



ELITE 8: MATCH 2 - VOTE FOR WHICH OF THESE TEXTS SHOULD MOVE ON TO THE FINAL 4:

<https://forms.office.com/r/iiVMS1P5Vr>

Elite 8 Additional NEW Study Questions for both texts:

1. If we treated one another as though we had all experienced the Revelation at Sinai together, do you think our communities would look or feel different than they do now?
2. How do the images of “shock and awe” of the Revelation at Sinai (thunder, lightning, etc.) affect how we think about the Torah? Does dramatic imagery make the Torah feel more important than it might with less dramatic images?

[Midrash] Exodus Rabbah 28:4-6

“And God spoke all these words, saying” (Exodus 20:1). Rabbi Isaac said: At Mount Sinai the prophets of each and every generation received what they were to prophesy, for Moses told Israel, “But with them that stands here with us this day before Adonai our God, and also with them that are not here with us this day” (Deuteronomy 29:14). [Moses] did not say, “[Those who are] not standing here with us this day,” but “[Those who are] not here with us this day,” a way of referring to souls that are destined to be created. Because as yet these had no substance, Moses did not use the word “standing” for them. Still, even though they did not as yet exist, each one received their share of the Torah. Nor were the future prophets the only ones who received at Sinai the prophecy they were to utter. The sages who were to rise in each and every generation-each and every one of them also received at Sinai the wisdom [Moses] was to utter.

Original Thought Questions for Exodus Rabbah 28:4-6

1. Why could it be valuable to think or believe that everyone was personally at Mt. Sinai to receive the Torah?
2. Do you feel the Torah is yours? Did you agree to it? Did you agree to be in a covenant with God?
3. Do you feel commanded or obligated to engage in Torah? Why or why not?

Mekhilta d'Rabbi Ishmael, Exodus 19.28, 20.2 [Biblical Commentary]

Why was the Torah not given in the Land of Israel? In order that the nations of the world should not have the excuse for saying, "Because it was given in Israel's land, therefore we have not accepted it." Another reason: to avoid causing dissension among the [Israelite] tribes. Else one might have said, "In my territory the Torah was given." And the other might have said, "In my territory the Torah was given." Therefore, the Torah was given in the desert, publicly and openly, in a place belonging to no one. To three things the Torah is likened: to the desert, to fire, and to water. This is to tell you that just as these three things are free to all who come into the world, so also are the words of the Torah free to all who come into the world.

The Torah was given in public, openly in a free place. For had the Torah been given in the Land of Israel, the Israelites could have said to the nations of the world: "You have no share in it." But now that it was given in the wilderness publicly and openly in a place that is free for all, everyone wishing to accept it could come and accept it. One might suppose that it was given at night, but Scripture says, "On the third day, as morning dawned..." (Exodus 19:16). One might suppose that it was given in silence, but Scripture says: "...there was thunder and lightning..." (ibid.). One might suppose that they could not hear the voice of God, but Scripture says: "The voice of Adonai is powerful; the voice of Adonai is full of majesty" (Psalms 29:4).

Original Thought Questions for Mekhilta d'Rabbi Ishmael

1. To whom does the Torah belong?
2. Do we announce good or bad news? Both? Differently?
3. What is the last thing that you did purposefully in public so that as many people could see or hear you as possible?
4. When you see searchlights or a loud announcement, how do you respond?
5. When do you ignore announcements?