



## HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

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# Coming to Our Senses

JEREMIAH 2:4-28, 3:4, 4:1-2

This Shabbat, we read the haunting words of the prophet Yirmiyahu in the haftorah known as *Shimu Dvar Hashem*. The Gaon of Vilna, zt”l, offers a striking explanation as to why this haftorah was chosen for this moment of national mourning. He teaches that the Jewish people sinned in three essential areas: **speech**, **sight**, and **hearing**—the very senses through which we encounter and connect to spirituality.

These faculties—so fundamental to our spiritual lives—were given to us as tools to perceive Hashem in His world:

- **Speech**, modeled after Hashem’s own creative speech, is meant to build, bless, and communicate truth.

- **Hearing** allows us to receive Torah, to absorb wisdom, and to cultivate humility.
- **Sight** enables us to witness the wonders of creation and recognize Divine presence around us.

But when these faculties are corrupted—when **speech is used for lashon hara**, when **eyes are turned away from suffering**, when **ears are closed to the voice of Hashem or the cries of others**—the damage is profound.

This is why, the Gaon explains, the first haftorah we read begins with “**Divrei Yirmiyahu Hashem**”—the word of Yirmiyahu, alluding to speech. It continues with “**Shimu Dvar Hashem**”—listen, referring to hearing. The third haftorah begins with “**Chazon Yeshayahu**”, the vision of Yeshayahu, referring to sight. Each haftorah in the Three Weeks underscores one of these critical senses, showing us that the path to destruction was paved by their misuse—and that the path to redemption begins with reclaiming them.

As we draw closer to Tisha B’Av, the haftorah of *Dvar Hashem* invites us to do more than mourn the past. It calls us to examine how we use our **senses**—not just to avoid sin, but to reconnect with our purpose. It asks us to re-tune our ears to Torah, to sharpen our eyes to see meaning and beauty, and to refine our speech until it resembles the voice of Hashem—creative, compassionate, and true.

The road back to the Mikdash begins here—with the eyes to see clearly, the ears to truly hear, and the courage to speak words of truth and peace. ■

