

LISTEN TO OUR VOICES

CAN YOU HEAR MY VOICE?



שמע קולנו

SHEMONEH ESREI SERIES



CAN YOU HEAR MY VOICE?

Hear Our Voice	שמע קולנו
Hear our voice, Hashem our G d; merciful Father, have compassion upon us and accept our prayers in mercy and favor, for You are G d who hears prayers and supplications; do not turn us away empty-handed from You, our King, for You hear the prayer of everyone. Blessed are You Hashem, who hears prayer.	שמע קולנו. ה' אלקינו חוס ורחם עלינו. וקבל ברחמים וברצון את תפלתנו. כי אל שומע תפלות ותחנונים אתה. ומלפניך מלכנו. ריקם אל תשיבנו כי אתה שומע תפלת עמך ישראל ברחמים. ברוך אתה ה', שומע תפלה:

My daughter cannot speak, but we communicate in so many ways

15 April 2015 Nick Duquemin

One of the first questions people ask me when they meet my amazing 14-year-old daughter Livvy is, "Does she talk?"

Well, Livvy has no spoken language – she is 'preverbal'. But, as we have learnt, there's more to communication than the words we say.

I remember in the early days being so desperate to hear her voice. She babbled on cue at six months, but after an ear infection at eight months, she became eerily silent.



At first, we suspected her lack of communication was down to glue ear and that she couldn't hear us, but after two grommet operations the words still didn't come.

Livvy wasn't playing social communication games such as peekaboo. She didn't wave or clap. We spent hours with an inspirational speech therapist – she virtually stood on her head to get Livvy to engage, but it was very difficult.

Livvy then went through a stage of saying the word 'more' in a low, drawn-out way. You could sense the effort it took to push the word out. She would over-generalize this word, using it for everything.

And then, one day, she stopped, and we haven't heard any words since.

But so much of our communication is non-verbal. Livvy's body language is key to us understanding her mood, and she uses it to express choices or even an opinion.



This can be very subtle – a sideways glance, or a brief movement of her arm. She lets us know that she would like to get out of her wheelchair by moving her legs and arms and pushing on the sides.

Livvy can express pleasure by laughing, or annoyance with a low, irritated growl. She lets us know she is upset or doesn't want to do something by raising the intensity of her vocalization, or using a deeper tone of voice.

She most definitely recognizes voices, and will turn to familiar people. I remember a few years ago rushing up to school as Livvy was not well after a very severe seizure.

Staff had struggled to calm her down and Livvy was pacing round the room, very agitated. I walked in and she immediately calmed down. It was a really memorable moment for me.

Livvy also used PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) for several years before her epilepsy became so severe that it was too demanding.

We felt the power of this was that she realized she was sending a message to somebody else – she was having a two-way exchange, the very core of a conversation. We're now looking at eye gaze technology as a way for Livvy to make choices.

Livvy knows she is heard

We chat away to Livvy constantly. We have no sense of how much she understands, so it is important to tell her as much as possible out of respect.

We use intonation to give her a sense of what we are saying. We get close to her, we sit with her, I put my face very close to hers and tell her I love her. She cannot say it back but, very subtly, she will often smile.

Livvy knows that she is loved, that she is valued, that she is heard.

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- ❖ HOW DOES LIVVY'S MOM KNOW WHAT LIVVY IS "SAYING"?
 - ❖ HOW DOES SHE KNOW LIVVY KNOWS SHE IS HEARD?
 - ❖ HAVE YOU EVER FELT UNABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH WORDS?
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CALLING OUT TO GOD

Psalms 145:18	תהלים קמה:יח
The Lord is near to all who call Him, to all who call Him with sincerity.	קרוב ה' לכל קראיו לכל אשר יקראהו באמת

- ❖ WHY DO PEOPLE CALL OUT TO HASHEM?
- ❖ WHAT SCENARIOS CAN YOU THINK OF THAT MAKES SOMEONE CALL OUT?



When the Jews were slaves in Egypt, they cried out to God to deliver them from their suffering.

