



# Saying Specifications

The beauty of studying Torah is amazing, the depth and breadth rooted in each word is staggering. In our *parashah*, the first *passuk* opens with the words of Moshe Rabbeinu, “*Va’etchanan el Hashem ba-eit hahi lemor-I pleaded with G-d at that time saying...*” The word “*lemor*” seems extraneous here. It is not obvious that **saying** is implicit in **pleading**?

Generally, we understand that when the word “*lemor*” is used, as in, “*vayedaber Hashem el Moshe lemor – and Hashem spoke to Moshe saying...*,” it is a directive to Moshe Rabbeinu to report back to Hashem what the people said. In this case, where he is speaking to Hashem, *chazal* explain that Moshe Rabbeinu was asking Hashem **to say**, i.e., to say His response, to let him know whether his request was accepted or not.

Indeed, throughout Tanach, when we

find the word “*lemor*”, as is “*Vayedaber... lemor...-and he said...saying...*”, it is an extra expression of speech and comes to convey a deeper message. We see one such example when Yosef Hatzadik is wandering in the field looking for his brothers (*Bereisheet 37:15*). He meets a man, “*vayishaleihu ha’ish lemor mah tivakesh – and the man asked him, saying, what are you looking for?*” Well, if the man was asking, clearly, he was saying! The Kotzker Rebbe teaches a profound moral lesson from this extra word. The man, (Rashi suggests that this was the angel Gavriel), was teaching Yosef Hatzadik **to always say**, “what are you looking for.” As a person wanders through life, he must ask himself at key intervals, “What is my goal? Where am I headed?” He then will find a place of *yishuv ha’das*.

The *midrash* learns another lesson from this word. Moshe Rabbeinu is **saying** something to all of us. He is teaching future generations to implore Hashem for salvation when they are stuck in times of despair. Even in the direst situations, one should never give

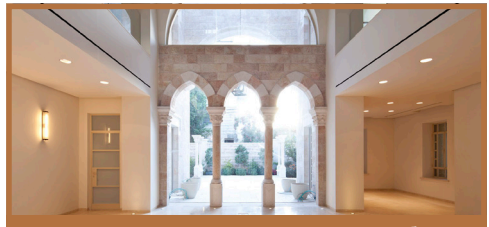
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up hope. We can always turn to Hashem as Moshe did, as salvation can come in the blink of an eye.

We learn another aspect of *tefilah* here, says the *Panim Yafot*. Moshe Rabbeinu was modeling a fundamental element of davening to Hashem. “*And I implored Hashem...saying*”, as if to ask Hashem, “help me with what I need to say, open my mouth so I can express my plea!” Truly, we follow Moshe Rabbeinu’s lesson every day before we commence our *shemoneh esrei*. We ask Hashem to “open our lips” so we can speak Hashem’s praise.

The *Me’am Loez* learns an additional lesson about the power of *tefilah* from the words “*ba-eit hahi* - at that time.” Moshe Rabbeinu is sharing a critique with the people. The previous *perek* ends with apportioning land for Reuven and Gad, as one who is carrying out his last will would do. Then it describes the appointment of Yehoshua as the new leader. All these events should have awakened the people to make them realize that Moshe’s passing was imminent. Knowing this, they should have davened for Moshe to be the leader who would enter the land with them. He is telling them that they should have davened for him, as the power of communal *tefilah* is formidable. However, when Moshe Rabbeinu saw that the people were not davening, he realized that he had no option but to daven for himself. We can apply this to our own experiences. When we see someone suffering, we cannot only encourage them to daven, we must join them in heartfelt *tefilah* as well. ■

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