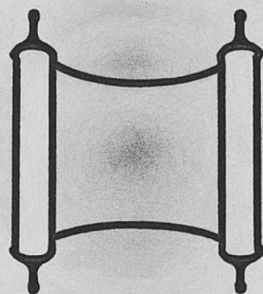


בס"ד

**Rabbi Menachem Mendel
of Horodak
Parshas Va'eira**



*Dedicated in Honor of the
Yahrzeit of*

לע"נ

שְׂרָה מֵרִים בֵּת אֲבִרָה

To find more Maamarim and to dedicate one visit:

ChassidusNow.com

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz Parshas Va'eira

Introduction

Menachem Mendel Horodaker, a leading Chassidic thinker of the early nineteenth century and a close disciple within the inner circle of the Maggid's tradition, lived during a period when the experiential power of speech, prayer, and Torah transmission stood at the center of Chassidic avodah. In this maamar, he develops a sustained teaching on the metaphysical nature of speech, the distinction between speech rooted in middot and speech stripped of middot, and why Moshe Rabbeinu's being "heavy of mouth" was not a deficiency but the very condition that allowed the Torah to be revealed in its purest form.

The questioner asked: Our Rabbis of blessed memory said

(Midrash Shocher Tov, Psalms 23:4): "Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me." "Your rod" this is sufferings, and "Your staff" this is Torah.

שאל השואל: אמרו רבותינו ז"ל (שוחר טוב תהלים כג, ד): "שִׁבְטְךָ וּמִשְׁעֲנֶתְךָ הֵמָּה יְנַחֲמֵנִי" "שִׁבְטְךָ" זֶה יְסוּרִים וּמִשְׁעֲנֶתְךָ זֶה תּוֹרָה.

The rabbi opened with the verse (Exodus 6:3): "And I appeared, etc., and My Name Hashem I was not known to them," and Rashi of blessed memory explained: "I did not make known" is not written, etc., for it has already been said (Genesis 12:7): "And Hashem appeared to Abram," but I was not recognized by them with this Name.

פֶּתַח הָרַב בְּפָסוּק (ו, ג): "וַיֵּרָא וְכו' וַיִּשְׁמִי ה' לֹא נִודַעְתִּי לָהֶם", וּפֶרֶשׁ רַשִׁי ז"ל: לֹא הִוָּדַעְתִּי אֵין כְּתִיב וְכו', שֶׁהֲרִי כָּבֵד נֶאֱמַר (בְּרֵאשִׁית יב, ז): "וַיֵּרָא ה' אֶל אַבְרָם", אָבֵל לֹא נִפְרָתִי לָהֶם בְּשֵׁם זֶה.

And behold, the Ramban raised a difficulty regarding the matter of Moshe being heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue (Exodus 4:10), and if the explanation is simple, there is a difficulty from questions of the Talmud (Sotah 12b) on the verse (Exodus 2): "And behold, a youth crying," for it is written first "child" and afterward he calls him "youth," but rather his voice was like a youth.

וְהִנֵּה הֵרָמַב (מב) "וְהָיָה עַל עֵינֶיךָ מִשְׁחָה כְּבֵד פֶּה וְכָבֵד לְשׁוֹן" (שְׁמוֹת ד, י), וְאֵם הִפְרוּשׁ פְּשׁוּט, קוֹשֶׁה קוֹשִׁיּוֹת ש"ס (סוּטָה יב, ב) עַל פָּסוּק (שְׁמוֹת ב. ז): "וְהִנֵּה נָעַר בָּכָה" – שֶׁכְּתוּב תַּחֲלָה יֵלֵד וְאַחֲרַי כֵּד קוֹרְהוּ נָעַר, אֱלֹא – קוֹלוֹ כְּנָעַר.

And he asks: if so, you have made Moshe our teacher, peace be upon him, a blemished one, for the Levites are disqualified by voice, which, seemingly, with respect to heavy of mouth is more and more difficult.

וּמִקְשָׁה: אִם כֵּן עֲשִׂיתוּ לְמֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ עֲלֵיו הַשְּׁלוֹם בְּעַל מוֹם שֶׁהֲרִי הַלְוִיִּים נִפְסָלִים בְּקוֹל, אֲשֶׁר לְכַאוֹרָה עַל כְּבֵד פֶּה קוֹשֶׁה יוֹתֵר וְיוֹתֵר.

And behold, the conclusion of his words is that on the contrary it was specifically the intention of Hashem, may He be blessed, for him to be so, for if he had been one with a beautiful and splendid tongue, the greatness of the Torah would not have appeared.

