. And there is another level, where a person speaks with the Creator of the world, and throughout the day.

It's possible that a person talks to Hashem, yet he doesn't feel that he is *in front of* Hashem. On the other hand, it is also possible that a person feels Hashem's presence, but he doesn't *talk* with Him. He

is in front of Hashem's presence, but he is only speaking with others.

What does it mean to talk to Hashem? Each of us has 24 hours in the day. Let us examine our schedule and see: How much time of the day does one spend talking *with* Hashem?

When a person *davens Pesukei D'Zimrah*, which are words of praise to Hashem, he has certainly spoken the praises of Hashem, but he did not actually speak *with* Hashem. When *davening Shemoneh Esrei*, it is also possible that a person hasn't spoken with Hashem. Praising Hashem is not the same thing as talking to Him.

Examine your schedule you have throughout the 24 hours of the day, and see: How much time of the day do I speak with the *Ribono shel Olam*? One might discover that it's only a few minutes!

And sometimes, even when a person is talking to Hashem in first-person, like when is saying "*Attah Choinen*" and "*Attah Kadosh*" in *Shemoneh Esrei*, what is he thinking about then? Even if he's concentrating on the meaning of the words, that doesn't always mean he is feeling indeed the "*Attah*". A person can write a letter to a friend and write the word "You" that doesn't mean he feels like he is actually talking to him. Saying "You" doesn't automatically cause a person to feel like he's talking to the one whom he is addressing.

What is the way that a true like is supposed to look like? We learn it from what we find with Queen Esther [who was really speaking with Hashem every time that she was speaking to Achashveirosh], which shows us that the true kind of life for a Jew is to speak constantly with the Creator.

The Abundance of Speech In Our Generation

In our generation, people are talking all the time, whether they are at home or on the go – there's a lot of speech taking place. What is the inner reason for all of this speech in the world today?

We are all awaiting Mashiach, and one of the roots of the word "*Mashiach*" is the word "*masiach*"- conversation. In other words, the power of conversation is linked with the times of *Mashiach*. The world is preparing itself for the time when there will be much speech in the world, but it will not just be about a world in which we will speak more words of Torah or to speak about the Creator. It will be a changed world, where we will speak *with* the Creator all the time!

The Gemara says that there were ten measurements of speech which descended to the world, and the women took ninety percent of it, which left men with the other ten percent. The abundance of talking that takes place in our times is like the ninety percent of speech that was taken by women, a speech of *kalus hadaas* (lightheaded). The amount of speech in our times, which has increased so much in the last couple of years, is enormous. Until recently, a person spoke much less. There was a lot less time to speak so much as there is today. Hashem changed the nature of the world recently: people don't stop talking. But it's not words of Torah that are being talked about so much.

From where did all of this abundance of speech come from? Superficially, we can answer that this is a "*nisayon*"^[2] that we have when it comes to speaking *lashon hora*^[3] and *rechilus*^[4]. But there is another way to look at it. All of the speech that has come to the world recently is to show us that we need to speak all the time [with Hashem]. A very large part of our time needs to be spent talking. But we can compare the situation of today to a person dialing the phone all day and calling the wrong numbers. Our phones should only have one number that they dial! All of our speech was given to us so that we can use it to talk to Hashem!

The increase of speech that has come to our times is a spiritual light of *Mashiach* that has become stolen by the *Sitra Achara* (the "Other Side"). Every day there is a lot of speech taking place, but what

kind of speech? Conversations that are empty, or forbidden, or worse. The world today is full of gadgets that enable a person to talk so much, but all of this speech is being misdirected.

Verbal and Mental Communication With Hashem

An inner kind of person speaks all the time, but he speaks with Hashem. There are two parts to speaking with Hashem, and we learn this as well from the *Megillas Esther*.

Firstly, a person needs to get used to talk *verbally* to Hashem.

