



Why is the language of the Torah called לשון הקודש, holy?

The Ramban explains that the language of the Torah is called לשון הקודש because divrei Torah, prophesy, and words of kedusha were said in this language. This is the language that Hashem uses to talk to prophets and people, such as when He gave the Ten Commandments. This is the language that contains names of Hashem, such as ל ק ים and אלקים ... (Ramban, Shemos 30:13)

Tangentially, the Sefer Moshav Zekanim (Breishis 3:4) from Tosafos explains that ויהי כל הארץ שפה אחת, the whole earth was of one language (Breishis 11:1)—that everyone spoke Lashon Hakodesh (see Rashi s.v. שפה אחת), even animals and birds. This is what is meant by ויאמר הנחש, the snake said (Breishis 3:4), that the snake spoke Lashon Hakodesh (see Midrash Pesikta Rabbasi, Breishis 3:1). Only after the sin of the Dor Haflaga, when language spread into 70 languages, did the animals and birds speak and communicate in their own specific language.

In explaining the advantages of davening in Lashon Hakodesh, the Biur Halacha (101 s.v. יכול) writes that when the nusach of davening, there were 120 זקנים and many prophets. They counted and weighed each Bracha with its words and combination of its letters with many high and lofty secrets. When we say the words, even if we don't know how to have kavana, it is still a proper tefila. This is because the words themselves activate kedusha in the upper spheres, in contrast to words

davened in another language. (Additionally, in the brachos we recite, the combination of letters and their order are arranged exactly and specifically in a unique way to bring out the energy of that bracha. For example, in Shemoneh Esrei in ברכך עלינו — the bracha for פרנסה — the combination of the letters brings out the energy for פרנסה.)

We know that Lashon Hakodesh created the world, and as the Midrash says that Hashem looked into the Torah and created the world (Breishis Rabba 1:1). Consequently, Lashon Hakodesh is unlike other languages in that the word tells us about the object. For this reason דבר means both a word and an object. We have many examples of this:

(1) A hand, which contains 14 joints, is called יד. Is it any coincidence that the gematria of יד is 14? Furthermore,  $1+4 = 5$ , referring to the five fingers. Additionally, the letter ה (ה) has a gematria of 5) is comprised of a ו and ד, as the ו is the bottom left part of the ה while the ד is the remainder of the ה. This spells the word יד, as there are five fingers on the hand.

(2) The word שן, tooth, is related to שנוי, change, since food goes through a process of change while it is in one's mouth—the food enters the mouth whole and is then ground up by the teeth. שן also means to repeat since the teeth repeat the grinding process until the food is thoroughly ground. The word שן also means sharp, as in שינוא, since a tooth is sharp enabling it to grind up the food.

(3) We know that a firstborn son gets a double inheritance. Thus, each letter that comprises the word בכר is double

the numerical value of the letter preceding it. That is, ב, 2, in gematria, is double 10, א, 1. Finally, ק, 200, is two times 100, ר, 200.

In light of this we can explain why לשון הקודש is called a שפה ברורה, clear language (Tzefanya 3:9, Ibn Ezra). Indeed, בשפה ברורה has the same numerical value as לשון הקודש (Siddur Yaavetz, Yotzer Ohr). This is what is meant by דברים אחדים, unified words (Breishis 11:1), because the word is the thing itself.

Taking this a step further, each letter in לשון הקודש has its own meaning (Examples: בית is ב, house when spelled out. ג, spelled out is גומל, to give. This is in contrast to the letters of other languages.). This contributes to the meaning of other letters that join with it in forming a word. For example, פדר means to separate." This is a combination of the meaning of the letters that compose that word. This is similar to what scientists do when they break up a chemical compound into its component parts, and then call it by the combined name of those components. To illustrate: Table salt was discovered to be composed of sodium and chloride, and was therefore named sodium chloride (NaCl).

When Adam saw the different animals and birds, he was able to tell which letters brought these beings to life. This is how he was able to give them names. For instance, when he saw an ox, he realized that it comprised the letters ש, ו, and therefore gave it that name. וכל אשר יקרא לו, whatever man called each living creature, that remained its name (Breishis 2:19).

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