

Parsha Plug: Parshat Yitro

Shemot 20:15-23	שמות כ: טו-כג
<p>15 And all the people saw the voices and the torches, the sound of the shofar, and the smoking mountain, and the people saw and trembled; so they stood from afar. 16 They said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear, but let God not speak with us lest we die." 17 But Moses said to the people, "Fear not, for God has come in order to exalt you, and in order that His awe shall be upon your faces, so that you shall not sin." 18 The people remained far off, but Moses drew near to the opaque darkness, where God was. 19 The Lord said to Moses, "So shall you say to the children of Israel, You have seen that from the heavens I have spoken with you. 20 You shall not make [images of anything that is] with Me. Gods of silver or gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves. 21 An altar of earth you shall make for Me, and you shall slaughter beside it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your cattle. Wherever I allow My name to be mentioned, I will come to you and bless you. 22 And when you make for Me an altar of stones, you shall not build them of hewn stones, lest you wield your sword upon it and desecrate it. 23 And you shall not ascend with steps upon My altar, so that your nakedness shall not be exposed upon it.' "</p>	<p>(טו) וְכָל־הָעָם רָאוּ אֶת־הַקּוֹלֹת וְאֶת־הַלְפִידִם וְאֶת קוֹל הַשֹּׁפָר וְאֶת־הַהָר עֹשֵׁן וַיֵּרָא הָעָם וַיִּנָּעוּ וַיַּעֲמְדוּ מֵרָחֵק: (טז) וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה דַּבֵּר־אַתָּה עִמָּנוּ וְנִשְׁמָעָה וְאַל־יְדַבֵּר עִמָּנוּ אֱלֹקִים פֶּן־נָמוּת: (יז) וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָעָם אֲלֹתֵיכֶם אֵל־תִּירְאוּ כִּי לְבַעֲבוֹר נִסּוֹת אֶתְכֶם בָּא הָאֱלֹקִים וּבַעֲבֹר תִּהְיֶה יִרְאתוֹ עַל־פְּנֵיכֶם לְבַלְתִּי תַחֲטְאוּ: (יח) וַיַּעֲמֵד הָעָם מֵרָחֵק וּמֹשֶׁה נִגַּשׁ אֶל־הָעֶרְפֶּל אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם הָאֱלֹקִים: (יט) וַיֹּאמֶר יְקֹוֹק אֶל־מֹשֶׁה כֹּה תֹאמַר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אַתֶּם רֹאִיתֶם כִּי מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם דִּבַּרְתִּי עִמָּכֶם: (כ) לֹא תַעֲשׂוּן אֵתִי אֱלֹהִי כֶסֶף וְאֶלֶּהִי זָהָב לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם: (כא) מִזְבֵּחַ אֲדָמָה תַעֲשֶׂה־לִּי וְזִבְחֶתָ עָלָיו אֶת־עֹלֹתֶיךָ וְאֶת־שְׁלָמֶיךָ אֶת־צֹאֲנֶךָ וְאֶת־בְּקָרְךָ בְּכָל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אֶזְכֹּר אֶת־שְׁמִי אָבוֹא אֵלֶיךָ וּבִרְכָתִיךָ: (כב) וְאִם־מִזְבֵּחַ אֲבָנִים תַעֲשֶׂה־לִּי לֹא־תִבְנֶנּוּ אֶתְהֶן גִּזִּית כִּי חֶרֶבְךָ הִנֵּפֶת עָלֶיהָ וְתַחֲלָלָהּ: (כג) וְלֹא־תַעֲלֶה בְמַעֲלֹת עַל־מִזְבְּחִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִגָּלֶה עֲרוֹתְךָ עָלָיו:</p>
Ibn Ezra on Shemot 20:15	אבן עזרא שמות כ: טו
<p>All of the people saw: There are a lot of examples like this, like “See the smell of my son” and “for you have brought us into foul odor in the eyes of Paro” and “the light is sweet”. This poetic phrasing is because all five senses originate from one place-- the head. And the reason for the emphasis that all of the people saw is to show that all saw-- men, women, and child.</p>	<p>וכל העם רואים - רבים כמוהו, כמו ראה ריה בני (בראשית כז, כז), אשר הבאשתם את ריחנו (שמות ה, כא), ומתוך האור (קהלת יא, ז). וזה בעבור התחברות כל חמש הרגשות במקום אחד, שהוא על המצח. וטעם, וכל העם רואים - שכולם ראו זה הפלא אנשים ונשים וטף.</p>
Hadar Zekeinim on Shemot 20:15	הדר זקנים שמות כ: טו
<p>All of the people saw the sounds: This is tough, because how could they have seen the voice? The answer is that God's voice is different for it is fire. As it is written “The voice of the Lord cleaves with flames of fire” (Tehillim 29:7). From this they saw the sounds coming out from His mouth and returning and engraving the tablets.</p>	<p>וכל העם רואים את הקולות. קשה היאך רואים את הקול. תריץ שאני קולו של הקדוש ברוך הוא שהוא אש. כדכתיב קול ה' חוצב להבות אש. ומתוך כך היו רואים הקולות אשר יוצאות מפיו וחוזרות ונחקקות בלוחות:</p>
Rashi on Shemot 20:15	רש"י שמות כ: טו