But we also find that "*Haman spoke in his heart*". The Sages learn from this in *Koheles Rabbah* that "the heart speaks." Shlomo HaMelech also said, "*I spoke with my heart*." This is not thought, but a kind of speech. There is a speech we speak with our mouth, and there is also a speech from our heart. "Speaking with our heart" means when we have a conversation with ourselves and we are thinking about what to do. There are times where we speak verbally, and there are times where we speak mentally. But we need to direct this speech towards speaking with the Creator.

The *Shemoneh Esrei* is not the only time we have in the day to talk to Hashem. *Shemoneh Esrei* serves as the gateway, and the example, of how to live life: to talk to Hashem. There are some people who set aside an hour a day to talk to Hashem, but this is not yet a truthful and complete kind of life. The true kind of life is to speak with Hashem all the time!

How To Talk To Hashem

A person might ask, "What am I supposed to speak about with Hashem all the time? Am I supposed to tell him over the last bank statement? Should I speak to Him about my wife and children? What is there to speak about with Him?" But if you go on a bus from Yerushalayim to Bnei Brak, you will hear that there is a lot that people have to say. People have so much to talk about with others. Why is it that when it comes to talking to Hashem, they don't have that much to say? Is it because they are careful to observe the statement of Chazal, "He is in Heaven and you are on earth, therefore, let your words be few"?

To speak with Hashem means to tell Him everything going on in your life, just as you include others in your life when you speak to them. Everyone likes to include others in his life and tell others about what's going on in their life. A husband comes home and his wife talks to him about what went on that day. A father likes to talk to his children and tell them stories. People love to talk.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l was known as a very quiet person. Once he told someone, "Don't think that I don't like to talk. Of course I like to talk to other people. Every person is born with a natural desire to talk to others and include them in his life. Even if a person is like Moshe Rabbeinu and he goes up to heaven for 40 days where he doesn't eat and drink, he will want to talk to others. The only question is to whom we will choose to talk to."

To whom does a person talk to all the time? Does a person only speak with his wife? A person talks to others whom he is close with, to someone who is included in his life, to someone whom he feels will listen to him and who cares about him. Since most people do not usually feel that Hashem truly listens to them and cares about them, they will only talk Hashem about their problems, when they need His help....

When a person lives a true kind of life, a soul kind of life and not a bodily kind of life, he feels Hashem next to him. He feels the Creator, he feels a love to Him, and he feels Hashem's love for him. There is no deeper love than the love that Hashem for a person.

The Search For Love

People on this world are searching for will anyone who will love them, and usually when a person does find someone who loves him, it is only imaginary, and soon afterwards they part ways. The search for love that takes place on this world can be compared to drinking salty water. When a person finds salty water and he drinks it, and he is unaware that it is salty, he thinks it is quenching his thirst, and soon afterwards he discovers that he is even thirstier than before.

If a person is searching for true love, he will only find it when he feels the Creator of the world deep in his own heart. When he removes the “blockage of the heart”, he will feel his love for the Creator, and he will feel the Creator’s love for him. Then he will find it pleasant to speak with Him and to converse with Him.

When one doesn’t feel Hashem’s presence in his life, these words seem too lofty and esoteric to him: “What does it mean to speak with the Creator and to feel that He’s listening to me? What am I, a prophet? Do I hear the Heavenly *bas kol*??”

All of that skepticism stem from feeling far from the Creator. But a person can live and feel the Creator in his heart, and feel the true love that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* has for him. The *Mesillas Yesharim* says, that a person can feel that Hashem is actually in front of him when he *davens*, and that he can talk to Him as if he’s talking to a friend. Esther knew that she was always in front of Hashem and talking to Him, even as she stood before Achashveirosh. When she fell before Achashveirosh and cried and begged for her life, she was addressing Hashem. She was able to do so because she lived an inner kind of life, where a person spends life talking with Hashem.

This is the depth of why man is called “*medaber*” – a social creature. It is because the essence of a person is that he can talk, and talk, and talk. But with whom should all of this talking be channeled to? With the One who created the world.

