

Great, Mighty, and Awesome, I Said.

גְּדוֹל גְּבוּר וְנוֹרָא, אֶמְרָתִי. וְשׁוֹב אֶמְרָתִי גְּדוֹל גְּבוּר וְנוֹרָא.
לְמָה שִׁקְרָה בְּעֶבֶר כּוֹנֵנִי. גַּם לְמָה שִׁטְרָם אֶרֶע.
וְאֲבוֹתַי שְׁחִיִּים וּמֵתִים, וְיִלְדֵי שְׁנוּלְדוֹ וְעוֹד לֹא
כָּל אֶחָד מֵהֶם, בְּקוֹלֵי הַמְדַבֵּר נָתַן אֶת קוֹלוֹ.
לֹא יָדַעְתִּי אִם הַדְּבָרִים שֶׁבִּפִּי
קִבְּלָנָה הֵם, אוֹ שֶׁאֵילָה, בְּקֶשֶׁה וּתְחִינָה
אִם שִׁיר שֶׁל הַלֵּל וְתוֹדָה בּוֹקֵעַ מִמְּנִי, אוֹ נְהִי שֶׁל קִינָה
לֹא יָדַעְתִּי, אִם אוֹתָהּ נוֹצְתִּיּוֹת שֶׁרַפְרָפָה עַל כְּתִיפֵי
הִיא חֲבוּק שֶׁל קֶרֶבָה
אוֹ שֶׁרֶטֶת, צְרִיבָה מְעֵנָה, הַמְרַמְזֵת, כְּגֵדָם כָּנָף, עַל הַסְּתַלְקוֹת הַשְּׂכִינָה-
אֵךְ הִיִּיתִי שָׂבָה וְאוֹמְרָת
שׁוֹב
וְשׁוֹב וְשׁוֹב
גְּדוֹל גְּבוּר וְנוֹרָא-
חוֹזְרֵת הִיִּיתִי וְאוֹמְרָת, חוֹזְרֵת וְשׁוֹנָה.

Great, mighty, and awesome, I said. And I said again, great mighty and awesome.
I had in mind what had occurred in the past. Also what had not yet happened
and my ancestors living and dead. Also my children who have been born but not yet
every one, with my speaking voice I give voice to the unborn.
I don't know if the words in my mouth
are complaint, or question, begging or plea
whether it is song of praise and thanks bursts from me, or the cry of a lament
I don't know, whether the feathery flutter on my shoulder
is an affectionate embrace
or a scratch, a painful burn hinting at a stump of wing, at the disappearance of divine
presence—
Yet I would always return and say
again
and again and again
great, mighty, and awesome—
I would go back and say it, go back and repeat it.

Rivka Miriam,
Translated by Rabbi Steven Sager

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