

# *Shiur L'Yom Shishi<sup>1</sup>*

[Friday's Study]

READINGS:      ***Torah Ki Tisa:***                      **Exodus 34:4-35**  
                      ***Haftarah:***                                      **I Kings 18:30-39**  
                      ***B'rit Chadasha:***                              **I Corinthians 8:12-13**

***Merciful. Compassionate. Slow to Anger. Abounding in Goodness and Truth.***

[Exodus 34:6]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 119:169-176;

This Week's Amidah prayer Focus is the *Avot, the Prayer of the Fathers*

***Vayash'kem Moshe b'boker*** – And Moshe rose early of morning ... ***vaya'al el-har Sinai*** – and ascended Mount Sinai ... ***ka'asher tzivah Adonai oto*** – as the Holy One had enjoined him ... ***b'yado shnei luchot avanim*** – and in his hand were two tablets of stone. **Exodus 34:4.**

Blame it on the moon. Insanity reigned. *Ra, shachat, and chamas* temporarily took hold of us, made us forget who we are, and took our entire camp on a whirlwind bender of *lawlessness, folly, vanity, idolatry fornication, and perversion*; finally, however, the season of summer madness seems to have run its course. In the bloody aftermath of what some are now calling *chet ha-egel* – *i.e.* ‘the calf sin’ - we are experiencing one wave after another of shock, shame, guilt, and grief. Aharon has put away the sculpting tools he used to create that despicable calf-god and is sitting in sackcloth and ashes. Moshe is trying to rationalize and self-excuse himself for all the ranting and raving; for smashing the Holy One's precious Tablets of Divine Testimony into pieces in a fit of self-righteous rage; for the first concocting, then dispensing a deadly ‘Kool-Aid’ potion consisting of ‘golden calf dust’ for every man, woman, and child in the camp to swallow in shame; and for using the Holy One's name to incite bloodthirsty vigilantes to run to and fro in the camp hacking *each man his brother, each man his friend* into bloody pieces. At last the screaming is over. At last the bloodletting is done. But look at the mess we have made! Can this infernal scarlet letter we now wear ever be removed from our foreheads? Can the label ‘*infidel*’ ever be removed? Will these sickening spots of blood ever disappear from our hands? Can we ever look each other, much less Moshe and Aharon, in the eye again? Can the fiery passion for beauty, majesty, purity, and holiness that we felt the day the Holy One declared His truth to us rise again from this ash heap of profanity and uncleanness? Can we – can anyone - *make this right*? Can this disaster be fixed? Can the damage we caused by surrendering our wills, emotions, and pseudo-intellecets to the *ra, shachat, and*

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*chamas* axis of evil ever be undone?

Will what we take away from our time at Sinai be the gross darkness of the abyss into which we rode the golden calf? Heaven forbid! Will it be the shocking level of cruelty to which a trusted leader of his people can fall when he lets his temper rise unchecked, and casts off shalom, lovingkindness, joy, gentleness, humility, goodness, and self-control all at the same time? May it never be so! This can't be the end. As *Fiddler On The Roof's* main character, Tevye the Jewish milkman, said after surveying the aftermath of the Cossack rampage that disrupted his daughter Tzeitels' wedding: *'Well ... why are you all standing around? CLEAN UP!'*

Something deep within us whispers that, whatever it looks like - or we *feel like* – right now, the Holy One is not finished with us yet. Somehow – though we do not know how – we sense that in His Brilliance and Goodness – for the sake of His Grand Plan of Redemption for Mankind and Restoration for Creation- He is even now in the process of working all things, including the nastiness that just happened in our camp, together for good for those who love Him, who are called according to His Purpose. Somehow we know that this disaster does not have to be what our season at this mountain is remembered for – and that something wonderful is even yet going to happen here that will send waves of hope and healing through nations, throughout generations, and across the universe.