Find A Private Place and Talk to Hashem

Getting used to this perspective will cause a big change in a person’s life; but it is really an easy change to make, relatively speaking, for one who gets used to it.

When a person is on the go and he’s in a private place where there are no people around, it’s much easier to get used to talking to Hashem. If there are people around, it’s harder for a person to concentrate, so he should stick his fingers in his ears so that he doesn’t hear anything, and lean up against a wall and talk to Hashem there, and he can talk to Him for hours like this. Channah did this, and she was praying for so many hours that Eli thought she was drunk. [Therefore it’s not always feasible to talk to Hashem when you’re around people]. But we don’t always have to talk verbally to Hashem; we can also talk to Him through our heart, mentally.

One needs to get used to talking to Hashem. If a person talks to Hashem but he doesn’t feel Hashem, eventually, he will begin to feel. This is because there is a verse, “*I believed, for I spoke.*” By getting used to speaking to Hashem, eventually the speech makes you “believe” - gradually. Understandably, one needs to slowly get there, in steps, and he should not try to grab too many levels at once, because that doesn’t work. But the point is clear: one must get used to talking to Hashem all the time.

What Should A Person Talk To Hashem About?

And what should a person talk about to Hashem? Talk to Him about everything you normally talk about with people. He is the only one who he is really and truly listening.

This is a kind of life where a person realizes the meaning of, *"It is not good for man to be alone."* Getting married doesn't really solve the problem of being alone. When a person gets married, *Baruch Hashem*, he is no longer living alone, but this does not yet mean that he is living an inner kind of life. The inner way to live life is that you know you are never alone only because you know and feel that Hashem is next to you.

A person who lives an inner kind life is a person who sets aside time every day where he will be alone and feel alone, and upon feeling the loneliness, he immediately turns to Hashem and speaks to Him.

Talking To Hashem Throughout The Day

But it is not enough to merely set aside time every day to talk to Hashem; one needs to talk to Hashem throughout the day as well. Compare this to a person who only talks to his wife, his children and his friends only at certain designated times, is this called having a real closeness with them? In order to have a relationship with others, one needs to be able to talk freely and naturally with those whom he is close with, and not only during specific times. The same goes for talking to Hashem – it is not enough to talk to Him at set times during the day. We need to be able to talk to Him all the time.

This is an inner point to know about. One who gets used to this perspective will see a complete overhaul in his life. Just be being in solitude for a few minutes a day and talking to Hashem, where one is away from people, he begins to live a life where he feels Hashem's presence, where he lives with Him and it is He Whom he talks with. Hashem is the true companion that we have in our life.

At first, it will probably feel hard for a person to begin talking to Hashem; it might feel uncomfortable. So a person should get used to it slowly and in steps. The first time he does it, he should try it for half a minute. The next day, he should try it for a full minute, and so forth.

But as mentioned earlier, it's not enough to set aside designated times each day to talk to Hashem. One needs to train himself throughout the day to be able to talk to Hashem.

There is a very big difference between one who talks to Hashem only at set times of the day with one who can talk to Him on a more continuous basis throughout the day. We all have *Shemoneh Esrei* each day where we talk to Hashem, but a true and inner kind of life is to talk to Hashem constantly, throughout the day, every day.

If you're sitting in a private place and talking to Hashem, and then someone walks in and asks you who you're talking to, what will you say? Say to him, "I'm talking to Hashem." He might say, "Ah, I understand." But this is really what a simple kind of life for a Jew is supposed to look like.

Leaving Concealment and Entering Into Revelation

Who did Adam speak to in Gan Eden? When Adam wanted a helpmate, whom did he ask? He spoke to Hashem. Our first speech was with Hashem. And who was the first person that Chavah spoke with? With the Serpent! Ever since then, all speech has fallen into the Serpent's hold, who is called "the master of evil speech". All of our speech today is negatively affected by the Serpent, and that is why a person doesn't always feel that his speech was meant for him to talk to Hashem.

