

Chapter Five: Listening for Interpretation

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Torah is acquired with forty-eight qualities:
...listening and illuminating...
Ethics of the Fathers, Chapter 6

Man has learned much since morning/
For we are a conversation and we can listen/
To one another.
Holderlin, from *Celebration of Peace*

Chapter Five: Listening for Interpretation

In our work facilitating havruta learning for students, we have consistently emphasized and structured the practice of good listening—not only to one’s human partner, but to the text as well. With any text, it is important to “hear” it on its own terms, rather than rushing and projecting our prior assumptions onto it or making it fit our expectations. At the same time, interpreting a text always involves some amount of projection both because of the subjective nature of understanding and because the text by its very nature invites readers to fill in gaps.¹ Consequently, learning to develop sound textual interpretations consists of learning to consciously and intentionally manage this dual nature of the interpretive process. In Chapter Four, we discussed the role of questioning in the service of that process; here, in a similar vein, we will investigate another central practice, that of listening.

As an interpretive practice, listening plays a complementary role in the process of textual interpretation. While questioning is clearly pro-active and verbal, listening has a more receptive, non-verbal quality—though it also requires active and at times

¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*; Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading*; Paul Ricoeur calls readers’ attention to the need to examine the ways in which they read with a healthy measure of suspicion, knowing well how easy it is to be seduced into convenient or self-affirming interpretations, in *Freud and Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970).

audible engagement. This chapter addresses the need for the havruta learner to cultivate a way of listening that does not merely respect but actively considers what the text and the havruta partner say, in a way that will contribute positively to the meaning he attributes to the text. In that regard, focusing on listening and on its specific contextual aspects means considering the particular role that listening plays in the dynamic of textual interpretation—that is, how the learner listens to the text and how he listens to the text when mediated by the havruta partner’s comments. In addition, listening operates as an expansive activity by allowing the learner to perceive and revise more directly the preconceptions he projects in this dynamic.²

In this chapter, we begin by addressing how these aspects of listening operate in havruta text study and discuss what may make it challenging for havruta learners. We then proceed to review an instructional strategy designed to help havruta learners cultivate these different aspects of listening during the interpretive process.

Listening as an Interpretive Practice

Listening is central to learning, yet it is only recently that researchers have recognized the more complex and challenging aspects of listening in the context of teaching and learning.³ Beyond its common understanding, close to that of

² For an analysis of how this plays out in an actual havruta session, see Orit Kent, *Interactive Text Study and the Co-Construction of Meaning*; Orit Kent, "A Theory of Havruta Learning." Kent discusses four kinds of listening, and considers how they reflect the listeners' different intentions and in turn how these affect modes of listening to people and texts.

³ Kathy Shultz, *Listening: A Framework for Teaching Across Differences* (New York and London: Teacher College Press, 2003); Michael Welton, "Listening, Conflict and Citizenship: Towards a Pedagogy of Civil Society," *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 21 (2002): 197-208; Clark Thomas, "Sharing the Importance of Attentive Listening Skills," *Journal of Management Education* 23 (1999): 216-23; Vivian G. Palley, "On Listening to What Children Say," *Harvard Educational Review*

“hearing”—that is, receiving and taking in sound or meaning—good listening is much more complex. It involves intentionally focused attention, and an openness toward something that may not be easily grasped because of its elusiveness and complexity.

The concept of the “fusion of horizons” that we discussed in Chapter Two shows how interpretation involves the learner in a process that is simultaneously proactive and receptive, a progressive process of meaning making that occurs when two horizons meet each other and emerges from that interaction. In that fusion, a circular movement takes place between the anticipatory movement of the learner’s horizon on one hand and what he encounters in the text on the other. While reading, the learner sheds assumptions, makes inferences and anticipates what is to come next. New sentences may confirm or undermine our anticipation, so we read backwards and forwards, predicting and negating, a process which Gadamer describes as the “interplay” between two movements.⁴ The receptive aspects of interpretation occur when the learner lets information provided by the text conflict with his previous understanding, disrupting his preconceptions and projections and making him revise the meaning he attributes to the text—and yet, the learner can only understand what the text is saying by activating and projecting his prior knowledge and preconceptions.⁵ While inevitable, and even indispensable to understanding, the

56 (1986): 122-31; more recently, *Teacher College Record* has dedicated a special issue to listening in the context of teaching and learning: *Teachers College Record* 112.11 (2010).

⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 293.

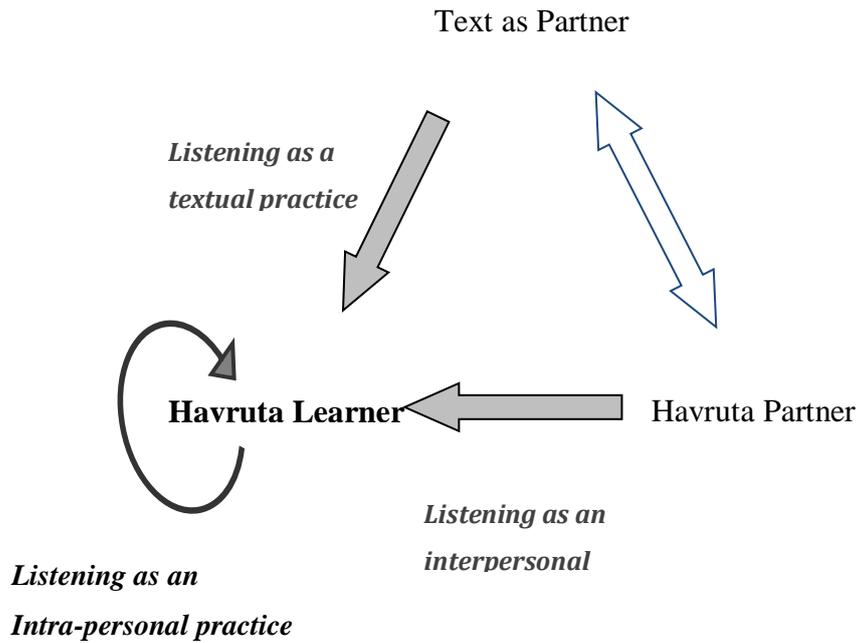
⁵ On various aspects of the receptive mode in text study, see Elie Holzer, “Ethical Dispositions in Text Study”; for a similar aspect of text reading, this time from the perspective of literary theory, see the concept of the delay of information, as discussed by Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985). For a pedagogical strategy implying the development of moral imagination, see Elie Holzer, “Allowing the Text to Do Its Pedagogical Work: Connecting Moral Education and Interpretive Activity,” *Journal of Moral Education* 36.4 (2007): 497-514; Elie Holzer, “Educational Aspects of Hermeneutical Activity in Text Study.”

proactive projection in all interpretive activity can block the learner's ability to engage equally in the receptive mode, and hinder the give-and-take that leads to textual understanding.

Since havruta text study happens in a triadic dynamic, for the individual havruta learner, new information is both provided directly from the text and conveyed to him by the comments, questions and assertions of his havruta partner. In that regard, listening in the interpretive process entails paying attention both to what is said by the text and/or by the havruta partner, and to what he, the learner himself, *does* with what he heard. Thus, conceptually listening in interpretation functions as a textual practice (in the interaction between learner and text), an interpersonal practice (in the interaction between havruta partners as they comment on the text to each other), and as an intrapersonal practice (in the listening one does to one's own thinking, enabling the uncovering, examination, and revision of preconceptions).⁶

The following diagram illustrates these three aspects of listening from the point of view of the individual havruta learner. The one-way arrows indicate the sources of information to which he is exposed and in relation to which he is to cultivate listening.

⁶ We also elaborate on this last aspect of text study in Chapter Eight. In contrast to philosophical traditions in which the subject pretends to know itself by immediate intuition or by introspection, philosophical hermeneutics assumes that we understand ourselves only by the hermeneutic engagement with the signs of humanity deposited in cultural works (Paul Ricoeur, *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics II*). In this view, a person remains unaware of some parts of his own self, in the form of preconceptions he holds. Focusing on and listening to one's own preconceptions during the hermeneutical encounter with a text can also present an opportunity to become more aware and learn something about oneself in relation to the subject matter that is addressed. From this perspective, during the interpretive process some of one's own preconceptions appear as an "Other" to oneself. In Chapter Eight, we discuss the educational implications of this view.



