**Sitting With Torah - Yitro**

There is a beautiful moment of our imagined past that has always stuck with me. A time in which I find myself closing my eyes- trying to picture and feel what this would have been like. This is the moment of revelation- the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai. A piece of our collective past that represents two fundamental pillars of Jewish tradition- Torah and community.

Since October 7th, my *neshama,* my soul, has embarked on a journey of incredible pain. Aches from the horrors of war. Sadness over questions like, “What’s the right thing to do?” And a shattering of my heart because I am seeing the Jewish community torn and divided in ways that I never imagined. Pitted against each other with misunderstanding and the inability to see the other.

This week's Torah portion Yitro marks the moment when we stood together and received the Torah. This moment at Sinai does not come to us with cheerfulness and delight. Rather this experience in Torah is tumultuous and scary. In [Exodus 19:16](https://www.sefaria.org/Exodus.19.16?lang=bi&aliyot=0) it says: “On the third day, as morning dawned, there was thunder, and lightning, and a dense cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud blast of the horn; and all the people who were in the camp trembled.” Thunder, a sound that echoes throughout the atmosphere and reverberates in your body. Lightening, visions of unimaginable light thrust through the horizon. This moment of peoplehood, of community making, was one in which we trembled. Where we were scared by the things we heard and the things we saw. Nonetheless, *this* is the moment of revelation, a moment in which our bonds were fused forever. And to think that we all stood together and were in agreement on everything we experienced is diminishing the power of personal experience.

When I say “our” bonds were fused in this moment it is because we, and all the generations of our past were there at revelation. In Deuteronomy 29:13-14 it says: “I make this covenant, with its sanctions, not with you alone, but both with those who are standing here with us this day before our God, Adonai, and with those who are not with us here this day.”

One of the oldest teachings I remember from my Jewish education is this piece right here; that we, all of us, and generations of the past were present for that moment of revelation at Sinai. Within our bodies we feel the vibrations of the thunder, within our memories, we have sight of the lightning, and within our souls, we have a common memory of being brought together as a community, although it was tumultuous and scary. Being in the Jewish community means that at our moment of revelation, we heard things that were not easy to hear, and we saw things that were not easy to see. Yet we stood together and processed through this- and this is how we became a people.

What I want is to be standing at Sinai with all of you, through the thunder and the lightning- through the difficulties of discussion, understanding, and *kahal,* community. You are a part of *my* community, no matter what the belief is. We as a Jewish people are founded on these two principles- Torah and community. I offer myself as a place to be a seen and heard member of our entire Jewish community. I offer us all the space to open our hearts to thunder and lightning and recognize that no matter what we believe we are one.