

# The Value of Vision, The Power To Act

*By Rabbi Ariel Bar Tzadok*

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***“Look! HaShem your G-d has given you the land.  
Rise up, possess!  
Even as HaShem G-d of your fathers has spoken.  
Do not fear and do not be small.”  
(Dev. 1:21)***

Two words we find repeatedly throughout Sefer Devarim – Look (Re’eh) and Listen (Shema). Rabbeynu HaBen Ish Hai (B.I.H. Drashot, Lekh L’kha) explains that these two words describe to us two different modalities as to how the world is perceived.

In the Gemara, when an issue of Halakha is discussed, the text introduces the topic with the words, “Ta Shema” (Come, Listen). In the Zohar, when an issue of Kabbalah is discussed, the text introduces the topic with the words, “Ta Hazei” (Come, Look).

The unique difference in terminology between rational and mystical studies is by no means a coincidence. The different language is to subtly suggest to us that a shift in thinking modalities is called for.

Listening and seeing are the two physical senses that are the most common forms for us to receive information from our outside world. Yet, there is a vast difference between them.

When we hear something, such as words, we must first come to understand and master the skills of language; otherwise, words are just a garbled bunch of meaningless sounds. Even once the language is mastered, many times we have to think about and deeply contemplate what we hear. In other words, learning by sound is not automatic. It takes time and effort. Anyone who has ever attended school and has had to listen to a teacher knows exactly what I mean.

This is why the Gemara always begins its topics with the words Ta Shema (Come, Listen), because the text is calling you to put on your ‘thinking caps’ and to pay attention. Without serious mental effort, Gemara and Halakha will never be understood correctly. Therefore, correct action is incumbent upon intellectual refinement. If one does not “hear” what is being taught, one cannot do what one has been instructed.

The hearing modality of learning, therefore, is crucial for understanding.

The sense of sight on the other hand operates in an entirely different manner. When we see a thing, we automatically absorb a tremendously larger amount of information than from simply hearing mere words. The old saying demonstrates this; “a picture is worth a thousand words.”

What is seen with the eyes makes a deeper, indelible impression than that which is merely heard with the ears. For this reason we are commanded to look upon the Tzitzit, so that “*you will look upon it and remember all the commandments of HaShem.*” (Num. 15:39).

Hear we see that the act of viewing the Tzitzit is not performed to teach us anything new, no learning is required. Rather, the act of viewing is to serve us as a reminder. The act of viewing does not bring to us any new information from outside of ourselves, which needs to be thought over and integrated. Rather, the act of viewing brings up into our consciousness previously stored and understood information; information, which might not be in the forefront of our minds, but lurking around somewhere in the unconscious.

Therefore, the modality of sight reminds us of previously stored knowledge, which has attached to it a depth of meanings learned over long periods. This is why Kabbalah topics are introduced by the words, “Ta Hazei” (Come, See) because mystical knowledge is said to be ingrained in the Neshama soul. Study of Kabbalah is said to teach us nothing new, but to remind us of spiritual knowledge that our Neshama already knows.

Thus, Kabbalah learning, unlike Gemara learning is not successful through hard and laborious intellectual pursuits. Kabbalah learning can only be successful, by staring at one’s Tzitzit and remembering the mitzvot. It is the arousal of memory that is the secret to success here. There is a reason for this.

The reason is that the sight modality contains an element that sound learning does not. When we sit to learn a text, the words are often boring. These do not often stimulate us. We have to often arouse ourselves to learn, whereas with visual learning, pictures and imagery move us emotionally. Visual imagery stirs up our hearts and motivates us to action. The imagery itself arouses us, without any effort on our parts.

Thus we see learning by both sight and sound are crucial elements in human educational development. Learning by sound brings new information into us (Ta Shema); we thus know what to do. Learning by sight (Ta Hazei) raises up within us already acquired knowledge that is now emotionally charged and motivates us to act. With sight and sound learning modalities operating in harmony, we become motivated to act and we know the right thing to do!

In this verse, Moshe Rabbeynu encourages the Jewish people to rise up and take the land of Israel. He does not call upon the people to HEAR his words, he tells them to LOOK! With regards to doctrines and Halakha Moshe Rabbeynu indeed tells the people to listen and to understand, as it says, “*Shema Yisrael (Listen, Israel) HaShem is our G-d, HaShem is One.*” (Dev. 6:4). The unity of G-d must be understood intellectually and taught to others, even as the continuing pasukim in the Shema teaches.

Here, with regards to the Land, mere hearing is not enough. It is not enough to intellectually convince the people that going to Eretz Yisrael is a right and good thing. The people must be

motivated to rise up. They must know from within the depths of their souls that Eretz Yisrael belongs to them, not because of any intellectual argument, but rather because that's the way it is, period!

