

פ

Pei

“Speaking Consciousness”

Invocation Verse:

פּוֹתִיחַ אֶת יָדְךָ וּמְשַׁבֵּיעַ לְכֹל חַי רָצוֹן
Poteiakh et yadekha umaspiah l'khol khai ratzon
You open Your Hand and satisfy the desires of all life!
(Psalm 145:16)

Meaning and Mystical Associations:

Pei means “mouth” and relates to the power of speech. In the *Sefer Yetzirah*, *pei* is one of the seven “double letters,” and represents the quality of peace, the astrological planet of Mercury, the left ear in the human body, and Thursday in time.

Text

הִלֵּל אוֹמֵר, אֵל תִּפְרָשׁ מִן הַצְּבוּר, וְאֵל תֵּאֱמִין בְּעֶצְמְךָ עַד יוֹם מוֹתְךָ, וְאֵל תִּדְוֶן אֶת חֲבֵרְךָ עַד שְׁתִּגִּיעַ לְמִקְוָמוֹ,
וְאֵל תֵּאמַר דְּבַר שְׂאֵי אֶפְשֶׁר לְשִׁמְעַ, שְׂסוּפוּ לְהִשְׁמַע. וְאֵל תֵּאמַר לְכַשְׁאֲפֹנָה אֲשַׁנָּה, שְׂמָא לֹא תִפְנֶה

Hillel says: Do not separate yourself from the community. Do not believe in yourself until the day of your death. Do not judge your fellow until you reach his place. Do not say something that cannot be heard, for in the end it will be heard. Do not say, “When I will be available I will study [Torah],” lest you never become available.

רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן אוֹמֵר, הִנְי זֶהִיר בְּקִרְיַאת שְׁמַע וּבִתְפִלָּה. וּכְשֵׁאֲתָה מִתְפַּלֵּל, אֵל תַּעַשׂ תְּפִלָּתְךָ קֹבַע, אֲלֵא
רְחִמִים וְתַחֲנוּנִים לְפָנֵי הַמָּקוֹם בְּרוּךְ הוּא, שְׂנֶאֱמַר (יואל ב) כִּי חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם הוּא אֲרָךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב חֶסֶד
וְנִחָם עַל הָרָעָה. וְאֵל תְּהִי רָשָׁע בְּפָנֵי עֶצְמְךָ

Rabbi Shimon says: Be careful in the reciting of Shema (and praying). When you pray, do not make your prayer fixed, rather prayers for mercy and supplication before the Place, It is blessed, as it says (Joel 2, 13), “For He is gracious and merciful, long-suffering and full of kindness, and repents of the evil.” And do not be wicked in your own estimation (lit. “facing yourself.”)

-Pirkei Avot 2:5, 18

Kabbalah Commentary (Based on The Aleph Beit by Rabbi Yitzhak Ginsburgh)

Tet has to do with seeing the good in things and doing good externally, while *ayin* has to do with the goodness of seeing itself. *Pei* has to do with articulating the unity between these two levels of subject and object, and through conscious speech, being a vehicle for raising consciousness.

An example in our practice is the chanting of the *Sh'ma*. The *ayin* of *Sh'ma* and the *dalet* of *ekhad* are written larger on a Torah scroll than the other letters, forming the word *ed* – “witness.” In becoming witness to the Divine Unity, which can be understood as a unity

between the goodness inherent in things and the goodness of the consciousness that perceives this goodness, we verbalize our witnessing, thus articulating and externalizing our perception and helping to create the world in a way that reveals this unity.

Practice

***Pei* Meditation and Chant**

Bring to mind the power of your own speech to either feed unconsciousness or create more consciousness. Affirm this inwardly as a responsibility, that you are called upon to be a spiritual teacher in situation where your speech will exert an influence. Bring to mind that this is a way of doing your part in gratitude for existence, because there is a constant flow of blessing that allows you to be.

Then, anchor this awareness with the chant:

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Daily Practice

1. Practice the *Peh* meditation and chant the Invocation Verse.
2. Open meditation with the Ten *Sefirot* and *Sh'ma*, adding the *peh* (see the practice sheet).
3. Spend some time in silent meditation. 20 minutes is wonderful, 2 minutes is infinitely better than nothing!