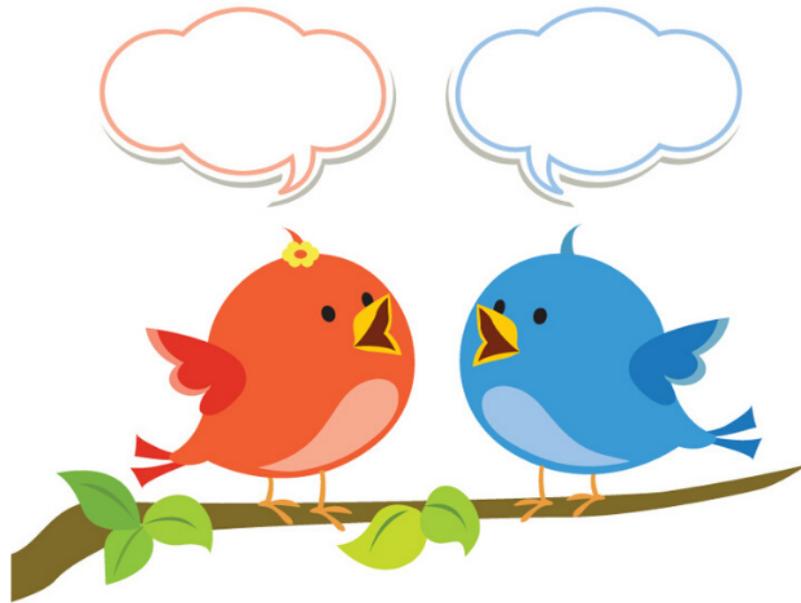


Parshat Bereshit: How To Get Hashem's Lovingkindness and Mercy

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In Parshat Bereishit we learn that Adam, the first human, had special qualities that set him apart from the other creatures. One of these qualities was the ability to choose the exact Hebrew name for each animal, a name that expressed that animal's innermost nature and purpose, its essence. Hebrew is Lashon Kodesh, the holy tongue. Inherent in its holiness is the fact that each name, whether for a person or other creature (or even inanimate object), is an expression of that creature's nature, purpose and essence.

Adam also chose the name for his helper, his wife, Chava (Eve.) Rashi tells us that the name Chava is a play on the word Chaya, which means life or alive. Rebbe Nachman tells us that Chava is an acronym for the phrase in Psalms, 103: 4, "hamaht'reichi chesed v'rachamim," "who encircles (crowns) you with loving-kindness and mercy."

The Rebbe also tells us that Adam represents a person's voice and Chava represents speech, which is how a voice expresses and articulates. As Chava is Adam's helper, speech is a person's helper, helping a person connect to Hashem. Words of Torah, kindness and prayer all strengthen that connection. We're taught that women are given nine parts of speech (although men do their fair share of talking, too!) Women are vital to the holy purpose speech has in this world.

How does this come together? Rebbe Nachman tells us that a person who reaches the level of holy and pure speech, a person who attains the level where their speech is always good and kosher, will be the recipient of Hashem's chesed and rachamim. When we use our speech to speak words of Torah, to speak to Hashem in prayer, to uplift other people, in return we are blessed with Hashem's loving-kindness and mercy.

May you be blessed with a day of loving-kindness and mercy.