

## **The Great and the Small**

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*Parshat Behar*

**G\*d spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai.** (Leviticus 25:1)

The words with which *Parshat Behar* begins remind us what the Torah is all about.

Mountains are tall, higher than their surroundings. Indeed, that is the definition of a mountain, that it rises far above the land surrounding it. But Sinai, our tradition teaches, was the least and the smallest of the mountains, as we can still see today, for, although it (whichever of the proposed sites for Mount Sinai we accept) rises above the plain in which it stands, it is not very impressive when we compare it to the Alps, the Himalayas, the Rockies, the Andes.

And that's what the Torah is all about. Sinai, as the least of mountains, combines the great and the small. And the Torah combines the great and the small. G\*d, the Infinite, speaks to Moses, the finite; the Divine speaks to the human; the Great speaks to the small.

Thus, we read at the beginning of the Talmudic Tractate *Pirkei Avot*, "Moses received the Torah from Sinai." Not, as we would perhaps expect, *at* Sinai, but *from* Sinai. It was not just that Sinai was the location where Moses received the Torah; he received it *from* Sinai, as if Mount Sinai itself had grown hands to hand the physical Torah to Moses or a throat to speak the words to him. It was Sinai itself that gave Moses the Torah; it was Sinai, combining the great and the small, that provided the lesson that is really what the Torah is all about.

The essence of Torah is to teach us to follow G\*d's Commands in this world. As we do so, we bring Heaven and Earth together, connecting the great and the small.

Then, not only do we stand at Sinai, seeing the great and the small; we *become* Sinai, combining in ourselves the great and the small.

To an awareness of the great and the small within us – our "inner child" and our "inner adult" acting in concert – may we soon be led.

Shabbat Shalom.

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