

Week Four, July 25:

Rabbi Avraham Chaim of Zlotchov (Orach Lechayim, Ha'azinu 387):

Likkutei Amarim (Magid Devarav L'vaakov: #151)

Avraham Chayim ben Gedaliah of Zlotchov (1750–1816) studied under his father Gedaliah b. Benjamin Wolf, who was *av bet din* in Zlotchov. He was a disciple of Dov Baer the “Maggid of Mezritch,” Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye, and Jehiel Michel of Zlotchov. He was also a pupil of the two brothers: Samuel Shmelka Horowitz of Nikolsburg and Phinehas Levi Horowitz, his first father-in-law. His book, *Orach Lechayim*, was published by his step-son in 1817.

ר' אברהם חיים מזלאטשאב, ס' אורח לחיים (האזינו, עמוד שפ"ז)

שמעתי בשם הרב בוצינא קדישא מו"ה דוב בער זללה"ה פירוש הפסוק: "כשופר הרם קולך" (ישעיה נ"ח א').

ר"ל: האדם צריך לחשוב את עצמו כאין, ואין בו שום זכות ומעשים טובים. ואע"פ שעושה מצוות ומעשים טובים, הוא אינו עושה. כי עושה בכח הש"י, ובשכלו ובחסדו ובטובו שהיטיב לו. ע"ד "מי הקדימני ואשלם" (איוב מ"א ג').

וגם בתפלתו יחשוב שעולם הדיבור מדבר בו. ומחשבתו היא עולם המחשבה.

והוא כשופר שאין בו שום קול, רק מה שתוקעין. והו"ו "כשופר הרם קולך", ודפח"ח.

It is written, “**Raise your voice like a Shofar**” (Isaiah 58:1). I heard the following explanation in the name of the holy light, Rabbi Dov Baer [the Mezricher Magid].

You must consider yourself like nothing. You must realize that you have no merit nor good deeds to your credit. Even though you may fulfill the commandments and do good deeds, you are not the one who is actually doing this. You are only acting through the power that God gives you, and through the intelligence and goodness that He bestows upon you. It is thus written, “**Who will come before Me, that I may pay him?**” (Job 41:3).

When you pray, you must realize that the Universe of Speech is speaking through you. When you think, you must realize that your thoughts are from the Universe of Thought.

You are therefore like a Shofar. A Shofar itself does not contain any sound. It only produces sound when someone blows through it.

It is therefore written, “**Raise your voice like a Shofar.**”

Likkutei Amarim is a collection of teachings of R. Dov Baer, the Maggid of Mezritch.

ר' דוב בער, המגיד ממזריטש, ליקוטי אמרים (מגיד דבריו ליעקב) (סימן קנ"א)

לא יהיה לו גדלות בזה שמתפלל בכוונה. כי הוא רק כבן כפר שאין בא לפני המלך בשום פנים (נ"א פעם). רק כשנאבד בן אצל המלך, והוא מביא אגרת ממנו, אזי מניחין אותו בעלי המשמר, ועייל בלא בר. ואדרבה הכל מקרבין אותו לפני המלך. כך כשמביא ניצוץ קדוש למעלה, שהוא נושא את בן המלך, אזי הכל מקרבין אותו.

Don't get a swelled head about the fact that you pray with kavvanah. You are just a country bumpkin who wouldn't be allowed to see the king at all. It so happens, however, that the king's precious child has been lost, and you come bearing a letter from that child. All the guards let you go right through; no one holds you up at all. On the contrary, they rush you right in to the king.

And so, when you bring a holy spark above, which carries in it the "kings child," then surely all the divine forces rush your prayer right to the king.

For Further Thought:

Now a text on surrender! Every effort we make in prayer that brings us closer to God may make us feel as if we are "succeeding" in our efforts. But, it is just such a thought that keeps us away from God. Who is actually praying, after all?

This text relies upon the understanding gained through the study of earlier texts that we are given new life in every moment, and that all our strength and thoughts and experience come from the Holy One. The moment of prayer is no different.

For Further Thought:

1. Have you ever had the sense of being like a Shofar in prayer? If so, describe.
2. At the same time as this text urges us to still the ego in prayer, there are other texts from the Hasidic tradition that urge us to pray for each and every thing in our lives, so that we might cultivate gratitude to the Giver. In your own prayer life, are there times when you start praying filled with a sense of "Ani" and end up in a place of "Anochi"? How do you understand that process?