### ***Second Chances; New Beginnings; Fresh Starts***

Whatever our future holds, it will not be a matter of suspense much longer. Moshe has received a call from On High. The Holy One said to him ***Cut two tablets of stone like the first ones ... and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself to Me there on the top of the mountain.*** Exodus 34:1-2. Later the Psalmist will later pen a song to be sung in times of similar ascent as follows: ***If you, O Holy One, should mark iniquities, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you, that you may be revered .... Yisrael, hope in the Holy One; for with the Holy One there is mercy; and with Him is abundant redemption; and He will redeem Yisrael from all his iniquities.*** Psalm 130:3-4, 7-8. *Selah!*

After this particular call, the morning could not come soon enough. It was still pitch dark when we heard Moshe cutting a second set of tablets out of stone. Some got up to see what all the racket was about, and caught a glimpse of Moshe heading back up the mountain for another encounter with the Holy One. How long will he be gone this time? What is he going to see – and hear – and do? And what kind of mood will he be in when – if – he returns. We can only imagine.

Watching Moshe's outline against the cliff getting smaller as the distance between

him and our camp caused some of us to wonder what this journey might bode for us? The last time we were left on our own we messed things up royally. We behaved like sheep without a shepherd. We lost focus and perspective. We got restless. We quit meditating on the Torah. We stopped speaking to one another in hushed tones about the things that matter most in life - *i.e.* the *wonders of Creation*, the *splendor of our original Edenic home*, the *genesis of the nations*, the *stories of the ancients*, the *terms of the Avrahamic call and covenant*, the *life-lessons of the Patriarchal Narratives*, the ‘*Great Nation*’ Promises of Exodus 6:6-8 and 19:3-5, the *miracles of deliverance we had seen*, the *Ten Identity-Redefining Words* that we all heard the Holy One speak at Sinai, or on the mind-renewing wisdom of the *Mishpatim Discourse*. We quit offering up prayer without ceasing. We quit giving thanks at all times. We quit being content in every circumstance. Our rotten, old man flesh rose up. Our appetites and emotions went on a rampage. Our pseudo-intellecets kicked in. Our love for the Bridegroom-King faded into hunger for hype, a craving for called meetings, and a fondness for a familiar form of religion. And as for Moshe? Well, let’s just say that on his re-entry to the camp from the Beauty Realm Moshe didn’t exactly *stick the landing!* Ah, but that *was then*, and this is *now*. Thank our Great Redeemer for second chances – and for understanding that fallen human beings come with a learning curve that is every bit as steep as Sinai’s slippery slope.

### ***The Divine Invitation Has Been Issued – to Arise and Ascend!***

Moshe will soon begin yet another climactic 40-day meeting with the Holy One. Will this involve another ‘magical mystery tour’ of the Holy One’s Courts? Well, not exactly. As wonderful as that grand tour was, the experience He has planned for the prophet now is going to be *much more personal* - and *worldview altering*. Last time the Holy One showed Moshe where He stays; this time He is going to show Him Himself. In the course of this adventure the Holy One is not just going to pull back the veil on the Beauty Realm where He holds Court; this time He is finally going to pull back the veil on ... *the Source From Whom All Beauty Emanates!* He has been dropping hints for awhile now about causing – or is it enabling - mortal men to KNOW Him. He is now ready to pull out all the stops to make that happen. He is going to start with Moshe. He is going to tuck the prophet with a shady past and recurring anger management issues away in a ‘safe room’ – carved especially for him in the cleft of a rock. Then He is going to overshadow Moshe, and cover him with His Beautiful Hand. Then, as Moshe gazes in awe, He is going to cause *all his goodness* to pass by in front of him. *Selah!* And as His goodness passes by Moshe, our eyes will see for the first time the telltale signs that always accompany His Presence - the ripples and waves of goodness and mercy that flow outward from His Being, and power His healing, transforming, ‘make-all-things-new’ Wake. We will know, when it is done, why the inspired Psalmists

cry over and over again: *Hodu l'Adonai ki tov ... give thanks to the Holy One, for He is GOOD – ki l'olam chasdo - and His Mercy flows continuously forever! See Psalm 106:1, 107:1, 118:1 and 29; and 136:1. And we will, at last, know what David was talking about when he so confidently declared: Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life .... Psalm 23:6.*