וְהִנֵּה סוֹף דְּבָרָיו, כִּי אֲדַרְבָּה שֶׁהִיָּתָה דוֹקָא בְּיִנְתָּה ה' יִתְבָּרַךְ לְהִיָּתוֹ כֵּן, שֶׁאִם הָיָה בְּעַל לְשׁוֹן יָפָה וּמְהֻדָּר, לֹא הָיָה נִרְאָה גְדֻלַּת הַתּוֹרָה.

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz Parshas Va'eira

For in truth the Torah is sweeter than honey (Psalms 19:11), enlightening the eyes (ibid. 9), and restoring the soul (ibid. 8), and everything was at Sinai; but it would have been possible to say that it appeared sweet to them because of the good taste and sweetness of Moshe's speech.

Therefore it was the opposite, and even so there was for them grace and sweetness.

And behold, in truth, the great ones searched for a path for the service of the Creator, may He be blessed; but in truth Moses was healed at the time of the giving of the Torah, as the statement (Exodus 19:19): "And God answered him with a voice."

But in truth, behold, it is known in the greatness of speech, for this is the whole of man, as is known, that it is the advantage of the speaker over the living creature; also the translation of (Genesis 2:7): "And man became a living soul" is translated as "a speaking spirit," which is the vitality within him, and this is the truth, for speech is the ruler and the commander and the leader of everything.

And the matter of His being within him is the essence of vitality, may His Name be blessed, for speech is without any grasp or image, although it is clothed in letters, but this is for the understanding of the one who understands and the one who hears, for without the garments of letters speech has no change or grasp to understand it.

And forever all the judgments of speech belong to the soul with greater beauty and splendor and speed and clarity that is possible, which the mouth that is in the body cannot speak in thousands upon thousands of years, for "The spirit spoke within him, and His word was upon their tongue" (II Samuel 23:4).

And every person who trains his speech to supervise and to understand that it does not go out from him, but only from Hashem the good, and He is the speaker, behold he creates new heavens and a new earth (Zohar, Introduction 5a), as it was at the beginning of creation, "By the word of Hashem the heavens were made" (Psalms 33:6), and what has changed now.

כי באמת התורה מתוקה מדבש (תהלים יט, יא) מאור עינים (שם, ט) ומשיבת נפש (שם, ח) והכל היה בסיני, אבל היה אפשר לומר שהיה נראה להם, מתוך מחמת טוב טעם ומתיקת דבורו של משה

לכן היה להפך, ואף על פי כן היה להם חן ומתיקות.

והנה באמת הגדולים חפשו דרך לעבודת הבורא יתברך, אבל באמת היה משה נרפא בשעת מתן "תורה כמאמר (שם יט, יט): "והאלקים יענו בקול".

אבל באמת הנה הוא ידוע בגדלת הדבור - כי זה כל האדם, כידוע שהוא מעלת המדבר על החי, גם תרגום של (בראשית ב, ז): "ויהי האדם לנפש חיה" - תרגומו "לרוח ממלא" שהוא החיות שבו, והוא האמת, כי הדבור הוא המושל והמצוה והמנהיג את הכל.

והענין להיות בו הוא עקר החיות יתברך שמו, כי הדבור הוא בלי שום השגה ותמונה, אם אמנם הוא מלבש באותיות, אבל הוא בשביל הבנת המבין והשומע, כי בלתי מלבשי האותיות אין לדבור שום השגה ותפיסה להבינו.

ולעולם כל משפטי הדבור יש לנפש יותר נאה ומהדר ומהירות ובהירות האפשרי, מה שאין הפה שבגוף יוכל לדבר באלפי אלפים שנים, כי "רוח (דבר בו ומלתו על לשונם" (שמואל ב כג, ד

וכל אדם שמרגיל את דבורו להשגיח ולהבין - כי מאתו לא תצא, כי אם מה הטוב והוא המדבר, הרי הוא בורא שמים חדשים וארץ חדשה (זוהר הקדמה ה, א), כאשר היה בתחלת הבריאה "בדבר ה' שמים נעשו" (תהלים לג, ו) ומה נשתנה עכשו

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz Parshas Va'eira

If a person grasps at the time of his speech how every single word that goes out is from the mouth of the Power and is drawn down so much until it is heard from his mouth, therefore with whatever speech he speaks he creates anew, like the act of Rabbi Akiva, that the valley was filled with vegetables and gourds through his learning (Sanhedrin 68a), and so many of the holy ones.

