



Parshat Yitro

For the week ending 22 Shevat 5760
28 & 29 January 2000

Overview

-in-

Hwife and sons, reuniting the family in the wilderness. Yitro Exodus from Egypt that he converts to Judaism. Seeing that the only judicial authority for the entire Jewish nation is Moshe himself, Yitro suggests that subsidiary judges be appointed to adjudicate the smaller matters, leaving Moshe free to attend to larger issues. Moshe accepts his advice. Bnei Yisrael arrive at Mt. Sinai where Hashem offers them the Torah. After they accept, Hashem charges Moshe to instruct the people not to approach the mountain, and to prepare for three days. On the third day, amidst thunder and -enshrouded mountain and He speaks to the Jewish People,

Jewish People regarding their responsibility to be faithful to the One who spoke to them.

Insights

THE SIGHT OF SOUND

(20:15)

Twice a day, the Jewish People cover their eyes, meditate on the ineffable Unity of the Creator and intone, *Hear! O Israel, Hashem our G-*
The *Shema* is the basic credo of the Jew, his first declaration of G- words to leave his mouth when he passes from this world.

Hear!

Look!

When the Jewish People stood at Sinai to receive the Torah, they underwent an experience which was literally out of this world.

perception of the senses. Kinesthesia. Seeing sound. What does it mean to see sound?

Sight and sound are very different. Sight operates instantaneously. We see through the medium of light. Light is the fastest thing in the

universe. It travels at 186,000 miles per second. Sound is relatively slow, moving at about 800 miles an hour.

The difference between the speeds of light and sound symbolizes a fundamental difference between the two senses. With sight, we perceive a complete whole instantaneously. After this first sight, we may analyze what we are looking at in more detail, focusing on one element and then another, but the essence of vision is an instantaneous whole.

Sound, on the other hand, is assimilated as a collage of different elements. We order these separate pieces of information, giving them substance and definition, and in the process, we understand what it is we are hearing. This process of assembly is not instantaneous. Our brain takes time to balance and evaluate what it is hearing.

When you listen to a lecture on a tape racting ambient noise there seems to be on the tape. You think to

constant drone of the traffic in the background, the noise of the fans and the air-conditioner. However,

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when you listen to a tape, those extraneous sounds vie for your attention. The tape recorder is not the human

elements it discriminates and balances.

This world is like an assembly line. The *olam* -d in this world. He is hidden behind see G-d in this world *but you can hear Him*. If you tune your ears carefully, you can hear an unmistakable pattern in events. If you listen carefully to the un-historical history of the Jewish People, and weigh it in the balance of probability, you will hear G-coincidental events in your life, you will hear Him.

Hear!
world, you cannot see G-d. You have to have to take the disparate, seemingly random elements of this world, and assemble them into a cogent whole.

There was only one time in history that you could actually see it. At Mount Sinai. There the They saw with an incontrovertible clarity those things that usually need to eyes.

Haftarah: Yeshaya 6:1 - 7:6, 9:5-6

LEST WE FORGET

Yeshaya envisions G-d sitting on a Heavenly throne which stretches down and fills the Temple below. Administering angels surround this throne, calling to each other with those familiar words which we echo *kedusha* G-d, Master of Legions, the whole world is filled with with smoke.
G-

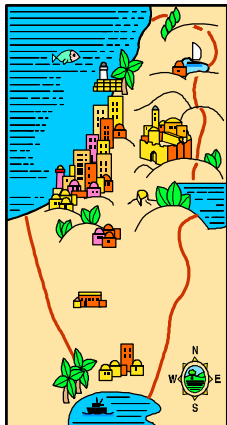
that witnessed a revelation of G-described by Yeshaya. But G-d gave us the power to forget. The power to forget is the power of free will. How can we keep the experience of Sinai alive? How can we stop ourselves from forgetting?

kedusha twice daily, we are to picture the Divine presence, to imagine the administering angels constant proclamation of G-blessings on the Torah every morning, we are to think of Sinai, to think back to when G-nations and gave us

Without a strong reminder, we are bound to forget.

LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael



EIN DOR

Following the death of the Prophet Shmuel, King Saul found himself facing a mighty force of Philistine invaders. When his efforts to gain Divine communication on how to proceed proved fruitless, he desperately sought to make contact with the spirit of Shmuel through a woman medium who lived in Ein Dor. The unhappy prophecy he received from this contact was that his army would be vanquished and that he and his sons would die in battle. (Shmuel I 28:3-19)

Near this spot opposite Mount Tabor in the north of Israel is the modern kibbutz of Ein Dor.

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