***It is Time To Stop Projecting Our Own Ideas, Offenses, Opinions,  
and Emotions Onto the Holy One***

*Knowing* the Creator of the Universe? Not as a concept or an object of religious belief – but as a *REAL, LIVING, INTERACTING PERSONA*? Knowing the God of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov, not theoretically, theologically, or doctrinally – but *PERSONALLY* – as a Trusted Friend? As a Worthy King? As a Gentle Shepherd? As an Honored Mentor? As a Cherished Rabbi? As the Ultimate Physician? As the Fountain of all Wisdom? As an Advocate for the Widow, a Father to the Fatherless, a Provider for the Poor, and as a Champion of the Foreigner? As a Constant Companion? As a Caring Confidante? As a Discippler and Disciplinarian in regard to every Discipline of Life? That ... would be ... a ... *game-changer!* But let's face it: we have ... well ... *OBSTACLES* that would have to be overcome for that to happen. We suffer from a long list of 'fallen humanity' issues. We are products of social, ideological, political, philosophical, and religious programming - our brains having been crammed full of such nonsense since the moment it formed in our mother's womb. We have tuned our ears to serpent-speak and gorged ourselves on the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of 'good' and 'evil' for so long that we now consider suspicions, illusions, delusions, obsessions, paranoidias, and disaffection syndromes to be 'normal'. We hypocritically coddle in ourselves – yet roundly condemn in others - ethnocentric, culture-obsessed, class-envy inspired, and gender-superiority biases. We approach people and situations with preconceived notions. We tend to process all information we receive about anyone we meet or hear about - including the Holy One - through a network of personal wounds, offenses, opinions and painful experiences. We have therefore developed an extensive social 'firewall' that very few people, and certainly not a God we can't see or control – have permission to penetrate. We have erected a razor-wire quality self-protection system of *negative-emotion-activating 'trigger-points'*. Most of our daily conversations therefore consist of self-indulgent ranting, repetition of catch phrases and cliches, banal prattling, panhandling, pandering, irreverent jokes, sarcastic one-liners, pseudo-intellectual pontification, excursions in fantasy, lewd innuendo, conspiracy theory speculation, and/or *opinion terrorism*. We have unrealistic expectations (especially of others); as a result we tend to 1. display a mindset of entitlement; 2. get offended at the drop of a hat – and stay offended for decades because we demand both prolonged groveling and Herculean acts of penance from the people we think wronged us before we will grant

forgiveness; 3. use far *too much profanity* to be taken seriously; 4. frequently indulge – and loudly celebrate - negative emotions like fear, envy, jealousy, anger, outrage, and disappointment; 5. have regular bouts of depression and despair; 6. have vocabularies that heavily emphasize complaint, criticism, and judgmentalism and are woefully short on thanksgiving, affirmation, and solution/resolution-counsel; and 7. consider ourselves persecuted victims of evildoers and righteous martyrs for morality instead of blessed servants of the Most High, here on earth to solely to do His Will. We project onto others – including the Holy One - how *we feel* ... or how we think *important people* are supposed to feel. How can the Holy One break through these strongholds? How can He cause us to truly know Him, for Who He really is - instead of for Who we want ... or fear ... Him to be?

The Holy One knows, you see, that at this point, even Moshe does not really know Him. If Moshe really knew Him, he would never have ordered his brethren to grab their swords, and go through the camp, from entrance to entrance, killing every man his brother, his companion, and his neighbor. **Exodus 32:27.**

Oh, Moshe has heard the Holy One's Voice – multiple times even. He knows His 'name'. He has heard His Words. But knowing Scripture is not the same as knowing the *Author of Scripture*. Knowing Torah is not the same as knowing the Source of Torah. Knowing a few protocols – or even all the protocols - is nowhere close to knowing the Protocol Designer's, or the Purpose of the protocols. Knowing how to pronounce a couple of the Almighty's Name[s] is not even in the same ballpark as knowing *Him*. No, Moshe did not know the Holy One yet. His response to the golden calf episode had proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that he did not really 'get' the Holy One at all, or understand the essence of, or the reason for, either the Avrahamic Covenant or Matan Torah. Moshe does not yet have a clue of the Grand Scale of the Redemptive and Restorative Plan the Holy One intends to unleash through *B'nei Yisrael*.

