Hearing Voices at Sinai: Living in the Plural

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Receiving the Torah was a moment of divine revelation and human connection. When we stood at Sinai, we did so "*k'ish echad b'lev echad*"—as one person with one heart (Rashi on Shemot 19:2, citing *Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael*). That unity was not incidental—it was essential. Torah could not be given to individuals in isolation. It required a people bound to one another in responsibility and shared destiny.

The Gemara tells us that each person serves as a guarantor for the other: "*Kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh*"—all of Israel is responsible for one another (*Shevuot* 39a). This idea, *arvut*, is not merely a moral nicety. It is the condition upon which revelation was possible. Divine truth cannot be housed in fragmented selves; it must live within a collective committed to compassion, accountability, and mutual care.

In a world that prizes autonomy and individual achievement, *arvut* asks something countercultural of us. It demands that we see ourselves not only as individuals with private lives, but as part of a covenantal community where the well-being of the other is bound up with our own. It invites us to live in the plural—to hear not only our own voice at Sinai, but the echo of our neighbor's.

Shavuot challenges us to see responsibility as expansive, not burdensome. To care is not to be weighed down—it is to be lifted by the knowledge that we do not stand alone. Just as the people of Israel carried each other through the wilderness, so too are we meant to carry each other through doubt, struggle, and joy.

In a time when the Jewish people face profound challenges and painful fractures, the call to *arvut* has never been more urgent. We stand together, not just at Sinai, but in every moment that demands courage, faith, and love. Revelation is not behind us—it happens again every time we choose to show up for one another.

This Shavuot, as we celebrate the gift of Torah, let us also recommit to the gift of each other. Let us read our story not just as a record of laws and lessons, but as a guide to building lives of shared purpose.