

O, God! What Can I Say?

A certain prayer leader went to lead the Tefillah/Prayer in the presence of Rabbi Hanina. He said: O God/ha'el,

the great/ha'gadol ,

the mighty/ha'gibor ,

and the awesome/v-ha'nora,

and the majestic/v'ha'adir, and the powerful/v'ha'izuz, and the terrifying/v'ha'yir'ui, the strong/he'hazak, and the fearless/v'he'amitz, and the dependable/ha'vadai, and the honorable/ha'nech'bahd....

Rabbi Hanina waited until he had finished. And when the leader had finished Rabbi Hanina said to him: Have you now concluded all the praise of your Master? Why should we say all of this? Even the three names that we do say, had not Moses, our Master, mentioned them in the Torah and had not the members of the Great Gathering come and set them into the Prayer/Tefillah, we would not have even been able to say this much! And you say all of these and go on!? It is as if an earthly king had a million gold denarii and someone praised him for having silver. Would it not be an insult to him?

(Babylonian Talmud, Berachot 33b)

הָהוּא דְנַחִית קַמִּיהּ דְרַבִּי חֲנִינָא, אָמַר : הָאֵל

הַגָּדוֹל

הַגִּבּוֹר

וְהַנּוֹרָא

וְהָאֲדִיר וְהָעִזּוּז וְהִירָאוּי הַחֲזֵק וְהָאֲמִיץ וְהַנּוֹדָאֵי וְהַנְּכַבֵּד . הַמְתִּין לוֹ

עַד דְּסַיִים . כִּי סַיִים אָמַר לֵיהּ : סַיִימְתִּינְהוּ לְכוּלְהוּ שְׁבַחֵי דְמַרְדָּךְ !

לָמָּה לִּי כּוּלֵי הָאֵי ? אֲנִן הֵנִי תַלְתָּ דְאֲמַרִּינְהוּ מִשָּׁה רַבִּינוּ בְּאוֹרֵייתָא,

וְאֵתוּ אֲנָשֵׁי כְּנֶסֶת הַגְּדוּלָּה וְתַקְנִינְהוּ בְּתַפְיִלָּה לָא הֲוִינָן יְכוּלִין

לְמִימַר לְהוּ, וְאֵת אֲמַרְתָּ כּוּלֵי הָאֵי וְאִזְלַת ! מְשָׁל לְמַלְךְ בְּשַׁר וְדָם

שְׁהִיוּ לוֹ אֶלְפִים דִּינָרֵי זָהָב וְהִיוּ מְקַלְסִין אוֹתוֹ בְּשַׁל כֶּסֶף, וְהֵלֵא

גְּנָאֵי הוּא לוֹ !