Why is Moshe still so clueless - even after the burning bush; even after Matan Torah; even after the Magical Mystery Tour; and after holding in his own hands the tablets inscribed by the Finger of God? What has hindered Moshe in understanding the Holy One's Persona, and learning His Purposes, Plans, and Ways? Perhaps this is, in part at least, because the only authority figures Moshe had ever really known were two obstinate and bloodthirsty Pharaohs, a cruel taskmaster, and an opinionated, controlling Midyani warlord/father-in-law. Thus far, it seems, Moshe has been subconsciously relating to the Holy One as if he thought the Holy One was like the authority figures from his past – i.e. narcissistic, cruel, impatient, vindictive, bossy, arrogant, manipulative, and angry most of the time. Moshe had therefore been viewing the Holy One, and interpreting all His

Beautiful Words, through the murky, suspicious lens of his traumatic experiences with Pharaoh and Yitro. How had Pharaoh treated him? He had mocked and banished him. How had Yitro treated him? He had treated him like a child, bossed him around, played with his emotions, manipulated him like a puppet, and used him like a slave. This had been the sum total of Moshe's experiences with authority figures. That is why Moshe has so often misread and misrepresented the Holy One at the most critical times of the desert experience. He has been projected what was in his own mind and heart onto the Holy One. He had actually believed that it was in the Holy One's heart to *go postal* on, and reign terror in the Camp of, the sons and daughters of the Avrahamic Covenant. Can you believe it? That is what *projection* does to a person and a relationship.

It is time for Moshe – and through his writings, for *us* – to have a great awakening. It is time we all learned Who the Holy One really is – and what He is really like – instead of thinking He is like some human being we have known. So the Holy One is about to take care of that. He is about to reveal that He is *not narcissistic, cruel, impatient, and vindictive like the Pharaohs, kings, generals, and politicians we have known*. He is about to prove that He is *not bossy, self-righteous, judgmental, and deceptive like the warlords, straw bosses, parents, policemen, judges, and community organizers who have inflicted their will upon and extracted their pound of flesh from us*. He is about to open our eyes wide. He is about to reveal by far the most wonderful aspect of the Beauty Realm - His own kind, merciful, patient, forgiving, covenant-faithful, and redemption-focused nature. As you will recall the Holy One just told Moshe:

***Hineh makom iti v'nitzavta al-ha-tzur***

*Behold - a special place where you can stand on the rocky crag!*

***Vehayah ba'avor k'vodi v'samticha b'nik'rat ha-tzur***

*When My glory passes by, I will place you in a crevice in the rock,*

***V'sakoti chapi aleicha ad-ovri***

*and protect you with My power until I pass by.*

***Vaha-siroti et-kapi v'ra'ita et-achorai***

*I will then remove My protective power, and you will gaze upon that which follows<sup>2</sup>*

***ufanai lo yera'u***

*My Face itself, however, you will not see.*

An exhilaratingly refreshing Wind of the *Ruach HaQodesh* is about to blow upon

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<sup>2</sup> What the Holy One promises to show Moshe *acharei* is enigmatic. The phrase *acharei* literally means *after* or *following*. The KJV translators chose to translate this phrase as 'My Back'. Hebrew translators have varied in their interpretations. The most literal is 'what follows from My Existence', or 'in My Wake'. More esoteric interpretations include 'a glimmer of My essence' [Emmunot VeDeyot 2:12]; or 'a partial realization of My uniqueness.' Yad, Yesodei HaTorah 1:10.

the Covenant and everyone associated with it. A reserved seat in the cleft in the Rock is our destiny. More revelation than we can imagine concerning the character, attributes, ways and cross-generational redemptive plan of our Bridegroom-King is our assigned portion. The wounds of our individual hearts and collective souls are about to be healed. The covenant the Holy One made with us will not change – but everything about the way we look at it – and HIM – will be made fresh and new.

### *I Lay in Tziyon, For a Foundation, A Stone*

Before ascending Mount Sinai this time Moshe had to get his hands really dirty. He had to get a hammer and chisel and carve two blank tablets out of something our English translations call “stone”. It will be upon these tablets that the terms of the *b’rit chadasha* [i.e. renewed, refreshed covenant] will be inscribed.

