GOD, PLEASE OPEN MY LIPS
CAN WE TALK?
Can We Talk?

When communication breaks down

You walk into a restaurant and see a couple seated near you. You notice that they are not talking to each other, she is staring into space as he feverishly sends out one more e-mail on his smartphone. How sad.

Jane is in a job interview, it has gone really well and the company seems really excited about her, why is Jane having palpitations about asking how much she is going to be paid?

Your roommate doesn’t put stuff away! You find yourself always putting the dishes away and even cleaning up after her. Say something? Oh no- that would be so awkward!

You know what they are going to say- what’s the point of mentioning it?

He doesn’t want to hear my apology! I was terrible. Anyway, I don’t know where to start.

What are the things we don’t talk about? Why don’t we talk about them? Why do we avoid conversations?

Sometimes starting the conversation is the hardest thing. Finding the right words is daunting and scary, the beginning of tough conversations sets the tone, affects the whole outcome and could potentially damage any success if not handled right!

- Have you ever struggled to start a conversation?
- How did you overcome it?
- What do you think the reasons for avoiding conversation might be?
ORIGIN OF THIS PRAYER

In Shmuel 2 Chapter 11, we find a story about King David. He marries a woman who he should not have; God is furious and sends the Prophet Noson to rebuke King David. After explaining to David his mistake through a vivid parable, David immediately owns up to his sin and seeks out God to repent. His heartbroken record of this even can be found in Psalm 51.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psalms 51</th>
<th>עלות נא</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. For the conductor, a song by David</td>
<td>(א) לָמְנַצֵּחַ מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When Noson the prophet came to him when he (sinned) with Batsheva.</td>
<td>(ב) בְּבֹא נֹעָן הַנֹּהֶבְאָא לְכָהְשָׁר אֲלֻבַּתֵּבָא</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Show me favor God, according to our kindness according to your vast compassion erase my transgression.</td>
<td>(ג) שְׂנֵּנִי אֱלֹהִים כְּחַסְדֶּךָ כְּרֹב רַחֲמֶיךָ מְחֵּּה פְשָׁע יַשׁ</td>
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<tr>
<td>17) God, open my lips, so that my mouth can tell your praise.</td>
<td>(ז) שְׂפָתִי שְׁפִּיתִי יָהֵה יִזְדְּוֵה תְּהִלְתֶּךָ</td>
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### Rashi’s Commentary

God, open my lips- forgive me and give me an opening to tell your praise.

### Alshich Commentary

Open my lips- that You should teach me and help me to pray. And secondly, that you should not ask or request anything of me until you open your mouth in praise.

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- **WHAT IS KING DAVID ASKING GOD FOR IN THIS PRAYER?**
- **WHAT DOES HE MEAN WHEN HE SAYS AN “OPENING”**
- **WHAT DOES THE ALSHICH SUGGEST ABOUT THE WAY WE SHOULD PRAY?**
- **WHAT SHOULD WE START WITH?**
USE YOUR WORDS

**Hoshea Chapter 14**

Take your words with you and return to God, say to Him "May You forgive all iniquity and accept our good intentions and let our lips substitute for sacrifices.

**Radak’s Commentary**

Take your words with you, I (God) am not asking for your repentance with silver and gold nor sacrifices – only good words that admits your sins and return to God with all your heart, not only with your lips.

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**Mishlei Chapter 27**

21) A refining pot is for silver and a crucible for gold, and each man according to his praises.

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**WHY DO YOU THINK IT IS SO IMPORTANT TO TALK TO GOD RATHER THAN ANY OTHER METHOD OF SHOWING YOU ARE SORRY?**

**SAVING PRAISE**

**WHAT IS YOUR INITIAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE PHRASE- EACH MAN ACCORDING TO HIS PRAISES?**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rabbeinu Yona- Shaarei Teshuva</th>
<th>ספר תשעים ומשה לרבינו יונה שערי תשובה</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The greatness of a person can be measured by what he praises. If he praised good deeds and wise people and righteous people you can know that he is a good person and is rooted in righteousness. | ירוש: מעלות האדם לפי מה שית附, אם הואمشב המשך טובים והחכמים והצדיקים ודע יבודי נמצאת בו.

**HOW DOES RABBEINU YONA CHANGE THE PERSPECTIVE OF “EACH MAN ACCORDING TO HIS PRAISES”?**

**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

- Sometimes we feel unable to start a conversation. The lines of communication seem closed, we feel unprepared or embarrassed or inadequate. King David knew this feeling and composed this line to open up communication.

- The use of words and prayer to communicate with God and come back to Him is the most valuable means of creating and maintaining our relationship.

- We say God’s praises not to because He needs praise but rather to emphasize what we hold to be important and true.