Shemos 2:23	שמות ב:
23) Now it came to pass in those many days that the king of Egypt died, and the children of Israel sighed from the labor, and they cried out, and their cry ascended to God from the labor. 24) God heard their cry, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.	(כג) וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָרַבִּים הָהֵם וַיָּמָת מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם וַיֵּאָנְחוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן־הָעֲבֹדָה וַיִּזְעְקוּ וַתַּעַל שׁוֹעַתָם אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים מִן־הָעֲבֹדָה: (כד) וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נַאֲקָתָם וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ אֶת־אַבְרָהָם אֶת־יִצְחָק וְאֶת־יַעֲקֹב:

Seforno 2:23-24	ספורנו שמות ב: כג- כד
And they cried out- They cried from pain in their hearts from their work. And their cries ascended to God from their work- not because of their repentance or their prayers but rather as vengeance towards the cruelty of their work as if to say- "I have seen the pressure" And God heard their cries- the short prayers that they prayed; even the righteous of the generation.	וַיִּזְעְקוּ. זַעֲקוֹ מִכָּאֵב לֵב עַל עֲבוֹדָתָם: וַתַּעַל שׁוֹעַתָם אֶל הָאֱלֹהִים מִן הָעֲבֹדָה. לֹא בִשְׁבִיל תְּשׁוּבָתָם וּתְפִלָּתָם, אֲבָל כְּמִקְנָא עַל אֲכֹזְרוּת הַמַּעֲבִידִים, כְּאָמְרוּ וְגַם רָאִיתִי אֶת הַלַּחֲץ: וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶת נַאֲקָתָם. תְּפִלַּת קִצְתָם שֶׁהִתְפַּלְלוּ אִזּוֹ מִצְדִּיקֵי הַדּוֹר, כְּאָמְרוּ וְנִצְעַק אֵל ה', וַיִּשְׁמַע קוֹלוֹנוּ בַּמְדַּבֵּר כ, טז

- ❖ DO YOU THINK THIS IS THE TYPE OF PRAYER THAT HASHEM WANTS FROM US?
- ❖ WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE FACT THAT EVEN THE MOST RIGHTEOUS PRAYED THIS WAY?
- ❖ IS THIS AN IDEAL FORM OF PRAYER?

I HEAR VOICES

Bereishis 27:22	בראשית כז: כב
So Jacob drew near to Isaac his father, and he felt him, and he said, " The voice is the voice of Jacob , but the hands are the hands of Esau."	וַיִּגַּשׁ יַעֲקֹב אֶל־יִצְחָק אָבִיו וַיִּמְשְׁהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר הַקֹּל קוֹל יַעֲקֹב וְהַיָּדַיִם יְדֵי עֵשָׂו

Rabbenu Asher	פירוש הרא"ש על התורה
The voice is the voice of Jacob, his strength lies in his Tefillah and Torah. But the hands are the hands of Esau that will control the enemies of Yisrael	הקל קול יעקב מהתפלל ומתלמוד תורה אז והידים ידי עשו שישלוט בשונאיהם של ישראל.

Sefer Sifsei Chaim Rinas Chaim 211	שפתי חיים ביאורי תפילה
We are asking Hashem to hear our prayer on the basis of our voice alone, even though we may lack the merit or the complete Kavannah that would render our prayers worthy of His attention.	אנו מבקשים שהש"ת ישמע קולנו גם אם אין טעם וסיבה או זכות לקבל את התפילה ולהענות ולבקשות

❖ BASED ON THIS, WHY DO YOU THINK WE SAY HEAR OUR VOICE AND NOT OUR PRAYERS?



INARTICULATE

Dover Shalom	דובר שלום - אוצר התפילות
The phrasing of this bracha asks Hashem to hear our groans and our cries, even if they are inarticulate.	שמע קולנו, מה שאנחנו נואקים ונאנחים, אף שהשומע מצדו אינו מבין את תוכן הנאקה

Rav Yitzchak Sender- The Commentator's Siddur:	
Voice alludes to so much more than just the words. It alludes to the fact that hidden in our subconscious, there is much more that we want to express, but either we cannot find the words, or we don't know what it is we want to say.	

❖ HAVE YOU EVER FELT THAT YOU DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO SAY TO HASHEM BUT YOU STILL WANTED TO DAVEN?


❖ WHY DO YOU THINK WORDS SOMETIMES FAIL US?