From what kind of stone was the second set of tablets hewn? The Hebrew word used to describe this substance is *avanim*. This is a plural form of the Hebrew noun *eben*<sup>3</sup>. One way of translating this word is “stone”. However, for the essence of any Hebrew word one should always look behind the definitions [which are conceptual], to the original word picture or pictographic mural presented to us by the Hebrew letters that make up the word. Each Hebrew letter is a pictograph. Put the pictographs together and you get a mural that visually depicts what lies at the essence of the combination of letters that makes up the particular word. The first letter of the Hebrew word *eben* is *alef* - the first letter of the Hebrew *alef-beit*. This letter is a pictographic symbol representing the Holy One, the One Who existed before any other. The *alef* is followed by the Hebrew word *ben* (*beit, nun sofit*), usually interpreted to mean “son”<sup>4</sup>. When you put these concepts together you get a word picture – like a hieroglyphic. What does it show? *The son [of] the Holy One! The Son [of] the Holy One is the medium by which the Torah was to be transmitted. The Torah is inseparable from the Son [of] the Holy One. The Torah is the essence of the Son [of] the Holy One.*

There will be no golden calf waiting for Moshe when he returns to the camp this time. This time he will know far more about the goodness – not to mention the essential character, nature, attributes - of the Holy One than he did the last time. This time Moshe’s face will not be filled with rage – but will instead radiate Divine Light. The set of *luchot* [tablets] the prophet will receive this time will not be thrown to the ground and shattered in indignation. This set will be delivered to – and embraced by, and taught to generation after generation of - the Holy One’s

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<sup>3</sup> Eben is *alef, beit, nun sofit*. Strong’s Hebrew word #68, it is pronounced *eh'-ben*.

<sup>4</sup> The letter *beit* is a pictograph of a household, with the ‘head’ of the household in his place. The letter *nun sofit* [the form the letter nun takes when at the end of a word] is a pictograph of the Messiah – the ultimate son or heir. The pictographic mural of *beit-nun sofit* [*ben*] is the declaration that the functioning household [*bayit*] will bring forth Messiah.



*Kallah* [Bride-to-be]. This second set of *luchot* will become the center of absolute gravity for the camp. It will inside the *aron ha-kodesh* [the ark of holiness], and its substance will come to life day-by-day, Sabbath-by-Sabbath, year by year, and generation, in the hearts, minds, mouths, and actions of the Holy One's *am segulah*.

### ***The Holy One Reveals His Glory***

Once Moshe ascended Mt. Sinai with the second set of tablets Torah tells us that the Holy One did something amazing: He “descended”.

#### ***Vayered Adonai b'anan v'yityatzev imo sham***

*And the Holy One descended in a cloud, and He stood there with him*

The Bridegroom-King did not sit back and wait for Moshe to come to Him. Like the father of the prodigal son, He saw him a long way off and ran<sup>5</sup> to meet him. The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as “stood with” is *yatzab*<sup>6</sup>. This word means to *place, set, stand, set or station oneself*, or to *present oneself*. The Creator of the Universe voluntarily left Heaven's Courts and descended into the realm of the temporal and physical. He left His Throne. He laid aside His Majesty. And He “stood” with, and spoke face-to-Face to, a mere man.

Let us pause and meditate on this amazing imagery for a moment. The idea is revolutionary, is it not? The intimacy, the tenderness, the glory ... it takes the breath away!

Are you ready to take your turn in the cleft of the craggy rock? Are you prepared to feel yourself suddenly surrounded by the shadow of the Divine Hand? Are you ready to feel the breeze of His Approach on your face? Are you ready to breathe in the sweet fragrance of His Presence? Are you ready to let Him wash every speck of residue from the filth of your sinfulness away, make you clean, and cover you with His tallit? Are you ready to see all His Goodness pass by, right in front of your eyes? Are you ready to let Him declare His nature, character, and long-range redemptive plan for mankind over you and your family? Summon your courage. Gird up your loins. Open your spiritual eyes wide. *Selah!* This is the revelation for which Moshe cried out on our behalf. The Holy One is about to *present Himself*. He will *set Himself* before our faces. Then He will cause all His Goodness to “*pass by*” or “*passed over before*” us. What does that mean? What does that look like?