And all of the people saw: This statement teaches that there was not one person who could not see among them. And from where do we learn that there was not a person among them who could not speak? From Shemot 19:8: "And all the people answered". And from where do we learn that there was not a person among them who could not hear? From Shemot 24:7: "We will do and we will hear".	וכל העם ראים. מלמד שלא היה בהם אחד סומא, ומפיו שלא היה בהם אלם? ת"ל ויענו כל העם, ומפיו שלא היה בהם חרש? ת"ל נעשה ונשמע:
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Mechilta DeRebbe Yishmael on Shemot 20:15:1	מכילתא דרבי ישמעאל שמות כ:טו:א
And all the people saw the sounds: They saw what was visible and heard what was audible. These are the words of Rebbe Yishmael. Rebbe Akiva says: They saw what was audible and they heard what was visible.	"וכל העם רואים את הקולות" - רואין הנראה ושומעין הנשמע, דברי ר' ישמעאל. רבי עקיבא אומר: רואין (הנשמע) ושומעין הנראה.

Kli Yakar on Shemot 20:15:1	כלי יקר שמות כ:טו:א
Each word God spoke became palpable and tangible to the extent that it took on physical form and could be seen in the air as floating letters as if they were written in front of them.	והנה קרוב לשמוע שכל דבור ודבור שיצא מפי הקב"ה, מיד נתגשם אותו דבור והיה בו כ"כ ממשות עד שהיו רואין באויר כל האותיות פורחות וכאילו היה הכל כתוב לפניהם.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, <i>Re'eh: Seeing and Hearing</i> 5768
G-d is to be found not by looking but by listening. He lives in words – the words He spoke to the patriarchs and matriarchs, prophets and priests; ultimately in the words of the Torah itself – the words through which we are to interpret all other words. Why is G-d revealed in words? Because words are what makes us persons. Language makes homo sapiens unique. Because we have language, we can think. We can stand back, reflectively, from the data provided by our senses. We can ask questions. Human beings are the only species known to us in the universe capable of asking the question, Why?...If you seek G-d, turn your attention to language – not to people, places or objects. The hidden presence of G-d is everywhere. But the revealed presence of G-d is in the words He gave to humanity on the basis of which He made a series of covenants, first with Noah, then with Abraham, then with the Israelites at Mount Sinai. The Mosaic books constitute the covenant binding heaven and earth, G-d and mankind. Hence the philosophy of Israel – so different from that of ancient Greece, the European Enlightenment and contemporary science: To meet G-d is to listen to G-d. The apparent counterexample of Re'eh, "See," turns out to be not a contradiction of this idea but a dramatic reiteration of it. "See, I am placing before you both a blessing and a curse." What the Israelites were asked to see was words.

Kedushat Levi: Chayei Sarah 5	קדושת לוי: חיי שרה ה
From where do we know there is a call to teshuvah every day? From this-- that we heard a voice at Har Sinai "I am your God and you shall not, etc" from God's mouth. This voice is recorded on our hearts and from this comes a call to teshuvah every day.	ומהיכן בא לאדם התעוררות תשובה בכל יום מזה ששמענו את הקול בהר סיני אנכי ולא יהיה לך (שמות כ, ב-ג) מפי ה' זה נרשם בלבינו ומה בא התעוררות תשובה בכל יום.