

VIEW FROM THE HEIGHTS

September 2023

“And lo, the Lord passed by... a soft, murmuring sound.”
1 Kings 19:11,12 (Tanakh Translation)

Greetings,

Welcome to Late Summer! This is a glorious season, filled with a myriad of unique blessings. Milder weather, mellowed colours, and abundant offerings from Nature refresh and revive us.

September sounds add their own joy. The honking of wintering geese, the buzzing of stocking-up bees, the clunking of apples as they fall into baskets – or pie dishes! Sweet sounds as summer segues into fall.

Sounds are a wonderful pathway to the holy. From music to the voice of a loved one, to the singing of birds, our ears help us connect with God. But rarely without effort. Elijah was surprised to discover that God’s voice is almost noiseless. We must listen up! Or employ sound amplification devices.

The First World War era produced listening devices that are ideal models for the systems required to hear God more clearly.

As aircraft began to be used in combat, various early warning systems were developed to detect incoming enemy planes. Enormous acoustic mirrors were found to be successful and were erected at strategic points along the coast.ⁱ

These huge, curved concrete listening mirrors captured sound waves at focal points where microphones were located. These were able to detect the low hum of enemy aircraft up to 27 miles before they could be seen. Trained operators identified the approaching sounds and alerted the authorities, providing a 15-minute warning for air defenses. It was an intense, high-pressure task and operators were only able to listen for 30-40 minutes per shift.

Improvements in aeronautical speeds made these concrete listening devices less effective and, by the Second World War, they were replaced by radar. But three acoustic mirrors still stand on England’s southeast shore.ⁱⁱ One dome measures 20 feet across, and one 30 feet. A giant curved wall is 200 feet in length. The larger the ‘ear’, the greater the accuracy.

These long-obsolete defense systems are testaments to the terrible noise of war. They also witness to human innovation and the importance of discovering how to amplify sound. Whether it is for personal wellbeing, national security, or to make base notes thunder!

We still need such “listening mirrors” to detect God’s *“soft, murmuring sound”*. The bigger – and more accurate – the better! They can be as large as we’re willing to go: the size of our hearts, the size of our church, or faith tradition, the size of a nation.

We can listen in shifts! According to our religion, or the time zones we live in. Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays are well covered, but we need more intensive listeners Mondays through Thursdays. Every person, from every faith – and none - is welcome to sign up!

Thirty to forty minute shifts of intense listening helped protect Britain from aerial attacks. Imagine the good that would come from intense listening to God.

A half hour or so shift per day could save the world!

May September bring you many blessings – especially, world-sized ears!

Brenda

ⁱ A mirror is a device that reflects light or sound waves.

ⁱⁱ *"The Denge Sound Mirrors: Radar's Predecessor"*, July 31, 2019, Kuriositas.com