Gadamer brings our attention to “the incapacity for listening” that we often manifest, which he identifies with ignoring what the other says, mishearing, not hearing the other’s silence, and stubbornness. He attributes this incapacity chiefly to his observation that most people merely listen to themselves.⁷ It is precisely because listening as a practice is neither “natural” nor habitual for most learners that cultivating the above mentioned types of listening is often challenging. This is the case for several particular reasons. First, students are not accustomed to being engaged in this type of conscious listening during the interpretive process, as it is rarely addressed in the classroom. Second, although teachers frequently address the importance of listening to each other in classroom discussion, this is often enacted by tuning out—simply not engaging—when other students speak. A discussion that is based on listening, however, is quite different from, say, a successive series of comments that no one interrupts but are not necessarily related—in essence, a pseudo-

⁷ Hans-Georg Gadamer, “The Incapacity for Conversation,” *Continental Philosophy Review* 39.4 (2006): 358.

conversation.⁸ Even when the importance of listening to fellow students is meaningfully addressed by classroom teachers, this is rarely true regarding listening to a text. The intimate and intense learning exchange that occurs in havruta text study provides a valuable opportunity to cultivate a more genuine type of listening, to the text as well as one's learning partner. Our instructional strategy helps students begin to experiment with and develop aspects of the practice of listening during havruta text study.

Learning to Listen in Interpretation

Instructional Strategy

Our instructional strategy addresses three aspects of the challenge of cultivating learning in havruta text study.

a) *The invisible nature of interpretation:* One major characteristic of the interpretive process is that it remains largely invisible. It takes place inside the learner and is not expressed. This invisibility not only makes the interpretive process difficult for students to perceive, but is also hard for teachers to address. For these reasons, our goal is to find ways to help make this process more visible.

b) *The complexity of the interpretive process:* Attending to the havruta partner's comments and to the text itself as well as to one's own preconceptions about the text makes listening particularly challenging. In our instructional method, we

⁸ From a broader cultural perspective, Charles Derber talks about "conversational narcissism" to describe the ways "conversationalists act to turn the topics of ordinary conversations to themselves without showing sustained interest in others' topics" (*The Pursuit of Attention: Power and Individualism in Everyday Life* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979], 5). Applied without the implication of individual or cultural pathology, this observation gives us additional language for framing the benignly self-focused types of listening (or non-listening) we at times see in beginning learners in havruta text study.

therefore suggest separating these foci of listening for didactic purposes, to allow students to learn something about each of them.⁹

c) *The swift pace of the interpretive process:* In havruta text study, interpretation can take place very quickly. This makes it particularly difficult for the learner to derive the maximum benefit from the effects of the interpretive process, when information that originates in the text challenges his preconceptions and all the more so, to engage in listening.

Our instructional strategy is characterized overall by slowing down the reading and the interpretive process that is performed by the havruta pair. In this way, students will have an opportunity to record some of the pointed moments of their listening, and to become aware of how this kind of proactive listening may contribute to the unfolding process of interpretation.