Megillas Esther is called so because it is a *giluy* (revelation) of the *hester* (concealment) – it reveals the secrets, it removes the concealments so that there should be revelation. The power of speech connects us to Hashem and it is the power that removes all of the concealment of this world, which enables us to connect to Hashem through the depths of our heart.

One who gets used to speaking with Hashem – and not as a superficial lip service, but from the depths

of the heart, and he pours out his heart to Him, whether it is something painful or something joyous – this is the way that an inner kind of life looks like: to keep talking to Hashem throughout the day. One who gets used to this leaves the *hester* (concealment) and enters *giluy* (revelation).

The Way To Prepare For Mashiach

This is the true way to prepare for the coming of Mashiach, whose name comes from the term *masiach*, to “converse.” When the words we speak are mainly with Hashem, Mashiach will then surely come!

The abundance of speech that takes place in our times, the final generation, is a total *hester* \concealment upon the coming of Mashiach. Even if all of this speech is not in the category of forbidden speech, the mere fact that people talk excessively with other people and not with Hashem, is something that shows how this great spiritual light is being stolen by the *Sitra Achara* (the Other Side), away from holiness.

In Conclusion

May Hashem merit all of us, that there should be a revelation upon all of our *neshamos*, to feel the presence of the Creator of the world, to talk with Him; not only to praise the wonders that He does, but to actually converse with Him. This will lead towards the complete revelation of the coming of Mashiach, speedily in our days. Amen.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WITH THE RAV

Q1: *What is the point of talking to Hashem if I don't need something from Him and if I'm not going through a particularly hard time? When talking to a spouse or to a friend, it makes sense to speak to them about all our worries, but why should I speak to Hashem if it's not a request for something I need?*

A: Why do you speak to your wife – is it only when you need her help?

Q2: *If she needs me then I understand why I should talk to her, otherwise -*

A: Do you only speak to her in the house when you need her to help you with something? Why do you to speak with your spouse in the home?

Q3: *Because that's the nature of people, but -*

A: It is a Jew's nature to speak with the Creator.

Q4: *But why should I speak to Hashem if there's nothing on my mind that I'm interested in speaking about?*

A: The reason why we talk to Hashem is to attain a bond with Him. That this the whole point; that is the whole interest. The Sages say that “the mitzvos were given to us only so that there should be

'tziruf' [connection] of the creations." The term 'tziruf' implies *chibbur* connection. All of the speech which we were given is so that we can use it to connect to Hashem with it. There is no other purpose for why our speech was given to us.

Q5: I understand that when talking to a spouse or to a friend, there is what to talk about, there is a conversation taking place. But when talking to Hashem....

A: You are saying that only if a person has attained a level of prophecy where he can hear the Heavenly *bas kol* answering him, only then it's worth it to talk to Hashem? A person only thinks this way because he doesn't feel the presence of the Creator, so he thinks that he's talking to the wall when he *davens*. Because he doesn't believe that it is really our Hashem Who surrounds us. If a person would really feel Hashem's presence with him and next to him and that Hashem is hugging him with His arms, he would talk to Him.

Compare this to a child who comes home from school and tells his mother about something troubling that happened to him that day. Either she can tell him what to do about it, or, she gives him a hug. When a person really feels toward Hashem as "*an infant on its mother's lap*" [as Dovid HaMelech says in *Tehillim*], that is how Hashem will treat him - with a hug. You are talking to Hashem about what's on your mind because you want someone who will really listen and who can give you a hug afterwards - and that is what you can have with Hashem. But you just have to first feel that Hashem is really next to you, to feel how He is in close proximity to you, and then bond with Him.

Q6: Why do I need to verbally communicate with Hashem? Why can't I just have a mental conversation with Him in my heart?

