

## Talmud

### Parshat Yitro

וְכָל-הָעָם רֹאִים אֶת-הַקּוֹלֹת וְאֶת-הַלַּפִּידִם וְאֵת קוֹל הַשָּׁפָר וְאֶת-הַהָר עֹשֶׂן כִּי יֵרָא הָעָם וַיִּנָּעוּ וַיַּעֲמֵדוּ מֵרָחֹק:

All the people **saw** the thunder 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. (Shemot 20:15).

How could the people see the sounds?

S'fat Emet on Yitro

From ParshaNut.com:

One of the greatest of the Hasidic commentators is the [Sfat Emet](#), a 19th-century Polish mystic who was also a brilliant Talmudic and Biblical interpreter. And one of the best pieces of Sfat Emet I've ever read is on this verse. He cites Rashi's interpretation, which we've just explained, and then goes on:

We still have to understand, though, what the need is for this miracle. What do I care if they just heard the sounds, without a miracle? And we may answer: because Seeing and Hearing are two distinct experiences, one unlike the other. And each one has an advantage and a disadvantage. For the Seer looks at a thing in its completeness, exactly as it is. But for the Hearer, the sound changes as it enters his ears, and it isn't exactly the same sound that was originally made. That's the advantage of Seeing. But with Hearing, there is an advantage that the sound truly enters inside of him through the ear, whereas the sight remains outside. With this in mind, the verse teaches us that the Children of Israel had both advantages. They received the words in the manner of "seeing sounds," such that even though they truly entered inside of them, nevertheless they "saw" the sounds, without any distortion.

See the sounds. <https://torah.etzion.org.il/en/parashat-yitro-and-all-people-saw-sounds>  
<https://www.jta.org/2021/02/04/opinion/parashat-yitro-want-to-fight-injustice-and-build-community-start-with-humility>  
<https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/between-sight-and-sound-parashat-yitro-5779/>