The Mini-Lesson

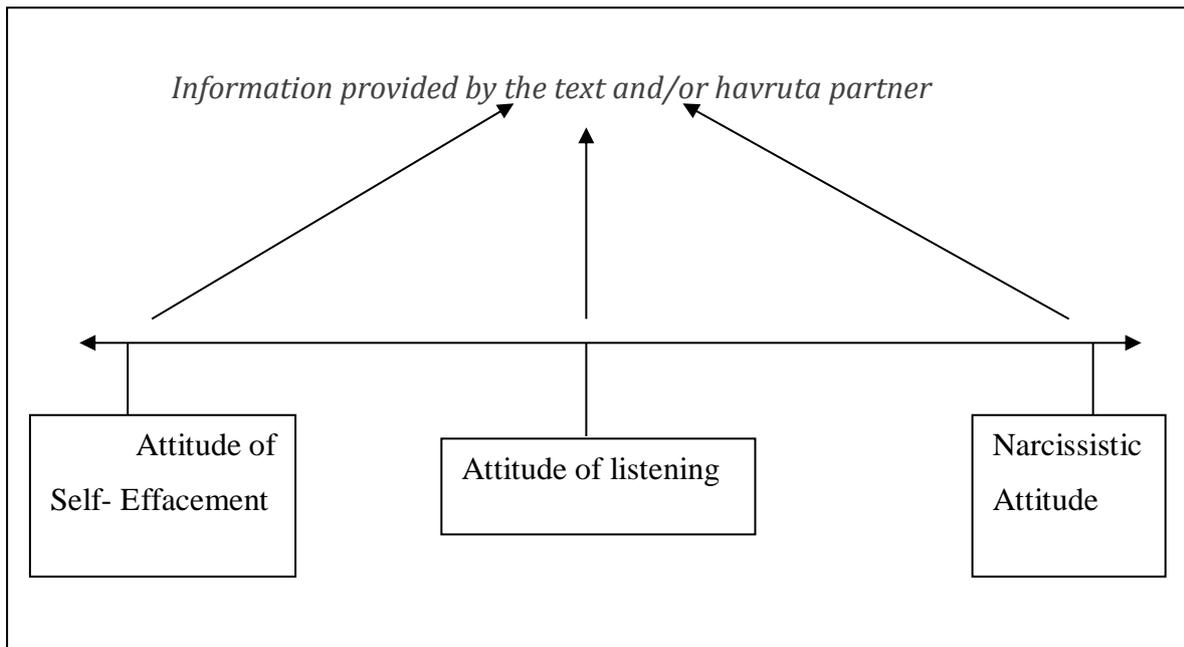
The session begins with a mini-lesson in which students are introduced to the aspects of listening discussed above, followed by a hands-on experience and students' reflections. Students are first re-acquainted with the havruta learning triangle. We ask them to comment on their understanding of what the two-way arrow between havruta learner and text represents. The students usually comment on the fact that text study is a two-way process in which they, as learners, bring something to the text (e.g., their interest, knowledge they have), while the text provides them with information.

We then draw their attention to what goes on inside themselves as they engage in the give-and-take of textual interpretation in a havruta learning format. To make this kind of mental activity a little more visible, we often use the example of what

⁹ For an analysis of listening in havruta learning which provides empirical evidence for this challenge, see Orit Kent, *Interactive Text Study and the Co-Construction of Meaning*.

happens to people when they engage in a conversation with someone they have been introduced to for the first time. At the outset, they make assumptions about that person, based on how he or she dresses, his or her name, or what they have been told about that person. As the conversation progresses, they are steadily taking in new information (e.g., information that the person provides as well as non-verbal cues), and either prior assumptions are reinforced or, on the contrary, are altered in light of the new information. To be sure, without the projection of some prior knowledge and assumptions, the conversation would not have taken place, but an unwillingness to revise those assumptions regardless of new information would lead to serious misjudgments. As with all conversations, being aware of our own listening processes during havruta text study involves more than the mere application of techniques for understanding (in the case of text study, for reading and learning). Rather, it orients us to a fundamental stance toward textual interpretation—one that can and should be cultivated over time.

We elaborate our point with the following figure:



An attitude of self-effacement is one in which the learner takes in what is said by the text and/or the havruta partner and adopts the latter *prima facie*, that is, without actively examining how it impacts his own understanding of the text. At the other end, a narcissistic attitude characterizes the learner who neutralizes his receptive mode, preferring to stick to the meaning that he has made up so far about the text, not ready to revise the latter even in the light of new information (which is automatically integrated into his prior reading and assumptions). Between these two extreme attitudes, listening requires moments of genuine receptiveness and processing of what has been heard.

The Line-by-Line Havruta Learning

Students sit in havruta pairs facing each other. We distribute a copy of the text that we have edited into separate lines. The text is covered by a thick sheet of paper. Students are told that they will only be allowed to uncover and read specific lines when we tell them to do so. This procedure is meant to slow down the interpretive process and help them listen to what they will hear from the text and their havruta partner.

