



שמע ישראל

SHEMA YISRAEL

Hearing the
Voice of God

Hearing
From
Hashem (God)

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For
Village of Hope & Justice Ministry

- CHAPTER 5 -
The Ways Hashem
(God) Speaks

Hashem (God) can speak to us in so many ways. As I discussed in the previous chapter, the Lord will primarily speak to us through His Word. That's why it's so vital to read, study and learn what the Bible has to say, to fill our minds with Hashem (God)'s thoughts.

He can also speak to us through nature, our natural gifts and abilities, through peace, and even through other people. He can speak through more "supernatural" ways like through dreams and visions. Or He can speak to us through seemingly "ordinary" ways like through our conscience or wisdom and common sense.

One of the most common ways the Lord speaks is through a *still, small voice*, through a simple "knowing" deep within our hearts. In this chapter and the next, I will explore most of these ways and try to give some practical examples.

I think one of the main things to keep in mind is that *Hashem (God)* desires to speak to us. It's not all about focusing on the *method* He chooses to use, but it's about learning to hear His voice so we can receive the message He wants to share with us.

OUR NATURAL GIFTS AND ABILITIES

I think sometimes we can complicate hearing from Hashem (God). Yes, it's extremely important to seek the Lord about our calling and what He wants us to do with our lives. However, we shouldn't ignore the natural gifts and abilities He has placed inside each one of us.

It's normal for us to wonder, *What am I going to do with my life? What is my purpose? What does Hashem (God) want me to do?* Many times the Lord answers these questions and leads us to our purpose through our natural talents and skills.

If you're not sure about your purpose, I think this is some good advice: Begin by doing what you are *good* at doing. I remember counseling a young woman years ago who had just graduated from high school. She was praying and seeking Hashem (God) about His direction for her life but just didn't know what to do. I finally asked her, "What do you *like* to do?" She immediately shared with me how passionate she was about helping and caring for people when they're sick. She really wanted to become a nurse. Hashem (God) used that conversation to open her eyes to what He was calling her to do. To this day, she is a terrific doctor, we can't imagine her doing anything else!

Likewise, it's so important to not spend your life trying to do what you are *not* gifted to do. Years ago, when I was still trying to figure out who I was, I ended up trying to be like everyone else. The problem was, *I wasn't given their God-given gifts and abilities to do what they were doing.*

For instance, one of my neighbors was a terrific gardener who canned her own tomatoes and fruits. So I decided that I would do the same thing. I'm sure you can imagine how it turned out. All of my tomatoes and fruits died! You see, when we work at things that we're not gifted to do, we not only make ourselves miserable, but we also make those around us miserable.

However, when we do what we're good at doing, we enjoy it... *and there's a grace and a passion to do it well.* Don't be afraid to step out. If you're not sure what direction to take, begin with what you're good at doing. Then, allow Hashem (God) to either confirm this direction or *re-direct* you a different way.

WISDOM AND COMMON SENSE

Wisdom is a gift from the Lord that helps us discern truth and the right thing to do in a situation. The Bible tells us that Hashem (God) *wants* to give us His wisdom, all we have to do is ask! Look with me at James 1:5 (TLV). It says:

If any of you is deficient in wisdom, let him ask of the giving Hashem (God) [Who gives] to everyone liberally and ungrudgingly, without reproaching or fault-finding, and it will be given him.

When we are faced with a difficult situation or have a hard decision to make, it's so comforting to know we don't have to figure it out on our own.

We can go to God and ask for His wisdom and direction, and He will help us know what to do. Having Hashem (God)'s wisdom is different than simply being smart or intelligent.

You can be extremely intelligent and *still* not operate in wisdom. Wisdom is closely related to common sense. Common sense implies using good judgment, it's knowing what to do with the wisdom Hashem (God) gives us.

Some people think being "spiritual" means doing away with common sense...that being led by Hashem (God) somehow exempts us from using practical, everyday good judgment. But it's just the opposite.

For example, if Harel and I are getting ready to purchase something, it's normal for us to pray and ask Hashem (God) about it.

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If we don't feel like Hashem (God) is necessarily speaking anything specific to our hearts, then we use conventional wisdom and common sense to help us make the decision.

We ask ourselves questions like, "Can we afford it? Will we be happy with this purchase later on down the road?" I've found that many times we really don't need a specific word from Hashem (God) because wisdom is already shouting the truth!

We have many decisions to make as we go about our daily lives, and the Lord isn't going to directly speak to us about every single one of them. He won't dictate every decision we make, but He *will* give us His wisdom to make good choices.

I've kind of come up with my own personal definition for wisdom. I often say wisdom is choosing to do today what you will be satisfied with *tomorrow*.

I encourage you to pray and ask for Hashem (God)'s wisdom often. Ask Him to show you the right thing to do. And when making decisions, also get in the habit of asking *yourself*, "What is the wise thing to do?"

HASHEM (GOD) SPEAKS THROUGH OTHER PEOPLE

As I've discussed, it's certainly not wrong for us to go to other people for counsel people who may be wiser or more experienced. The Bible even tells us there is safety in having many counselors (see Proverbs 11:14). The problem is when we seek other people's advice instead of Hashem (God)'s or place too much emphasis on what others say.

There's a balance. The Lord desires for us to seek Him first and look to Him for answers, knowing He may use other people to help confirm what He is speaking to us. Let me give you an example...

Years ago, I had a wonderful assistant who served me well and was also extremely involved with some of our many outreaches. Over the course of a few weeks, I continued to sense the Holy Spirit prompting me to let her know that it would be okay if she desired to move on and work somewhere else.

It's not that I was *hoping* she would do this, but I knew the Lord wanted me to share this with her. When I let her know what was on my heart, she was absolutely amazed. She replied, "I am so glad you have told me this!" It turned out she had been seeking the Lord about her future and believed He was encouraging her to step out and make a change.

Hashem (God) used what I said to *confirm* what He had been speaking to her. The bottom line is that we should seek Hashem (God) and trust Him to speak to us in His way and His time. The truth is, He can use *anyone* or *anything* to speak to us and give us direction. I encourage you to stop and read Numbers 22:20-28. In this passage, the Lord literally uses a *donkey* to give someone a message from Him!

Hashem (God) controls how and when He speaks to us, and it doesn't always come from the method or person we prefer. There have been many times when I've sought Hashem (God) about an issue and He will speak to my husband Harel with the answer. For me, this is humbling. I've thought, Hashem (God), *why can't you just tell me?*

We can't put Hashem (God) in a box, expecting Him to Do things our way. If we are serious about hearing from the Lord, we have to remain humble and remember that He can speak to us in any way and through *anyone* He chooses.