And according to the truth of the greatness of speech, if it is in holiness, so it is, God forbid, the opposite if it is for the opposite, for self-benefit, God forbid, he creates firmaments of falsehood and chaos and gives vitality to the shells and empowers them over himself, for behold he increases their strength because of his self-benefit that he wants to receive from them; it is found that he is beneath them and receives from them, it is found that he empowers them over himself.

Which is not so when he does not speak, but rather his words, may He be blessed, are without any turning toward benefit at all, and on the contrary he is bound through the speech to Him, may He be blessed, the Creator of everything; behold he rules with his speech.

And likewise the Torah, which is the creation of the worlds and their conduct from the beginning of the will until eternity, is the Ten Utterances (Exodus 34:28), and it is fixed in speech, as the statement (Deuteronomy 6:7): "And you shall speak of them," which is the matter of attachment with Him, may He be blessed, complete unity as mentioned, for behold He is the speaker and the one who causes to be heard through this vessel, the man, without any image.

But such speech is stripped of the attributes, which is not so with speech that goes out because of some attribute; it has already been clothed in the attribute, and the attribute has attachment in all physical matters, for behold all the lowly created beings below, all of them, are through attributes.

אם האדם משיג בשעת דבורו, איך שכל דבור ודבור שיצא - מפי הגבורה הוא ומשתלשל כל כך עד שנושמע מפיו, לכן באיזה דבור שהוא מדבר הוא בורא מחדש, כמעשה דרבי עקיבא שנתמלא הבקעה ירקות ודלועין על ידי למודו (סנהדרין סח, א) וכן הרבה מקדושים.

וככל אמתות גדלת הדבור אם הוא בקדושה, כן נהפך הוא חס ושלום אם הוא להפוך להנאת עצמו חס ושלום, בורא רקיעין של שוא ותהו ונותן חיות בקלפות וממשילם על עצמו, שהרי הוא מוסיף כחם מחמת הנאת עצמו שהוא רוצה לקבל מהם, נמצא שהוא תחתם ומקבל מהם, נמצא הוא ממשילם על עצמו.

מה שאין כן כשאינו מדבר, אלא דבריו יתברך בלי שום פניות הנאה כלל, ואדרבה הוא קשור על ידי הדבור בו יתברך הבורא את הכל, הרי הוא מושל בדבורו.

וכן התורה שהיא בריאת העולמות והנהגתם מתחלת הרצון עד עולם, היא עשרת הדברות (שמות לד, כח) ונקבית בדבור כמאמר (דברים ו, ז): "ודברת בם" שהוא ענין ההתקשרות עמו יתברך אחדות גמור כנזכר, שהרי הוא המדבר והמשמיע על ידי כלי זה. האיש בלי שום תמונה.

אבל דבור כזה הוא המפשט מן המדות, מה שאין כן דבור היוצא מחמת איזה מדה, כבר נתלבש במדה ויש למדה התקשרות בכל הדברים הגשמיים, שהרי כל הנבראים השפלים המתתונים כלם על ידי מדות הם.

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz Parshas Va'eira

Also, for every attribute there is a herel, and if so it is impossible for his words, may He be blessed, to be clean and clear, for the herel causes forgetting; and even all the fine words of rebuke and wondrous intellects and voices of voices, after the herel they do not arouse, for the herel is the cause of forgetting the power of the doer and his wonders, after he has already seen or heard or known many times.

Rather, thus, speech is without any garment of attribute at all, except through faith in “the words of the living God” (Eruvin 13b), and this is what is called “commanded and does” (Bava Kamma 38a), which is greater than one who is not commanded and does, for the deed is not because of the speech, but because of the attribute that compels him, whether his love of Him, may He be blessed, or his fear, which is the matter of the fulfillment of the Torah that was with Abraham and Isaac because of their attributes and not because of speech, for the Torah had not yet been given. And Jacob —

And behold, speech that is not because of attributes is a flowing spring, for behold it is bound to the Infinite, blessed is He, and from Him it flows, and all mouths grow weary of speaking His words and do not suffice according to the measure of the outpouring of its flowing; which is not so with speech that is clothed in an attribute, according to the measure of the attribute it acts in the limbs, for behold the attribute is the one that accustoms the limbs to speak according to its language.

And therefore Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, who was stripped of all the attributes in his speech,

— was called “heavy of mouth,” as the statement: “And I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac,” etc.

— who are the attributes, “as El Shaddai,” that there is sufficiency in His Godliness, which is the revelation to each one, but “My Name Hashem I was not known to them,” which is an expression of “and he made Himself known among them” (Judges 8:16) and an expression of attachment.