At each line, students are invited to comment on what they have read in their havruta pairs, to ask questions or to make a comment about the characters' motivations, to say what they expect to happen next, or more generally, what they understand the meaning of the story to be.¹⁰ We stress that there are no right or wrong questions or comments, and that they may not be capable of answering all of the

¹⁰ This move is a pedagogical application of Wolfgang Iser's description: "Each sentence correlate contains what one might call a hollow section, which looks forward to the next correlate, and a retrospective section, which answers the expectations of the preceding sentence... Thus every moment of reading is a dialectic of protension and retention, conveying a future horizon yet to be occupied, along with a past (and continually fading) horizon already filled" (*The Act of Reading*, 112).

questions. What matters is to hold on to possible and potential meanings, scenarios of what is going on in the text, up to the point where new information may compel them to revise, reinforce, or drop some of these meanings and scenarios. We stress that this process will most probably generate some competing interpretations, which should remain on the table until someone at any point feels that his or her interpretation is no longer relevant.

Among various texts we have used with this instructional strategy, we have found the story of Rabbi Hama son of Bissa (described below) to be especially conducive to this listening exercise. It has an unfolding plot at its heart, and it is long enough to enable an unfolding interpretive process, but not so long that it cannot be completed in one session. Thematically, it is possible (although not indispensable) to connect central ideas of the story with the sophisticated aspects of listening that are addressed as a practice in this session. Like many short talmudic stories, it has enough gaps in describing the motivations and feelings of the characters to generate the process of gap-filling.¹¹ Finally, it is a text that does not require much prior knowledge, thus enabling the full participation of students with both more and less background in rabbinic literature.

To best be understood, study of this text should be preceded by encountering another short text that provides the background story for our text (see Appendix 7). We usually read this background text together with all the participants, as it helps put all of them on the same page before engaging in the line-by-line study that follows.

We uncover the first line and read it together. It says: “Rabbi Hama son of Bissa went away and spent 12 years at the house of study.” The floor is then open for

¹¹ For the concept of textual gaps, see our discussion in Chapter Two.

people to share their comments and questions with their havruta partner. We often first take the lead and model the kind of questions that can be asked:

“Why did he leave his place?”

“Wasn’t there a local house of study?”

“Was the other house of study more prestigious?”

“Was Rabbi Hama married? Did he have children? If he did, did he leave to pursue his studies, regardless of his duties and obligations at home?”

We then uncover the second line: "When he came back he said: ‘I will not do what the son of Hakhinai did.’”¹² Students begin to wonder aloud and to make inferences, they say for example:

“How long has he been away?”

“Based on the comparison with the son of Hakhinai, we infer that R. Hama had a family as well. Has he been in touch with his family during his absence?”

“Unlike in the story of the son of Hakhinia, the text does not say here why R. Hama is returning home. Does he think that he achieved his studies?”

“In what way precisely isn’t R. Hama going to imitate the son of Hakhinai?”

The reading process continues like this, line-by-line.¹³ Most often, the more the process progresses, the more confident students feel to actively participate. Some lines generate a high number of comments, questions, and conjectures. During the

¹² The “son of Hakhinai” refers to the preceding short text. See Appendix 7.

¹³ The full version of this text is to be found in Appendix 8.

process, students experience the need to re-read previous lines in order to make sense of the new information. At times they have to drop or revise a hypothetical interpretation, thus experiencing something of the hermeneutical circle by which a reader processes the dialectic between parts and whole of the story. For example, the third line reads: "He therefore entered the (local) house of study and sent a message to his house."

At this point, students often revisit their assumption that R. Hama left his local town because he had no place to study. "What then," they wonder, "could have been his motivation to leave?" The various hypotheses offered at this point play a projecting role as they come to interpret subsequent developments in the narrative.

Our role as instructors consists of pacing the speed of study by having everyone move on to a new line at the same time. While we listen to the various havruta pairs, we monitor the time that we allow for the exchanges in pairs for each different line of the text. We also model generic questions, for example, "So, what is going on at this point?" This directs the students toward the articulation of a temporary synthesis. Another question might be "Where do you think this is going and why?"; in answer, they project what they think is going to happen.¹⁴ At times, we encourage havruta partners to probe each other's comments in order to have them articulate what has prompted them to say what they said.

To heighten the students' attention to the impact of what they listen to during their unfolding interpretation of the story, we provide several "Reflection Pauses" during which they are asked to reflect and complete the following chart.

¹⁴ Projecting one's expectations as to where the plot of a narrative is leading next is inherent in the interpretive process of generating meaning, thus the importance of this question. Ricoeur discusses at length how anticipation is always at work as we interpret a narrative text. See Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative Vol 1*.