The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as ‘passed by’ or ‘passed over before’ in this verse is *abar - ayin, bet, resh*. Interestingly, this is the verb from

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<sup>5</sup> See Luke 15:20(b): ... *when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.*

<sup>6</sup> *Yatzab* is *yod, tzade, beit*, Strong's Hebrew word #3320, it is pronounced *yaw-tzab'*.



which the term “Hebrew” comes. It means *to cross over from one realm to another*. Do you understand what that means? It means that the Holy One is going to cross over - make the transition - from Mount Sinai to *someplace else ... right before our eyes*. To where will the Divine Bridegroom ‘cross over’? Perhaps He is crossing over from *Mount Sinai* to *Mount Tziyon* – in the Heavenly Jerusalem. Perhaps this is the experience which the writer of Hebrews was talking about in Hebrews 12:18-24, where it is said:

*For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire,  
and to blackness and darkness and tempest,  
and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words,  
so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore.  
For they could not endure what was declared in their hearing:  
"And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it is to be stoned or shot with an arrow."  
And so terrifying was the sight that Moshe said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling."  
But you have come to **Mount Tziyon**, and to the city of the living God,  
the **heavenly Y'rushalayim** [Jerusalem], to an innumerable company of angels,  
to the general assembly and k'hilah of the firstborn  
who are registered in heaven, to the Holy One the Judge of all,  
to the spirits of just men made perfect,  
to Yeshua the Mediator of the covenant that has been made new,  
and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Hevel.  
[Hebrews 12:18-24 (author's translation)]*

This experience is the essence of what the gift of the ‘*second luchot*’ is about. It proclaims the forgiveness of sin that comes through the sprinkling of the Blood of the Lamb slain before the Foundation of the World. It testifies that even a betrothed maiden’s shameless adultery, committed under the very *Chuppah* where she pledged her troth to her Bridegroom, is covered by the sprinkling of that Blood. This is the revelation the Holy One showed Moshe in the place to which He ‘crossed over’. And it testifies that the Holy One will indeed put on temporal, physical, finite form, enter the temporal, physical, finite realm, go in search of His lost sheep, and then do whatever it takes to restore them to His fold, reawaken them to covenant, refresh them in love, return them to His paths of righteousness and reconnect them with their assigned roles in His Divine Plan for the Redemption of mankind and Creation.

### ***The Midot Ha-Rachamim [Attributes of Mercy]***

As the Holy One makes the transition, or crossing, we will hear the Voice with which we are become intimately familiar sounding forth once again. Torah tells us: ***Vayikra veshem*** – and He<sup>7</sup> called out a *shem*. This does not mean the Holy One said

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<sup>7</sup> I have chosen the interpretation of *Ibn Ezra*, that the Holy One is the One Who ‘called out’ His own Divine Name, as part of His promised self-revelation. *Targum Yonatan* and *Mizrachi*, on the other hand, interpret the masculine pronoun [he] – all the text gives us to tell us who ‘called out’ the Name - as referring to Moshe.

“My Name is ...” and then completed the sentence, as you and I would when introducing ourselves to a stranger. In Hebraic thought one’s *shem* is much, much more than the name or title by which one is called. To the Hebrew mind - and to the One Who created the Hebrew mind - a *shem* is a *description of the very essence of a person*. In Hebrew thought a *shem* is a *concise summary of the person’s essential attributes, characteristics, ways, motivations, and qualities*.