THE SHOFAR CONNECTION

Blessing on Shofar	ברכה לפני תקיעת שופר
Blessed are You O Lord our God King of the Universe Who sanctifies us with Your Commandments and has commanded us to hear the voice of the shofar.	ברוך אתה ה' אלוקינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו לשמוע קול שופר.

- ❖ WHEN DO WE LISTEN TO THE SHOFAR?
- ❖ WHAT ROLE DOES THE SHOFAR PLAY IN PRAYER?

Shem Mi'Shmuel's Commentary	שם משמאל ראש השנה תרע"א
And this is the strength of man, in the innermost part of his heart and he is not able to bring out the tools of speech- as it is written (Eicha 2) "They cried out their hearts to God". We find that when the heart itself cries out to God when we are not able to bring forth from the mouth, this brings forth tremendous mercy. And this is the Shofar, coming from the innermost place without the tools of speech; this strength of the shofar can turn strict judgment to mercy.	<p>וזה הכח יש לאדם בפנימיות הלב ואינו יכול להוציא זאת אל כלי הדיבור, כמו שכתוב (איכה ב') "צעק לבם אל ה'", היינו שהלב מעצמו צועק אל השי"ת שאינו יכול להוציא בפיו, וזה מעורר רחמים רבים, וזה שופר קלא פנימאה בלתי כלי הדיבור, ובכח זה השופר מהפך מדת הדין לרחמים</p>

Adapted from Introduction of Artscroll Rosh Hashana Machzor	
<p>We lack even the words to begin propelling ourselves forward out of the muck. For people there is hope. True they lack the words to express their inner stirrings, but sometimes there is the wordless groan of an aching heart that longs to return to its spiritual origins.</p> <p>This is the sound of the shofar.</p> <p>It is a primitive instrument, barely capable of modulating its tones or shifting notes. Can anyone play a symphony or even a song on a shofar? No.</p> <p>Its piercing sounds symbolizes the inarticulate cry of the indelibly stained should that longs to be cleansed. It is a cry that only God's ear can comprehend and translate into a pleas. As the Rambam puts it, perhaps we do not know the intellectual reason for the commandment of shofar but it has a symbolism that we can comprehend.</p> <p>Even an estranged Jew remains Jewish so long as he returns "home" when threatened. The shofar is his homing signal, the cry from the Jewish heart that says "I belong here" and the echoing cry from God's heart that says "Yes, the door is open."</p> <p>It is the instrument that says that when no words are possible, no words are needed.</p>	

THE PERSONAL CONNECTION

Orach Chaim 119:1	שולחן ערוך אורח חיים הלכות תפלה סימן קיט
The Shulchan Aruch rules that in the Shmoneh Esrei's blessings of request, a person may add his personal petition for something similar to the theme of the blessing. Thus, one may mention a sick person during the blessing for healing. One may add a specific personal request	<p>אם רצה להוסיף בכל ברכה מהאמצעית, מעין הברכה, מוסיף. כיצד, היה לו חולה מבקש עליו רחמים בברכת רפאנו; היה צריך פרנסה, מבקש עליה בברכת השנים ובשומע תפלה יכול לשאול כל צרכיו, שהיא כוללת כל הבקשות;</p>

for livelihood during the blessing of prosperity. In Shomeah Tefillah, one can ask for anything he desires, because this blessing is a general supplication petitioning God for all our needs.	
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- ❖ WHY DO YOU THINK PERSONAL REQUESTS FOR ANYTHING FIT INTO THIS PARTICULAR BRACHA?
 - ❖ WHAT KINDS OF REQUESTS DO YOU WANT TO MAKE?
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Chayei Adam: "Whatever one knows in his heart that he needs, he should add a request for it to his tefillah, and if he does not know how to express himself satisfactorily in Lashon hakodesh, he should say these entreaties in any language. The main thing is that the requests emanate from the depths of his heart."



CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

- ❖ Sometimes words fail us, this prayer shows us that it is our voice and our inner voice that is most important here.
- ❖ The shofar teaches us that depth of request and genuine yearning is the most important form of prayer.
- ❖ This prayer which is about connecting to Hashem and asking us to hear our inner hearts is the perfect time to ask for ANYTHING you need.