Reflection Pause #1

Please reflect on what happened during your text study and fill in the following chart:

At this point of our study, what do I tentatively think this story is about?	What is one thing I've heard from my havruta partner that has contributed to this tentative interpretation of mine?	What is one thing I've heard from the text that has contributed to my tentative interpretation?
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The chart is meant to help students capture vivid and tangible moments of their listening experience in the elusive flow of the interpretive process, and establish explicit connections that might have occurred between what they listened to and the unfolding shape of the meaning they take from the story.

Comments by students that we have collected over the years show that not only does the line-by-line method turn text study into a playful experience, it also helps them listen attentively; they often experience shifts and changes in the unfolding meaning of the story they have been processing during this study session. The experience compels students to pay attention not only to details provided by each line, it also makes them more alert to the unfolding dynamic of the plot. The reflective pauses have them think about the *temporary* meaning they make of the story at different stages of the interpretive process.

Our goal is to help students begin to realize the connection between the various moments of listening and their textual interpretations. However, due to this heightened attention to the process they undergo, students still need time to pull things together and articulate one or several overall interpretations of the text. A first step consists, therefore, in having students articulate one or several integrative

interpretations of the text. For that purpose, we provide them with guiding questions, using similar language to that used in the session on questioning:

Articulate a compelling interpretation:

Based on your line-by-line examination of the text, discuss with your *havruta* partner what you believe to be a good interpretation of this story. Make sure to support your interpretation with textual evidence.

Write your interpretation (of course, you may each have your own):

I /We believe that this story is about

.....

And it says that

A second step consists in having students attend to the potential contribution to their final interpretation of the text of the insights they have gleaned or “captured” from the text and/or *havruta* partner. Students are given time to work on this step by answering the following question:

Between listening and developing interpretation:

Please examine the second and third columns in your table. Do you have any insights as to how this information may have helped you develop your final interpretation? Please share these thoughts with your *havruta* partner.

Last, but not least, we invite students to examine some of their preconceptions:

Listen to and identify your own preconceptions:

We learned that text interpretation develops in a process during which we also project prior knowledge, pre-conceptions, beliefs and assumptions that we bring to the text.

Think again about your experience in studying the text line-by-line.

- a. Try to retrace one of those moments when you discussed “what is going to happen next,” what you anticipated and how it compared to what actually happened next.
- b. Try to retrace one of those moments when you had to take back something you were assuming about one of the characters and/or the plot.

Take the time to examine your projections and assumptions. Can they tell you anything about pre-conceptions or beliefs you hold in general and which were elicited in studying this particular text? Please discuss your findings with your havruta partner.

Insights from Students’ Reflections

What is important is that the written reflections provide students with an opportunity to explore how listening may have contributed to their ongoing understanding of the text and of themselves.

We have used this instructional strategy in various educational settings where people learned havruta text study. Based on the feedback from students and our own experience, we have two general observations to offer: Very often, when presented with a text, students focus their discussion and engage in learning by paying most attention to the “bottom line” of the text. Due to the nature of the line-by-line method and the emphasis on listening, students begin to appreciate how significant learning can take place at various stages of the reading process, not just once the text is read through.

Second, reading the story through completely before engaging in its analysis and interpretation can obscure some literary aspects of the narrative. Having readers attend, listen and process one line at a time without having access to what is going to follow underscores how crucial plot is to reading.¹⁵ Students report that being plunged, temporarily, into an incomplete sense of the unfolding meaning provided by the narrative, (and the time allocated to dwell on that while trying to figure it out), awakens in them a deep sense of excitement and identification with the existential situation that they perceive in the text.¹⁶

Most important for the purpose of this learning experience are ways by which the slowing down of the reading/interpretive process that takes place in the havruta pair helps students experience first-hand with various aspects of listening, as described above. Following are a few illustrations of what participants have said as they were reflecting on what this learning experience elicited for them in that regard.¹⁷

Mark, a mid-career social science teacher, reported that focusing attentively in order to listen made him aware of

¹⁵ Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative Vol. 3*.

