

Friends and Colleagues;

I delivered the following talk on the anniversary of my Bar Mitzvah, Shabbat Shuva---9/26/09.

V--A---K

Years back I was involved in learning and teaching NLP—
Neuro-Linguistic Programming, which teaches about how humans process
experience and get on in the world.

NLP postulated three systems. (A lot of people use more than one.)
And that in order to achieve rapport with our fellow humans, it was
very useful to meet others at their model of the world, and then work with
them and assist them in developing flexibility. An example of how different
people process experience follows,

Three people—A, B, and C—have gone for a walk together. Each is asked to describe the experience:

A:Wow! That was a terrific walk—a sight for sore eyes. The air was so
brilliantly clear, as I moved along, my Internal fog seemed to lift and I saw
things in a new way.

It is true that on a clear day you can see forever. I was aware of seeing a
bird in the distance. The bright color of that bird's plumage was just
wonderful.

B:Wow! That was a terrific walk—a really moving experience. Feeling the
brisk air on my face, I just warmed up as I moved along. I felt energized.
Getting my body going at a quick pace, I felt alive and tingly all over. The
crunching of leaves under my feet was invigorating. I have not had such an
exciting walk in a long time.

C:Wow! That was a terrific walk—a hymn to nature. Moving along, I tuned in
to the rhythms of the world. There is such harmony out there, if we only
listen for it. I could hear the birds chirping, the wind whistling through the
trees, and the sound of the leaves crunching under my feet. It is a day made
for singing.

Three people went on the exact same walk and described a seemingly
identical experience, yet each person processed the experience of the walk

differently. And they expressed it differently. We thus have three rather different descriptions.

If you listen carefully, you note that Mr. A spoke to us using **visual** words, Ms. B told us what she felt by using **Kinesthetic** words, and Mrs. C described her experience with **Auditory** words.

By paying careful attention to their words, you can chart their experience—how each one attends to, processes, and talks about what has happened differently.

Now, we're talking about three people who all had "the same experience". They took the same walk, along the same path during the same weather conditions.

And each has a different way of processing the experience and talking about it.

The tradition we Jews are heirs to is overwhelmingly about hearing, attending to, book learning and listening---

Davening-Reading the Torah publicly with trope. Or studying text-Talmud and others, as it was done, in a singsong voice.

AII AUDITORY!

Shma (Hear-Listen) Yisrael-watchword of our faith-Lots of rules, have to listen. Attempt to listen and obey--To hear the other and be heard

All the talking to and the listening to.
Leading to 4-hour services.

No one to listen if not spoken to. To listen and be listened to—A Very auditory tradition

Shma Yisrael not the only example; We say Shma Koleynu, and even the Shofar. Lishmoa Kol Shofar-

Seeing (**visual**) Very much in second or third place

Feeling (**kinesthetic**)— in second or third place

Visual and **Kinesthetic** have not been primary.

The Jewish **Auditory** tradition- was mine- I was raised in it since I was a little boy. But I had some rebel in me-and early on described my self as God's recalcitrant servant.

At my Bar Mitzvah and numerous times since, including today, I chanted Moses' great ode, Haazinu. “

Listen carefully for the auditory.

Haazinu-“Give ear, O heavens, let me speak;

Let the earth hear the words I utter!”

“Take to heart **all the words** with which **I have warned you this day**. Enjoin **them** upon your children, that they may observe faithfully all the **terms** of this **Teaching.**” For this is not a trifling thing for you; it is your very life;

v.44&on

Moshe came and spoke all the words of this song (which in this context is a **poem**) in the ears of the people, When Moshe had finished speaking all these words to all Israel, he said to them; Set your hearts toward all these words ...indeed no empty word is it for you, indeed, it is your (very) life.

Then Moses hears his destiny:

“You shall die on the mountain that you are about to ascend... for you broke faith with Me among the Israelite people, at the waters of Meribath-kadesh in the wilderness of Zin,

What had Moshe done?

God's instructions were to take his staff and to speak to the stone (**Auditory**) and Moses struck the stone with his staff twice (**Kinesthetic**) rather than **talking** to the stone.

At one NLP convention I remember abruptly becoming aware:

The tradition I was part of and represented was limited.

The tradition I was raised in is overwhelmingly_Auditory

Inwardly, and rebelliously- I thought-maybe it didn't have to be so one-way.

Maybe it would be an incredible improvement - to have all 3,

Visual –Auditory and Kinesthetic

In greater balance as we move forward to a

Both/and-and not an Either/or world.

There is more than one way! We can Have All Three.
After all--My High School yearbook listed my ambition as

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An Athletic Coach for Rabbis

I am after all a member of both the Conservative Rabbinical Assembly and the Reform Central Conference of American Rabbis. I teach in both.

Some Saturday mornings I start at B'nai Israel (Reform) and then head over to Beth El (Conservative). Reform and Conservative- in a single morning.

I married Ingrid, who came from a radically different background and culture, despite many Jews being scandalized by my choice. She is now my "**Yekkeh Rebbitzen**" the light of my life. We call each other Schatz (German for sweetheart). On each of our wedding rings—Schatz is inscribed in Hebrew letters

One of the major changes urgently needed in Jewish life is moving towards including the **Visual** and the **kinesthetic** bring both into our Jewish experience, leveling the playing field as it were.

We kiss the tzitzit (the fringes of our prayer shawls (talit) when we finish the Shma (**Kinesthetic**). Yet the Vilna Gaon instructed us to—look at tzitzit as commanded. (**Visual**)

The **Auditory** has served us well—but we need more than one way of processing the world around us,

Rabbi Satlow and I are both products of Jewish camping where **Auditory, Visual and Kinesthetic** play crucial roles. The more we provide our children with those **K** experiences, the more they will feel and appreciate their Jewishness.

In the sixties; (when I occupied the pulpit at Beth El) Our teenagers spent weekends together, away from this building where Hebrew school (very much an **Auditory** experience took place, and built the rapport of shared experience—A **Kinesthetic** experience that we hope will last a lifetime, and help determine their “gut” level loyalty to Jewish life. Some of them are present here today.

Operation Birthright, takes young people to Israel to see what Israel is like. They come home feeling different and if the program works have a much different Kinesthetic experience and a different feeling and loyalty about being Jewish. Loyalty is to a great extent a **Kinesthetic** experience.

People report when they have done that, it makes a major difference in their FEELING (**Kinesthetic**) State.

The **Visual** changes that need to be made are clear.

Shma Yisrael -Hear O Israel to which we must add; See clearly my people and have the bodily experience of feeling Jewish to your very core.

I was astonished, as I prepared for today-surprised by what I experienced as a “Chidush”.(something new that was not apparent before.

In v.52 of **Haazinu**- The Kadosh Baruch Hu (The Holy One Blessed Be he. says to Moshe; “**Ki mineged tireh et haAretz**”- You may view the land from a distance. Distance for most of us makes the **Visual** hard and unclear. That is very different than seeing something up close. **V’shamah lo tavo**-But you shall not enter there. Moshe is to have no **Kinesthetic** experience of the holy land.

We begin with Haazinu. We need to move beyond that!

May we be blessed by the God of Israel, the God of all humankind with a greater balance of the three. **V-A-K**.

May we see **(Visual)** our way clear to a new Jewish life, may our feelings **(Kinesthetic)** be governed by enjoyment and pride as we balance our **Auditory** tradition with the full range of our being as human beings, whose vision is Jewish, whose feelings are Jewish, while maintaining respect for the auditory tradition which has indeed served us well and brought us to this place.