What the Holy One was doing as He proclaimed [Hebrew *qara'*, meaning to call out loudly] His *shem* in the course of crossing over before Moshe was revealing as much of His *essence*, His *attributes*, His *characteristics*, His *ways*, and His *moral/ethical qualities* as Moshe’s mind could process. The Holy One was revealing to Moshe what in Hebrew is called His “*midot ha-rachamim*” — *i.e.* His *essential attributes of compassionate mercy*<sup>8</sup>. Here is the *shem* by which the Holy One revealed Himself:

***YHVH YHVH El rachum v'chanun***

*The Holy One, the Holy One, a God of mercy and of grace*

***erech apayim v'rav-chesed v'emet***

*of longsuffering, and of great covenant-faithfulness and of truth.*

***Notzer chesed la'alafim***

*Keeping covenant faithfully with thousands,*

***nosei avon vafeisha v'chata'ah***

*He forgives iniquity and transgression and sin,*

***V'nakeh lo yenakei***

*He will not by any means clear [the slate]*

***pokeid avon avot al-banim v'al-bnei vanim***

*He will visit the sons and grandson and inspect them for their fathers’ sin*

***al-shileishim v'al-ribei'im***

*unto the third and fourth [generation]<sup>9</sup>.*

Why, after all this time, is the Holy One just now revealing to Moshe the fullness of His *shem*? Probably because, in light of our recent behavior at Sinai, it has now become clear to all neither Moshe nor any of us whom He redeemed from bondage in Egypt really have a clue Who it is we are dealing with. We have no idea how good He is. We have no grid for how faithful He is. We have never met anyone who was one millionth as merciful, or patient, or kind as Him. We are ignorant as newborn babes regarding what His essential characteristics, attributes, and motivations are. We know He delivered us – but we do not understand why. And

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<sup>8</sup> These attributes complement, and perfectly offset, the *midot Ha-Din* [Attributes of Judgment] which the Holy One declared over all His Redeemed in Exodus 20:2-6.

<sup>9</sup> This verse and its declaration should be considered in the light of, and with reference to, Exodus 20:5.

we do not know if we can – or even want to - trust Him. Indeed, no matter what good things our Divine Bridegroom does, He knows He still has a serious ‘*image problem*’ in our minds. As He is, so are we have been called to become. So far, however, the reality of Who He actually is, what really motivates Him, how He thinks, and what His essential characteristics consist of, has eluded us.

### ***The Creator of the Universe Is Ready to Address His ‘Image Problem’***

Everyone projects to others something modern marketers have called an ‘image’. This image is *how people perceive us* – *i.e.* what people think of when they think of us. Do they get a warm, fuzzy feeling? Do they think of us as strong - or weak? As capable - or bumbling? As caring - or cold-hearted? As wise - or foolish? As friendly - or aloof? As kind - or cruel? As trustworthy - or sneaky? As irritable - or patient; as sad - or happy?

In the early days at Sinai – much like is occurring today – there was a toxic high-tide of half-truth, confusion, misinformation and *selective misremembering* concerning the identity, character, and motives of the One Who had delivered B’nei Yisrael from Egypt inundating the Camp of the Redeemed. It is one thing to get delivered from bondage; it is something altogether more difficult to get to truly know, trust, appreciate, and bond with one’s Deliverer.

The former slaves had, of course, seen evidence of the awesome power their Deliverer possessed. They had witnessed first-hand the devastation wrought by the plagues. They had seen with their own eyes what their Deliverer did at *Pi Ha-Chirot* - first dividing the waters of the Sea of Reeds and then causing the waters to collapse upon the Egyptian armies. They had seen their Deliverer make bread fall from Heaven and water flow from a rock. Many negative words have been spoken about him along the way to Sinai. Some of those He redeemed have accused Him publicly of hating them, and of bringing them out into the desert just to kill them. Some very publicly selectively misremembered the circumstances of their leaving Egypt, accusing their Deliverer of ignoring their request to ‘leave them alone and let them serve the Egyptians’. Of course that alleged event never really happened; but the mere public expression of such nonsense – especially in a time of great vulnerability when raw negative emotion was running amuck among the masses - had its delicious serpentine effect.

This misinformation and selective misremembering continued through the Divine Betrothal ceremony of Exodus 19 -20. When we drew near to Him, and heard His Voice for the first time, we drew back in fear. We felt the thunderings, saw the lightning flashes, heard the sound of the *shofar*, and realized the mountain was smoking; and we trembled and stood afar off. We said to Moshe: ***You speak with***

*us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.* Exodus 20:18-19. Then, as Aharon pulled a golden image in the shape of a calf from the fire at Sinai, someone yelled: *This is your god, Yisra'el, that brought you up out of the land of Mitzrayim!* Exodus 32:4. We bought the lie, hook, line, and sinker. The Holy One knows He has an 'image problem'. And He is now ready to address it head on – and *kalah* us - just like He tried to tell Moshe He was going to do before Moshe had eyes to see or ears to hear Who He really is and what He is really up to.

