

An MP is a member of the British Parliament  
Our MP is also originally from England -

## **Menachem Persoff**

### **Do we know what we hear?**

In this day and age of the global village, Internet, Twitter, Tic-Tac, and other media outlets, it is not easy to keep a secret. However, as is well-known, "beauty" is in the eye of the beholder: Two people view the same event through different eyes, interpreting reality based on personal preferences and viewpoints. What they hear (and see) is both subjective and selective.

So, when the opening lines of our parsha declare that "Yitro, the Priest of Midyan and father-in-law of Moshe, heard all that Hashem did to Moshe and Israel, His people - that Hashem took Israel out of Egypt" - What did he hear and which "Yitro" processed what he heard?

Was it Yitro, Moshe's father-in-law, or Jethro, the Midianite priest? And what precisely did he hear? Following opinions expressed in the Talmud, he heard about (1) the war with Amalek (the account of which precedes our parsha) or (2) the Splitting of the Sea or (3) Matan Torah (cf. Zera'im 116a). For Rashi, the first two options triggered Yitro's conversion to Judaism.

The Maharal asks, wouldn't either of

these events have been enough to spur Yitro to enter into the fold? Why does Rashi indicate both events?

It appears that when Yitro heard these matters, he was already disposed to see Hashem in all His various guises; no longer would he propose that there was a separate god for the sun and another for the earth.

For when Yitro heard of the Splitting of the Sea, he recognized Hashem's power over water, that primary source of life. Furthermore, he became aware of Hashem's supremacy over nature in the skies when Hashem stilled the sun towards the end-game of the battle with Amalek (Maharal). Both these exceptional happenings were executed by the "Hand of God", as opposed to the more localized plagues managed by the "Finger of God". As such, they had a devastating effect on all the surrounding peoples.

These were the lessons drawn by Yitro. Moreover, says the Maharal, the reverberating voice that spread across the nations at Har Sinai would poignantly have prevailed upon Yitro as an encapsulating, higher-level universal experience that established for him, once and for all, Hashem's supremacy and dominion over the entire world. **MP**