A: There is such a level of "mental conversation" with Hashem (this is called "*du siach*"), but this is a more subtle matter. Here we have described a concept that is clearer which people can better relate to. When a person has a problem, he usually is not seeking just answers. He wants someone else to feel him, to listen to him, and to give him a hug afterwards. When one feels Hashem's love for him, he talks to Him. If he doesn't feel that love, then indeed, he will not feel anything special when talking to Hashem and he will feel like he is just talking.

Q7: How can a person practically work on this concept throughout the day? Shouldn't a person just set aside time for this every day to work to talk to Hashem? Why should it also be done throughout the day as well?

A: Anything which you want to work on acquiring, will need time set aside every day, so that you can train your soul to get used to it in the first place. But if a person remains with just those designated times and he doesn't talk to Hashem throughout the day, he is missing the main part. Of course, it's not pointless. It is definitely better than nothing. But the purpose is not so that a person should set aside 30 minutes a day or an hour a day to talk to Hashem and to remain at that level. That's just an opener of what it means to enter into a truer kind of life.

Q8: If I'm in a public place and I'm uncomfortable talking to Hashem in front of other people, should I just talk to Hashem mentally, in my heart?

A: It is definitely something you should do, but it should not be the only way you talk to Hashem. Sometimes there is a plus in talking to Hashem mentally (through your heart) because it enables you to convey your deeper feelings to Hashem; the advantage to verbal speech with Hashem is that it takes up more permanence in your life.

Mental speech with Hashem is not something tangible that you can feel, so it makes less of an impression. For example, there is a rule in the Gemara that "words of the heart are not words", when

it comes to monetary laws of the Torah, because it lacks a real decision of the *daas* (mind) of a person, and also because a person doesn't always know what his "heart" decided. So there is an advantage to verbal communication in that it shows that the person's *daas* is active. There is an advantage to either verbal communication with Hashem or non-verbal communication with Hashem; sometimes we speak to Him verbally and sometimes we speak to Him in our heart. It is a cycle.

Q9: What exactly is the purpose of talking to Hashem each day?

A:The point I spoke about here is for a totally different purpose. It is about *talking to Hashem for the sake of talking to Him*. It is not about *Viduy* (confession of sins) or about asking for things about the future. And it is not enough to talk to Hashem for an hour a day; one needs to talk to Hashem throughout the day. I spoke here only about a point which people can understand. I did not say here anything except which is not stated explicitly in the words of our earlier sages, who were around for many years before Bresslev; the *Rishonim* (the sages who lived in the era spanning the tenth and fifteenth centuries) have been around much longer, and "the *Rishonim* are like *malachim* (angels)". We spoke here about a way to live life which connects a person to Hashem.

What should a person speak about with Hashem? It's not so much about *what* to say. Compare this to a person who comes home and he only talks to his spouse about what he planned on saying to her, and nothing else. If a person makes up with himself that he will only speak with Hashem about his specific words of praise to Hashem, his confessions, his self-accounting, and his resolutions for the future. A relationship with Hashem cannot be based on what we plan on speaking with Him. Hashem is called our "*Dodi*", our Beloved friend.

What to talk about with Hashem is certainly an important question to wonder about, but it is an entirely different matter. One speaks to someone whom he is close with, and this is the purpose of our speech. There are other purposes in talking to Hashem, which are all holy and necessary, but the main point is to talk to Hashem in order to simply have a bond with Him. A relationship is built through communication.

Q10: If a person learns Torah, does he need to speak less with Hashem?

A:The question is not really about *how much* Torah he is really learning, but *how* he is learning Torah. A person might be learning Torah as a purpose unto itself, or he is learning Torah with Hashem. It is indeed a very high level for one to learn Torah "with" Hashem as he's learning, because when one is using his *seichel* (intellect) to learn Torah, it is very difficult for him to have even the simple recognition that he is standing before the King [which is a sense of the heart]. But if a person anyways isn't learning Torah right now, and he is in any case having many conversations with others during the day - and indeed, most people spend many hours of the day talking to others... [he should use that time to speak with Hashem instead].

