The title of this Torah portion is translated very simply with the word “see.” This small simple word can be taken for granted by some. For the vast majority of the people in this country, “seeing” is the first thing they do every morning. People wake up, open their eyes to see, or depending on your optical ability, at least look at the images our eyes are allowing their brains to discern. I question whether there is a difference between seeing or looking?

In Hebrew the word is re’eh. The word has the meaning of looking at something with our eyes, but that is not the context in how it’s being used here. The Hebrew meaning is for us to perceive and consider something so as to bring forth discernment. Many of you may relate to the example I’m going to use to explain my point. Most people wake up in the morning head to the bathroom to begin their daily routine to make themselves presentable before leaving home. Many of us find in the mirror the proverbial “bed head” look with hair going every direction. As one makes sense of the new style their pillow created they might find a few gray hairs that certainly could not have been there the day before.

How you handle these sneaky little gray hairs is what brings forth my point. Will you make a mental note of the location of these sly little hairs to pluck them out, hide them with a new hairstyle or run to the local Wal-Mart to grab a bottle of hair color? Are these little gray hairs a frightful unwanted sight or do they bring you to a place of introspection? Do you just “see” the gray hair or do look deeper to evaluate the Scriptural meaning behind gray hair and how it’s interpreted. Do you perceive what is happening in your life regarding your maturity and reflect on decisions you are making? The gray hair is a sign to us to ponder if we are learning the lessons life has been trying to teach us or traveling around the same mountain of mistakes. Are you gaining wisdom through maturity or just going gray?
There is another word in Scripture which brings deeper meaning to my thought, the word selah. The word is found 71 times in Psalms and 3 times in Habakkuk 3 after verses 3, 9 and 13. Selah is defined as an obscure word which is a musical note. The true meaning though is found in its root which is about weighing balances. My favorite definition is “To weigh a thought or action in light of eternity.”

Let’s go back to the gray hair for a moment. When we begin to see them appear what is our response? Do we “look” at them, ignore them or try to find a way to make it look like they are not there? Do we allow them to help us in perceiving where we are in life regarding the consequences or actions we are bringing forth for ourselves and for others? Would it not be healthier to permit them to be a message of “selah” in our lives to ponder our decisions in light of eternity? Welcome to tomorrow’s mirror!

This Torah portion as well as most of Deuteronomy relates to how we will live our lives according to the mitzvot of Elohim. We have the opportunity to assess which mountain we will stand with, G’rizim or Eival, Blessing or Curse. Deuteronomy solidifies where HaShem has put His Name. Will we agree or try to insert His name into the real estate we select. This important book evaluates how we treat what He has entrusted to us which includes our relationships with others. It is about what we do with our time and resources in our observance of His Feasts and giving back a portion of what He has given us.

In light of personal reflection, the questions being asked this week are, “Are we just seeing the words or do we discern the spirit of the words? Do we perceive in light of our daily walk, or in light of an eternal walk?

On a final note, let us not forget that the very fact we are able to make the choice to see, perceive or selah is because of His grace shown to us. In the words of a friend, “grace is not that He chooses us, but rather grace is His giving us the power to choose Him.”