¹⁶ Ricoeur discusses at length the role of imagination in entering the world of the text and opening oneself up to the existential power of the narrative to re-describe reality (Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*). It is interesting to note that we have had students who have asked to participate two or three times in this kind of line-by-line study session despite the fact that they had already studied the actual text. They reported that this instructional strategy helped them to re-experience the tension created by the line-by-line method, to open themselves to renewed, attentive listening and thus to come up with new insights. More important, the fact they were already familiar with the text it made it easier for them to focus on and to further improve their listening ability in its three different orientations.

¹⁷ The following reflections were collected in 2011, among teacher students of *Melamdin*, a two-year post-bachelor teacher education program co-jointly based at the Hartman Institute in Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv University.

how much I myself usually focus on the content. This makes me more aware of “how” I learn and of the importance of what makes for the learning process to work.

Through the focus on listening, Mark has broadened his awareness to the learning/interpretive process as such. His statement “what makes for the learning process to work” seems to point to the three foci of listening that have been attended to in this learning experience.

Similarly, Joel a teacher in his late twenties, reports that this helped him become aware of the dynamic by which interpretation gets constructed. He says:

It helps you very clearly identify your evidence. It makes it easy to see where your interpretation is making a transition.

Here, purposeful listening impacted the student’s heightened awareness of two aspects of the interpretive process: the text as an “other” than himself (Joel’s need to clearly identify textual evidence), and specific changes in understanding that occur in this process.

Of particular interest is this reflection from Jordan, a 22 year student:

There was a particular moment in the process when I realized I was carrying a strong pre-conception through my interpretation. It happened when we moved from line 7 (“he became distressed”) to line 8 (“Had I been here,” he said, “I would have had a son like this”).¹⁸ After our reading of line 8, my havruta

¹⁸ The full text is to be found in Appendix 8.

partner commented: “what is going on with this guy? He is so full of himself that he can’t even imagine that the young man in front of him is his son.” So far, I was seeking to make sense of the story on the assumption that having studied for a long time, R. Hama would somewhat serve as a role model through his behavior. This is usually how I am used to interpreting stories about rabbis in the Talmud. It now occurred to me that this text may actually be showing us just the opposite: that there is a connection between R. Hama’s being away and study and his disturbing disconnect from reality.

Jordan’s reflection exemplifies one of the purposes of slowing down the reading process while having students focus on listening and become aware of the hermeneutical circle. He allowed the text (mediated by his havruta partner’s comment) to uncover a pre-conception he brought to the interpretive process. He then activated the new information and allowed it to alter his understanding, and to disrupt his preconception.

Finally, Steven, a teacher in his late twenties, points out that cultivating attentive listening to both text and havruta partner can help learners become better human beings in general, far more capable of listening to others.

As we further discuss in Chapter Nine, some practices of havruta text study are more than learning tools. They are best conceptualized as dispositions, a term which captures simultaneously the skill as well as a long-standing formative effect of that skill on the learner, way beyond the confines of havruta text study. Through his experience of the intricacies of listening to text and havruta partner, Steven seems to already intuit this broader potential impact. He comes to realize that listening is an

expansive activity, one that provides a way to perceive more directly the ways people participate in the world around them.

In conclusion, while listening is essential in any conversation, it takes on a particular importance in the context of havruta text study, which involves the student in a triadic relationship captured in the dialectic movements described by the hermeneutical circle. In the particular line-to-line strategy, students are invited into the experience of careful collaborative listening to the text. Listening is thus enacted in the web of relationships that constitutes havruta text study. In that regard, listening constitutes a core relational practice as it invites the student to intentionally attend, both in a receptive and in an active mode, to some of the more subtle intricacies that constitute the interpretive process taking place between text, havruta partner, and oneself. To that end, we introduce students to a new terminology (“slow reading,” “pre-conceptions,” “foci of listening”) and to different attitudes toward text and partner (“self-effacement,” “narcissistic attitude”).

By making havruta learners conscious of the effects of listening on their ability to develop textual interpretations, we aim to help them cultivate an increasing ability to seek and perceive what there is to listen to in a text and by a havruta partner, beyond initial impressions. However, following the hermeneutical circle, we teach them that pre-conceptions and assumptions do not have to be eliminated in order to engage in a productive interpretation. Rather, as much as possible, they need to be consciously managed. It is in this sense that listening is an intended choice and a practice to be cultivated, refining a process that begins with assumptions.