Q11: Is a person allowed to talk about his negative feelings with Hashem, like if he's not feeling right now that he's in a good mood? Can he talk about this with Hashem, since he is supposed to feel that really everything is good?

A: He should say to Hashem, "I know in my *seichel* (intellect) that everything is good, but I don't feel in my heart that everything is good. I am asking of you, Hashem, that You purify my heart, so that I can indeed feel that everything is good."

Hashem is not an address to come fight with. A person has knowledge that everything is good, but he also feels pain, and he can ask Hashem that his heart be purified so that his feelings will feel how it is good, even though there is pain. But you must talk to Hashem about your pain, and you know that it

stems from a lack of emunah and that you don't believe right now that everything is good; and precisely in this situation you are asking Hashem for help, that your heart should become purified so that you will feel the truth how it is all good.

It is not because you need to deny your feelings; if you deny your feelings then that doesn't do anything for you. You need to allow yourself to feel your feelings, and upon feeling the negative feelings, you become aware that your heart needs to be purified right now. Your negative feelings aren't coming from your actual heart itself, but from the "blockage of the heart" that resides on top of the heart, and one needs to remove it.

Q12: *If I'm teaching about this concept to other people, should I say to them that they should allow themselves to feel their negative feelings?*

A: Yes, but you need to emphasize to them that they shouldn't begin talking to Hashem by venting their feelings to Him. It is a step that can help a person come out of depression, but it should not be the entire process.

Q13: *The Rav has many sefarim - which sefer of the Rav does the Rav recommend I should start with? Should I start from the Rav's original sefarim [Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh], or should I start with the Rav's peirush (commentary) on Mesillas Yesharim...?*

A: I do not understand, at all, the question. From the time of the giving of the Torah until today, the shelf is full of so many *sefarim*. How did you deal with that until now, of which *sefarim* to learn?

There are many *sefarim* on the shelf...

Q14: *What I mean to ask is, should I start with "aleph" [the first volume of Bilvavi] or should I start with "beis" [the second volume of Bilvavi]?*

A: If you're starting from "*Aleph*", start from "*Anochi Hashem Elokecha*" ("I am Hashem your G-d"). If you're starting from "*Beis*", start from "*Beraishis Bara Elokim.*" ("In the beginning, G-d created").[\[5\]](#)

Q15: *I do not understand - what "Beraishis" is the Rav referring to...?*

A: The *raishis* (beginning) does not begin with me. That is exactly the point. There is a long journey to take way before these *sefarim*. There are some things to take from the earlier *sefarim* and there are some things you can take from the *sefarim* of our times. But you cannot begin from that point; you must begin from the words of our earlier Sages, and to build everything from there.

Q16: *But their words are too closed (inaccessible) to us.*

A: And how do you start learning the works of the earlier sages? Do you start from *Rabbeinu Yonah*, or *Ramban*, or the *Chovos HaLevovos*?

Q17: *I am not talking about those sefarim - I am talking about your sefarim.*

A: The question is: from where are you coming, before you got there? After you figure out what comes before [these *sefarim*], you can then know from where you should continue.

[1] Berachos 30a

[2] test

[3] gossip

[4] peddling

[5] *Editor's Note: The Rav's humorous answer (which also contains his humility, for he did not impose upon the person asking the question that he specifically learn his sefarim), contains much depth to it, and perhaps it can be explained as follows. The Rav has oft-quoted the concept mentioned in our sefarim hakedoshim that there are "two beginnings to Creation" - a beginning that starts from "Beraishis", which starts with the letter ב, and a beginning that starts from the Ten Commandments, "Anochi Hashem Elokecha", which starts with the letter א. The א represents emunah, and the ב represents the wisdom of the Creator, which is contained in the Torah. There are two paths one may "start" from - either from emunah\directly bonding with Hashem, or from wisdom\Torah.*

Source: <https://bilvavi.net/english/droshos-talking-hashem>