גם להיות כל מדה יש לה הרצל, ואם כן אי אפשר להיות נקי וברור דבריו יתברך, שהרי ההרצל משפח, ואפילו כל דברי המוסר הדקים ושכלים נפלאים וקולי קולות - אחר ההרצל אינם מעוררים, שההרצל הוא סבת שכחת פה הפועל ונפלאותיו, אחר שפכר ראה או שמע או ידע כמה פעמים.

אלא אם כן הדבור הוא בלי שום מלבוש מדה כלל, כי אם על ידי האמונה ב"דברי אלקים חיים" (עירובין יג, ב), והוא הנקרא "מצוה ועושה" (בבא קמא לח, א), שהוא גדול יותר ממי שאינו מצוה ועושה, שאינו מחמת הדבור הוא המעשה כי אם מחמת המדה המכרחת אותו אם אהבתו יתברך או יראתו, שהוא ענין קיום התורה שהיה לאברהם ויצחק מחמת מדותיהם ולא מחמת הדבור, שלא נתנה - התורה עדין. וינעקב

והנה דבור שאינו מחמת מדות, הוא מענין הנזכר, שהרי הוא קשור באין סוף ברך הוא ומאתו נובע, וכל הפיות נלאים לדבר דבריו ואינו מספיק לפי ערך משפד נביעותו, מה שאין כן דבור שהוא מלבש במדה, לפי ערך המדה הוא הפועל באברים, שהרי המדה הוא המרביל את האברים לדבר כלשוננו.

ולכן משה רבנו עליו השלום שהיה מפשט מכל המדות בדבורו

נקרא "כבד פה", כמאמר: "וארא אל אברהם אל - יצחק" וכו'

שהם המדות, "בא-ל-ש-די" שיש די באלקותו - שהוא ההתגלות לכל אחד, אבל "שמי ה' לא נודעת להם" - שהוא לשון "וידע בהם" (שופטים ח, טז) ולשון התחברות.

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz Parshas Va'eira

For this speech either rules over everything, or, God forbid, empowers over himself if it is not proper; which is not so with speech that is because of attributes, which has connection and closeness to all created beings as well through the attributes.

And this is that in the order of Shemot (Exodus 5:22) Moses complained: "Why have You done evil to this people, why is this that You sent me," for he feared perhaps he had damaged with his speech that is not proper, that the faith did not enter their hearts through his speech, as explained elsewhere (above, Parashat Shemot).

And Hashem, may He be blessed, answered him: "Now you shall see, etc., for with a strong hand he will send them," etc., and with a strong hand, which is the action of speech for everything to be in strength, which is a rod, ruling over everything (Sanhedrin 5a).

And behold, every person who speaks words of Torah in this manner, behold he is like him, and this is: "Your rod and Your staff," which are the sufferings and the Torah, in the manner that he is heavy of mouth as mentioned above.

Or that the speech is "clear lips" (Jeremiah 4:11) and rules or empowers, which are the sufferings of speech; such Torah, "they comfort me," as our Rabbis of blessed memory said (Kiddushin 30b): "I created the evil inclination; I created the Torah as its seasoning."

[NOTE Summary:

Throughout the entire maamar, Menachem Mendel Horodaker builds one continuous argument: true divine speech is not an expression of human temperament, emotional inclination, or personal spiritual coloring, but rather a channel through which the Divine speaks directly into the world. The discussion opens by establishing that greatness in avodat Hashem was long sought by the great ones of earlier generations, yet Moshe Rabbeinu alone attained a state where his speech was entirely divested of middot. This is the deeper meaning of Moshe being described as "heavy of mouth." It does not indicate a flaw, but rather a complete absence of emotional self-expression in speech.

Speech rooted in middot, even elevated middot such as love or awe, remains limited. It becomes clothed in the emotional structure of the speaker and therefore subject to dulling, repetition, and eventual forgetfulness. This is why moral exhortations, even when intellectually refined and emotionally stirring, often lose their power after repeated exposure. They originate in middot, and middot are inherently finite.

שְׁדָבוּר זֶה אוֹ מוֹשֵׁל בְּכָל - אוֹ מְמַשִּׁיל עַל עַצְמוֹ חֵם וְשָׁלוֹם אִם אֵינוֹ פֶּהֲלָן, מֵה שְׁאִין בֶּן דְּבוּר שֶׁהוּא מִחֲמַת מִדּוֹת - שִׁישׁ לוֹ נְשִׁיכוֹת וְהִתְקַרְבוֹת לְכָל הַנִּבְרָאִים גַּם בְּמִדּוֹת.

