

PARSHAT YITRO 5782
EXODUS 18:1-20:23
18 SH'VAT 5782/20 JANUARY 2022



Self-Portrait with Grey Felt Hat
Oil on Cotton by Vincent Van Gogh
“We cannot speak other than by our painting.”

LEARNING TO PAINT

1. God said to Moses, “Write down these matters (*devarim*), for on the basis of (*al pi*) these matters (*devarim*) I make a covenant with you and with Israel.” (Exodus 34:27).

Rabbi Elazar says, The majority of Torah was transmitted in writing, while the minority was transmitted orally, as it is stated: “I wrote for him the greater part of My Torah” (Hosea 8:12). And Rabbi Yohanan says, The majority of the Torah was transmitted orally (*al peh*), while the minority was transmitted in written form, as it is stated: “For on the basis of (*al pi*) these matters I have made a covenant with you and with Israel (Exodus 34:27). (Gittin 60b)

2. “If you accept the Torah, it will be well with you, but if not, here will be your burial site.” (Shabbat 88a)

For that is why the Torah was distributed to the 600,000 people in the desert, to be an all-inclusive Torah from every opinion and wisdom. (Maharsha)

3. Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid, for God has come only in order to test (*nasot*) you.” (Exodus 20:17)

God tested (*nisah*) Abraham. (Genesis 22:1)

In order to exalt you, to elevate you throughout the world....*Nasot* is an expression of elevation and greatness. (Rashi to 20:17)

4. It is human spiritual greatness that is God’s purpose in revealing Godself. (HaAmek Davar)
5. The purpose of Revelation is to develop human qualities. What is enacted at Sinai is the revelation of the human being in larger range and strength....God comes at Sinai so that the human being may come fully into its own. (Avivah Zornberg, *The Particulars of Rapture*)