







שיטת הרמב"ם בענין פסוקי דזמרא

מראי מקומות - משנה תורה הלכות תפילה ז:יב, ספר מעשה רב אות כ"ו, טור או"ח סימן קי"ג, ברכות לג:, "ההוא דנחית...הוא לו", מורה נבוכים א:נ"ט על הנ"ל, ריטב"א ברכות שם ד"ה אמשול

Q1: The Rambam holds that the only type of praise that could be recited in Pasukei D'Zimrah is the praises of Hashem that are found in Sefer Tehillim. Although Ashkenazis do not pasken like this practically, it is still a fascinating opinion. Why would this be true?

Q2: Regarding the paragraph of ('תהילים פרק ל'), which most Ashkenazi Jews have the tradition to say before Baruch She'amar, the Gra thought that it should not be said at all. Why would that be? Even if we could figure out why he thought that, why would it be so bad to just say an extra paragraph of מהילים?

Answer: The Gemara in Brachos 33b comments on how there was someone who would not stop saying the praises of Hashem. He was identifying the different words that would personify Hashem. However, someone came over and told him that he was saying too many and had to stop!! The most classical understanding of this is that he had to stop because who are we, flesh and blood, to know how to praise Hashem? Hashem is beyond our comprehension and we are just flippantly using words, man's creation to describe Him? We must be silent to acknowledge who we are and what our limits are!!

However, there is a question that arises from this גמרא. If it is not appropriate for us to praise Hashem, so then how could we do it at all?! The Gemarah there answers that too. The only time that we could do it is if the people before us had praised Hashem that way as well. That is why. We could rely on them. The עור who he thinks says that this says that this someone is davening but even during times of private supplications as well! The Rav said that this could be the idea behind the first few verses in which we say every day.

תהלים פרק קמה פסוק א - ד

(א) תִּהַלֶּה לְדָוִד אֲרוֹמִמְךּ אֱלוֹהַי הַמֶּלֶךְ וַאֲבָרֵכָה שִׁמְךְ לְעוֹלֶם וָעֱד:

(ב) בְּכַל־יוֹם אֲבַרֵכֶךְ וַאֲהַלְלָה שְׁמִךְ לְעוֹלַם וַעֵד:

(ג) גָדוֹל יְקֹוָק וּמְהֻלָּל מְאד וְלִגְדֻלָּתוֹ אֵין חֵקֶר:

(ד) דור לְדוֹר יְשַׁבַּח מַעֲשֶׂיךּ וּגְבוּרֹתֶיךְ יַגְידוּ:

He explains that we begin the פרק with the first two verses – where we say that we are going to exalt and bless Hashem's name forever. This is coming from a place of immense love that we cannot even begin to help ourselves and we just have to praise Hashem. However, then we realize that we cannot. We take a step back and realize that Hashem is so great and praiseworthy. How could we even begin to think we are שיי ך could then we do it as well!!

The רמבם says in the מורה הנבוכים that this is also the verse: לך דומיה תהלה - he says, "לך השבח - he says, הוא השבח". (See there where he explains the more philosophical underpinnings of this idea, but it is the same idea.)

The אמרא סח this גמרא חוש quotes the רמבם and explains that this is also the continuation of the גמרא and the parable that the גמרא brings. The גמרא speaks about a king who has all of this gold and instead his subjects praises him about his silver. It is something that is not relevant to be praised in the face of gold!! The same is true for us.

So therefore, the question becomes – how could someone (like ברכות לב says on ברכות לב) say that we are allowed to say שבחים? After all, there are many שבחים there?

So the ריטב"א suggests one answer. He says there is a difference between labelling Hashem and giving שבח to Hashema bout the things that Hashem does in this world. Therefore, that is completely okay and that is what we say in פטוקי דזמרא.

However, the Rav Suggested another answer. He said that the only שבחות that we could say are only the ones that were said by our sages before us. That is why we only say תהילים according to the רמבם! Because those we know were said before us as a praise to Hashem!!

Additionally, the Rav explains that the only way we could say פסוקי דזמרא is with some sort of הקדמה of some sort of paragragh that makes it מותר to us and frames for us that really we cannot praise Hashem. The Rav explains that this is why we have the paragragh of ברוך שאמר because it is the words that teach us how above praise Hashem really is. Once we have this, then we could go and praise Hashem but only with the praises of our anscestors and were sanctioned.

Based on this, the Rav explained that this is why the גר"א says there could not be any ברוך before ברוך, because there is not yet the ברבה that frames all the praise for us, and therefore it is not yet permissible.

Message: Sometimes, when we are silent, it is because we realize how humble and small we are. That is a feeling that we try to feel a little bit during our תפילות in order to realize who we are standing in front of and the power of what we are about to do. This could be why in some ways we remain silent in פסוקי according to the opinions above – to show ourselves that we are so undeserving to stand in front of and the power of what we are so undeserving to stand in front of So, to a certain extent, we go in front of Him as we make our way to שמונה עשרה with our tail between our legs.