וְזֶהוּ שֶׁבִּסְדֵּר נְשִׁמוֹת (ה, כב) הָיָה מִלְּשָׁה קוֹבֵל: "לָמָּה הִרְעֵתָה לְעַם הַזֶּה לָמָּה זֶה שְׁלַחְתָּנִי" שֶׁהָיָה מִתְנַרְא אוֹלֵי קִלְקֵל בְּדָבוּרוֹ שְׁאִינוֹ פֶּהֲלָן, שֶׁלֹּא נִכְנָס הָאֱמוּנָה בְּלִבָּם עַל יְדֵי דְּבוּרוֹ, כְּמִבְאָר בְּמָקוֹם אַחֵר (לַעִיל (פֶּרֶשֶׁת שְׁמוֹת),

וְהַשִּׁיב לוֹ ה' יִתְבָּרֵךְ: "עֲתָה תֵּרְאֶה וְכוּ' כִּי בְּיַד חֲזָקָה יִשְׁלַחֲם" וְכוּ' וּבְיַד חֲזָקָה שֶׁהוּא פְּעֻלַּת הַדְּבוּר לְהִיּוֹת הַכָּל בְּחֲזָקָה, שֶׁהוּא שִׁבְט - מוֹשֵׁל בְּכָל (סִנְהֶדְרִין ה, א).

וְהָיָה כָּל אָדָם שֶׁהוּא מְדַבֵּר דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָה עַל דֶּרֶךְ זֶה הָיָה הוּא כְּמוֹהוּ, וְזֶהוּ: "שִׁבְטָךְ וּמִשְׁעֶנְתְּךָ" - שֶׁהֵם הַיְסוּרִים וְהַתּוֹרָה בְּאֶפֶן שֶׁהוּא כְּבֵד כֶּה פֶּה כְּנֹזֵק לַעִיל

אוֹ שֶׁהַדְּבוּר הוּא "צַח שְׁפִים" (יִרְמְיָה ד, יא) וּמוֹשֵׁל אוֹ מְמַשִּׁיל - שֶׁהֵמָּה יְסוּרֵי הַדְּבוּר, תּוֹרָה כְּזֶה "הֵמָּה יִנְחֲמוּנִי", כְּאֶמְרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ ז"ל (קִידוּשִׁין ל, ב): "פְּרָאֲתִי יֵצֵר הָרַע פְּרָאֲתִי לוֹ תִּבְלִין הַתּוֹרָה

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'Eretz

Parshas Va'eira

In contrast, speech that flows from faith alone, unmediated by personal inclination, is described as a living spring. Such speech is bound directly to the Infinite, blessed is He, and therefore never exhausts itself. This is the meaning of Torah as the Ten Utterances and of the command “and you shall speak of them.” Torah speech is not self-generated; it is Divine speech passing through a human vessel without image or form.

Moshe Rabbeinu feared that perhaps his speech had failed to penetrate the hearts of Israel, as reflected in his cry, “Why have You done evil to this people.” The Divine response, “Now you shall see,” clarified that redemption would come through the force of Divine speech itself, described as a strong hand and a ruling staff. Speech of this kind does not merely influence reality; it governs it.

The maamar concludes by returning to the verse “Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.” Both suffering and Torah function as instruments of Divine speech. When Torah is spoken in this mode, stripped of self, it becomes the ultimate source of consolation and rectification, overpowering the evil inclination not by persuasion but by Divine authority itself.

Practical Takeaway:

The central avodah emerging from this maamar is to refine one's speech so that it is less an expression of personal emotional drive and more an act of faithful transmission. When speaking words of Torah, prayer, or guidance, the goal is not eloquence, inspiration, or emotional impact, but transparency. Speech should become a vessel rather than a performance. Even when passion is present, it must not be the source of the words. This demands humility, restraint, and a constant awareness that true spiritual effectiveness comes not from how much one feels, but from how fully one allows the Divine word to pass through without distortion.

Chassidic Story:

Among the early Chassidim, there is a well-known account recorded in later Chassidic memoir literature about a simple disciple who once complained to his teacher that his words of Torah never seemed to move people, while others with far less learning stirred entire communities. The teacher listened quietly and then asked the disciple to recite a passage of Torah aloud. After hearing him, the teacher said, “Your words are full, but they are full of you.”

Years later, after enduring personal hardship and years of quiet avodah without recognition, the same disciple was again asked to speak. This time, his words were simple, unadorned, almost flat. Yet those who heard him later testified that the words remained with them for years, shaping decisions and strengthening faith long after the moment had passed. When asked what had changed, the disciple answered only, “I stopped trying to say something, and allowed something to be said.” This story reflects the core teaching of the maamar: speech that emerges from self may inspire briefly, but speech that emerges from ביטול endures, rules, and comforts.

END NOTE]