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THE DIALOGUE

A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR THE CHABAD HEBREW SCHOOL COMMUNITY

SHAVUOT!

By: Shandel Mueller. This is based on a story in the Talmud describing G-d's choice of Mt. Sinai as a perfect venue. It is also based on a talk by the Rebbe, in which he explains the dialectic of striving to be a 'small mountain'.

It was nearly 3,330 years ago, on the 6th day of the month of Sivan. The Jewish people were standing at the foot of Mt. Sinai. Seven weeks earlier, we had finally left Egypt. Now, we're ready to become the Jewish People. We were going to get the Torah from G-d!

Thunder and lightning rent the air, and the sound of the shofar was heard growing strangely louder and louder. All the people trembled.

Then all was quiet again. The air was very still. Not a sound was to be heard. No bird twittered, no donkey brayed, no ox lowed. Every living thing held its breath. Everybody and everything kept silent... waiting.

Suddenly G-d's mighty words were heard from one corner of the earth to the other: "I AM G-D, YOUR G-D!" One after another, G-d proclaimed the Ten Commandments.

Shavuot is that day!

At last, it was time for G-d to give His Torah to the Jewish People. G-d had been waiting for this moment, oh, for a couple of thousand years, ever since the world was created. "I want to teach my people to feel strong and proud, like a mountain," said G-d. "With strength and bravery, they will then go ahead and do the things that make My world into a better, holier, place. Yes! I will give the Torah to the Jewish People on a mountain." But which mountain should G-d choose for this special job? So many different mountains, each with its own uniqueness...

Suddenly, the Mountains started to argue!

The **tallest** mountain spoke up first: "Look at me, I am so tall that my head is in the clouds! G-d will choose me, because I am the tallest mountain."

"Yeah, I don't think so," snarled another mountain. "Get a look at my **volcano**. See the smoke pouring from my crater? How could you even compare yourself to my heat?"

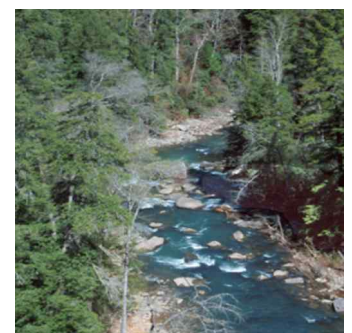
"Well, look at me," said another, coyly. "See the mountain **flowers** covering me? What good is fiery volcano when G-d can choose me, the prettiest mountain around?"

"Flowers? That's nothing!" sneered another. "I have rich, green, beautiful **grass**, all over me. In fact, I am the greenest grassiest mountain in the whole world!"

"Uh, guys, actually Hashem is going to choose me, for my cool, clear, sparkling, mountain **streams**! See how they gather in blue pools up and down my special mountain sides?"

"Biiiiig Deal!! Mountain streams? So what! Did you see my **waterfalls**? Flowing, cascading, finding their way down the mountainside, they seem magical. Whooshing and roaring."

"Water? Is that what you're bragging about? See the **snow** on my peak. I look like I am wearing a white *kippah*, quite fitting to receive the Torah, no?"



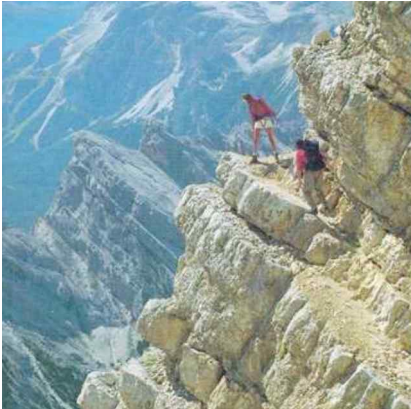


"Speaking of snow, did you see my **glacier**? It's incredible, watching the river of ice slide slowly down one of my slopes. I'll bet G-d will pick me, I am the best!"

"Even the **animals** know that I am the best mountain, look at my mountain goats! They skip and prance! Even people love me! I am simply perfect for rock climbing."



"Well, the **birds** pick me! They build their nests on me. My deep crevices and rocky ledges keep their babies safe, until they are ready to fly on their own."



"Speaking of rocks... I'm known to be the **rockiest** mountain around. Tough and hard, you can count on me."

"Why would Hashem want to give his Torah on a rocky mountain? Look, the soft green **brush** and bushes make me the softest mountain of all!"



Mount Sinai kept very quiet. "I don't think that I am better than all the other mountains," he thought to himself. "As a matter of fact, I am quite plain. I'm not especially tall or pretty, snowy or icy. I'm not very grassy or flowery. I don't have mountain streams or glaciers. Not many people would want to climb on me, and I don't see many birds or mountain goats, for I'm in the middle of the desert. As for my color, it's not green or blue or smoky. I'm just, well, mountain colored."



G-d said, "Mount Sinai is the perfect place to give the Torah!"

G-d wanted us to learn that it is important to be strong and brave, but not to turn that awareness into braggery.

It is important to know that we are special, but everyone is special too. We can't lift ourselves up by putting down others.

So G-d chose Mount Sinai.

A mountain, to remind us to be strong. But a simple one, to remind us to be humble.

Strength and humility, a perfect combo!

