

Cong. Etz Chaim's
Torah at the Table
Parshat Yitro

Parshat Yitro tells the story of Bnei Yisroel arriving at Har Sinai to accept the Torah. After accepting the Torah, we are told:

כָל־הָעָם רָאִים אֶת־הַקּוֹלֶת וְאֶת־הַלְּפִידֶם וְאֶת־קָרְעַל הַשְּׁפֵר וְאֶת־הַחֶרֶב עַשְׁנִי וַיַּרְא הָעָם וַיַּנְפַּע
וַיַּעֲמֹד בָּרְחָק:

All the people saw the thunder (lit. sounds) and lightning, the blare of the horn and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they fell back and stood at a distance.

How can a human being see a sound? And if this was a miracle that Hashem performed for the special occasion of receiving the Torah, why was it necessary?

Rav Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986) writes beautifully:

Rashi tells us that they saw the sounds. And it must be asked, why was this necessary? Why did Hashem perform this seemingly insignificant miracle? It seems that He did this to show us and give over that we each need to work and try to understand these words of Torah, by means of study and investigation, with all our strength to the point where we can "see" what we understand.

Why does Hashem require us to have such a deep understanding? Why not just rely on faith alone?

What things in Judaism do you "hear" but do not "see" (understand)?

Like most areas in life, Torah is only appreciated when one fully understands what they are learning. What can you do in your life to transform things you "hear" into things you "see?" How can Etz Chaim help you in that goal? Let me know! issbern@gmail.com :)