

In this week's פרשה, right before קריעת ים סוף, commands בני ישראל to turn back, so that פרעה would think they were wandering aimlessly. The פסוק says (14:2): דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיָשׁוּבוּ. As we know, there are four different methods of explaining a דבר תורה, דבר פשט, דרש, רמז and סוד. פשט is the פשוט פשט, and רמז is a hint.

The Apter Rav, Avraham Yehoshua Heshel זצ"ל, also known as the בעל אוהב ישראל, uses this פסוק as a רמז to a beautiful מידה that a person to adopt throughout life: וְיָשׁוּבוּ וְיִתְּנוּ לִפְנֵי פִי הַחֵירוֹת. פִּי means "mouth," and חֵירוֹת can be understood as "freedom" or "letting loose." The Apter Rav explains that before allowing one's mouth the freedom to speak freely, a person should first וְיָשׁוּבוּ - pause and think carefully. Reflect on what you are about to say, weigh your words, and only then speak thoughtfully. This corresponds to the פסוק in משלי (21:23): שֹׁמֵר פִּי וּלְשׁוֹנוֹ - one who guards his mouth and tongue; שֹׁמֵר מִצָּרוֹת נַפְשׁוֹ - protects himself from trouble.

I thought that was brilliant. Good Shabbos!

