

מְדַבֵּרַת עַל לֶבָהּ. אָמַר רַב הַמְנוּנָא: כַּמָּה הִלְכְתָא גְבוּרָתָא [הִלְכוֹת חֲשׁוּבוֹת] אֵיבָא לְמִשְׁמַע [יֵשׁ לְלִמְדָּא] מִהֵנִי קִרְאִי [מִפְסוּקִים אֵלּוּ] דְּחִנָּה: "וְחִנָּה הִיא מְדַבֵּרַת עַל לֶבָהּ", מִכָּאן לְמִתְפַּלֵּל צָרִיךְ שִׁכּוֹן לְבֹו. "רַק שְׁפָתֶיהָ נִעוֹת" מִכָּאן לְמִתְפַּלֵּל שְׂיַחְתָּךְ בְּשִׁפְתָיו [שְׂיִכְשָׁא בְּפִיו]. "וְקוֹלָהּ לֹא יִשְׁמַע", מִכָּאן, שְׁאִסוּר לְהִגְבִּיחַ קוֹלוֹ בְּתַפְלָתוֹ. "וְיִחְשְׁבָהּ עָלֶי לְשִׁכְרָה" מִכָּאן, שְׁשִׁכּוֹר אִסוּר לְהִתְפַּלֵּל.
[בְּרֻכּוֹת ל"א, א']

2 Hannah is the prototype of prayer, for the essence of prayer is to stand before God, before the *Shechinah*, devoid of all pretense and the accoutrements of power, in lonely communion with God. The silent prayer of Hannah reflects intimacy. There are certain subjects which we are willing to discuss with colleagues and friends. More sensitive and intimate matters are reserved only for a spouse, in the privacy of one's home. But the ultimate in intimate communication is prayer; it is that dimension of communication that is exemplified by the silence of Hannah's prayer. The attribute of intimacy and the humble knowledge that we are totally dependent on God is most profound in women, as expressed in the verse, כָּל כְּבוֹדָהּ בֵּית מֶלֶךְ בְּיָמָהּ — *The entire honor of the princess rests within (Psalms 45:14)*. Men often find intimate conversation difficult, and in some cases demeaning, because it threatens to strip a man of his veneer of strength. It is, therefore, a woman who was chosen by Providence to be the prototype of the silent *Shmoneh Esrei* (R' Menachem Genack).

Rosh Hashanah
machzor

Rav Solo veitchi

3 This is the secret source of *teshuvah*, repentance. An individual Jew cannot sever himself completely from the Holy One. The community of Israel cannot travel on a straight path away from God. It is always on the path to return and repentance—of going away from God and coming back to Him. "In your distress when all these things are come upon you . . . you will return to the Lord your God." The circle may be very large, it may have an immense radius, but those who follow its path always move in a circular direction. The community of Israel simply cannot escape from this circular route. God who is there after man sins bars them from doing so.

Man may wander about in circles and become entangled in all sorts of vain causes and pursue empty ideas. He may believe that he has found the true goal in his life's fight for socialism, for "civil rights," for communism, or any of the other "isms." He makes a circuit of Beth-el, Gilgal and Mizpah, he searches for gods, overturns worlds, and it may appear to him that he can see ahead and is heralding a new and better future—but always and ever "his return is to Ramah, for there is his home." God who is there after man sins gives him no peace. Soon his world will be overturned upon him, he will be banished from Beth-el, from Gilgal and Mizpah, and people will cry out after him: Dirty Jew! Traitor! Exploiter! Cosmopolitan! Then, willingly or not, he will return to Ramah, to his

home, where his mother Hannah welcomed him with her longing and supplication, where he lay in his cradle and absorbed the affectionate dulcet melodies sung to him by his mother.

"And his return was to Ramah"—traveling a circuit, he had to find his way back to his starting point; coming from afar, he made his way back home.

On Repentance
P. Nachas H. Peli
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