

The Seeable and the Sayable

People yak, gab, jaw and rattle on about the spirit of a language, but what does it mean to truly hold a clear picture of this abstract idea. Not merely the general characteristic peculiarities in the formation of words and sounds, a set of words that is complete in itself and in visually descriptive or figurative methods of human communication, either spoken or written. Not simply the language of gesture and facial expression. Not the chatter, prattle, babble, blather, natter, or rap. Nor the kind consisting of the use of words merely in a structured and conventional way, but spirituality that has an objective reality that never goes beyond abstraction. A shift in priorities into nonphysical emotions, away from the tangible character of language, beyond conceptual thinking into the life and being of things.

Then there is the ability to notice things, to perceive with the eyes, discern visually, become aware of something from observation or from a written or other visual source, discern or deduce mentally after reflection or from information, of practical contact and observation of facts. A spiritual actuality not to be confounded with any vague, mystic sensation, but an actuality of fact that is no less substantial in the spiritual sense, drift, gist or thrust.

We may direct our gazes, by way of a straight route or moving from one place to another by the shortest way without changing direction or stopping, towards something. Inspecting it perhaps with a view to establishing its merits.

The viewer watches, looks-on, observes, is a member of the audience, the onlookers, the crowd, is, literally, the beholder. The seer may travel further than anything that can be expressed in language. We spot, notice, glimpse, make out, pick out, spy, distinguish, detect, perceive and note. But what is seen does not necessarily need to find its way to the lips. We may try to communicate, and therein begins the real battle with language. Language is a structured system of communication. In a broader sense, it is the method of the imparting or exchanging of information. Finding the ability to express thoughts and feelings by articulating sounds is what we do. The ring, the peal, the toll: ding, dong, clang, boom, bong. The reminiscence of words, a story told about a past event remembered by the narrator, the turns and twists of phrasing, the enjoyable recollection of past events, a characteristic of one thing suggestive of another may chime, ding, dong, clang, boom, bong in the mind. Nothing is left unexplored within the seeable and the sayable.

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