Eretz Yisrael for Am Yisrael, this is not an intellectual concept; it is an emotional/spiritual reality. It is engraved upon the Jewish Neshama soul. Rather than teach this anew to the people, Moshe Rabbeynu is telling the people to remember it from deep within their souls.

Eretz Yisrael is yours, he says! It has always been yours! The Land is the people; the people are the Land. See this! Know this! Do not just think about, do it! Manifest it! For this Divinely instilled picture is in your hearts and your souls. Allow now, the fire in your hearts to burn away all imposing forces that prevent manifest reality from expressing itself.

Moshe Rabbeynu knew well that the type of motivation necessary to inspire the people required vision. This is why we speak and say that when a person has an idea of a greater destiny, he has a vision of it, not merely a thought or concept about it.

Visional language and communication is also the modality of spiritual learning. Prophets had visions. A Seer is called so because he is one who sees. Moshe Rabbeynu was calling the people to activate their spiritual sense of being the children of prophets, to activate their inner knowledge and to enable them to reveal manifest destiny.

Over a thousand years later, Hillel said it best, "*if Yisrael are not prophets, they are the children of the prophets.*" (Pes. 66A). Although the layman Jew is not trained in Kedusha (holiness) to reach the highest levels of Divine communion, nonetheless, a communion of a lower level always exists. All Benei Yisrael are connected to HaShem at the source of our Neshama souls. This connection cannot be severed!

Thus, whenever a Jew wishes to, he/she can connect with the living spirit of HaShem burning in the Jewish heart. All one must do is to turn within oneself for a moment of silent contemplation (glancing upon one's Tzitzit or a Shiviti assists in this endeavor). Then from deep within the recesses of one's unconscious mind will arise a passion and a memory of what it is to be a Jew. This emotional inspiration guides one beyond what intellectual thought can provide and the person so motivated becomes a gibbor, a hero and does great things.

These great things can be in any domain related to Jews and Judaism. This motivation inspired our Rabbanim to write their holy works. A spark of this same Jewish spirit seen in the depths of their souls is most likely what motivated the Zionist soldiers when they conquered Eretz Yisrael 52 years ago.

It is the mystical element of inner inspiration that drives one forward. Indeed, our holy Rabbanim have taught in the Zohar numerous times that in merit of the study of Kabbalah will Yisrael be redeemed. The reason for this is now evident.

Mystical studies require of one to delve deep into one's heart and Neshama to find the answers one seeks. Once one is in touch with one's heart, the unleashed psychological potential is unstoppable! Once the inner power of the collective Jewish psyche is unleashed, the world is thereby changed. Even Mashiah can come as a result.

There is only one danger that the one with vision must be aware of. He must not become afraid or doubt what he sees in his heart. All too often, when we see the greater picture of destiny our rational mind steps in to convince us that such grandiosity is irrational and thus impossible.

Voices rise from within us and from without to tell us to “LISTEN” to reason. This belittling of destiny is a poison to the soul. Doubt forever keeps us in exile. Indeed the Hebrew word for doubt, Safek, is numerically equal to Amalek, the archetypal enemy of G-d and Israel. (Safek – Samekh,60 + Pey,80 + Kof,100 = 240; Amalek; Ayin,70 + Mem,40 + Lamed,30 + Kof,100 = 240).

Communion with one’s Neshama soul, i.e., one’s spirit is through one’s heart. In this case, one’s heart is actually above one’s head. Spirit is a realm above intellect and this order must be respected in order for an individual to preserve psychological health and stability.

One of the fathers of psychology, Carl Jung (CW 13, 7) said it best, *“The intellect does indeed do harm to the soul, when it dares to possess itself of the heritage of the spirit. It is in no way fitted to do this, for spirit is something higher than intellect, since it embraces the latter, and includes feelings, as well. It is a guiding principle of life that strives towards super-human shining heights.”*

I quote here psychological sources to prove the point that what is discussed here is no mere religious philosophy, it is a necessary psychological truth!

*“It is, unfortunately, only too clear that if the individual is not truly regenerated in spirit, society cannot be either, for society is the sum total of individuals in need of redemption”,*  
Carl Jung, The Undiscovered Self, pg. 63

We must pay attention to this! Jewish survival depends on this! We must rise up and not be afraid or belittle ourselves with doubts!

*“Direction in life is not a simple straight line, fate confronts us like an intricate labyrinth, all too rich in possibilities and yet of these possibilities only one is the right way”.*  
Carl Jung, CW 7-72

We know the one, right way, it is the way of our holy Torah. Moshe Rabbeynu, upon him be peace commanded us to rise up and take what is rightfully ours. It does not matter what other people have to say or what they think. Ours is a higher calling. We must believe it in our hearts, we must know it in our minds, and we must see it with our eyes. When we have the vision, we will manifest the reality. This is G-d’s promise to us. This lesson is applicable to all our daily individual struggles. Let us learn it well. Let us see the BIG PICTURE of Torah and mitzvot and make it so!