

**Drash 1/29/00**  
**By Rabbi Lisa Edwards**  
**Beth Chayim Chadashim**

**(Drash by Rabbi Laurence Edwards will be available soon!)**

Not that I think I am "the VOICE" that Larry just spoke of, but if there are still ears willing to listen, I wanted to say a few things as well, before we do hear THE VOICE.

When Larry and I were kids we had a book that we both loved (still love) called, LION by William Pene du Bois. It is the story of the artists who "long, long ago, high up in the sky, way above the clouds" spent their days in a white and silver palace designing the animals that the Chief Designer would then send to Planet Earth. LION, as you might imagine, is the story of the creation of the animal called LION. In this story, the animal called Lion changed a lot from conception to implementation. One of the ways Lion changed is that when its creator, Artist Foreman, first imagined LION, he thought to himself, LION will say "Peep Peep." And "peep peep" was the sound the Foreman's LION uttered through all the design changes right up to the last minute when the Chief Designer, in approving the final plans for LION, asked Foreman, "What sort of noise does LION make? Does LION roar like THUNDER?" (You'll have to read the whole book sometime.)

The Torah verse of the week that the Torah study group chose last night is part of the description of the scene at Sinai that Larry made reference to. Immediately before we're told that "God spoke all these words," we learn that "the blare of the horn grew louder and louder. Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder." How many of you before tonight would have imagined that at Sinai when God spoke, God roared like thunder? Most of us do, I think, follow the Cecil B. DeMille school of thought on this. Even our translation follows that school of thought, for the Hebrew doesn't say thunder at all, it just says v'haElohim ya-ah-neh-nu v'kol and God answered him with a voice" [Exodus 19:19].

But what if it was a quieter voice, as Larry suggested. What if it wasn't a thunderous voice that God used when God spoke all these words, but rather more like the voice Elijah heard on a mountainside many years later, a voice that the Book of Kings describes as kol d'mamah dakah [1 Kings 19:10-12], "a thin voice of silence." What if the noise God made sounded more like "peep peep" than like the roar of thunder? What if, when "God spoke all these words," God whispered them?

What happens when someone whispers? What is the difference between a peep,peep and a roar? When someone whispers to another, the listener tends to lean in closer, often the whisperer does too. Thus, the act of whispering automatically creates an intimacy between whisperer and listener. On the other hand, when a thundering voice shouts out, a listener might instinctively pull back, step back, maybe even cover one's ears. Shouting automatically creates distance between the shouter and the shoutee. When we hear again the words God spoke in the midst of thunder from that shaking, quaking, smoky mountain will we lean in or step back? cover our ears? or cup them gently, eager to hear more?