### ***The Thirteen Essential Attributes***

The Holy One does not want His Beloved to confuse him with the human masters they have known. He does not want them to think He is like Pharaoh, or Yitro, or even Moshe. He does not want His kingdom of kohanim to either misunderstand Him personally or misrepresent Him corporately. He does not want those who take His Plan of Redemption to the world to think He is – or project Him as being - an angry, hard, cruel, God after the pattern of the gods of the pagan nations. He does not want us to see or think of Him primarily in 'power terms'. He does not want our first thought of Him to be about His attributes of omniscience or omnipresence or omnipotence – or judgment. He wants us to know Him more deeply, more intimately, than that. He wants us to know Him as MERCIFUL, and GRACIOUS, and SLOW TO ANGER. He wants us to know Him as so committed to His Covenant promises that He will be FORGIVING beyond our wildest imaginations, will be FAITHFUL and JUST to provide invitation after invitation, and will provide opportunity after opportunity, for *teshuvah* - generation after generation after generation. So here are the attributes of the Holy One, as He reveals them:

**Essential Attribute #1:** *He is YHVH*

**Essential Attribute #2:** *He is YHVH El*

**Essential Attribute #3:** ***Rachum*** (i.e. *He is all about mercy*)

**Essential Attribute #4:** ***Chanun*** (i.e. *He abounds in graciousness*)

**Essential Attribute #5:** ***Erech Apayim*** (i.e. *He is patient/slow to anger*)

**Essential Attribute 6:** ***v'rav chesed*** (i.e. *He shows Great Favor to His Covenant Partners and Even to Strangers*)

**Essential Attribute #7:** ***v'rav emet*** (i.e. *He is True to an Eternal Pattern; He does not change course or deviate from Covenant Promises and Goals*)

**Essential Attribute #8:** ***Notzer<sup>10</sup> chesed l'alafim*** (i.e. *He Keeps Watch Over and Guards our Multitudes in Covenant Love*)

**Essential Attribute #9:** ***Nosei avon*** (i.e. *He will, whenever possible, bear, carry away iniquity rather than judging us for it<sup>11</sup>*)

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<sup>10</sup> The Hebrew verb used here is a form of *natzar*, *nun*, *tzade*, *resh* – i.e. to tend as a gardener.

**Essential Attribute #10: nosei feisha** (i.e. He will, whenever possible, bear, carry away rebellion rather than judging us for it)

**Essential Attribute #11: nosei chatata'ah** (i.e. He will, whenever possible, bear, carry away covenant breaches rather than judging us for them)

**Essential Attribute #12: Nakeh lo yanakei** (i.e. He will not overlook our waywardness or the danger it puts us in; He will intervene for redemptive purposes and discipline us as sons when and as the situation requires)

**Essential Attribute #13: pokeid<sup>12</sup> avon avot al-banim v'al-b'nei banim** (i.e. He is Faithful to Watch over and visit our generations to make sure the deleterious effects of the iniquity, rebellion and sin in our lives are not passed down unabated)

Do you know the Holy One like that? Is that the kind of Deity you imitate for the world? Are those the characteristics you model before the nations? Please put aside whatever 'God concept' you may have dreamed up in your own mind or inherited from the forums of religion you have visited. The 13 attributes listed above constitute Who our Bridegroom-King really is. It all starts with mercy. Mercy is His – and is therefore to be our - primary, over-riding characteristic. He is not a Vulcan. He is a *passionate lover of humanity*. He is almost impossible to offend, and even harder to disgust. He is slow to anger. Forgiveness is His first choice in every situation – and His greatest delight. He wants to make it possible for man to know, approach Him and commune with Him. He is always, always working for the good of His Covenant Partners. And He is always faithful to all their generations.

Alas, time does not allow any more thorough discussion of these attributes in this lesson. But it is the privilege and delight of all those who love the Holy One to personally search out and meditate on each of the things the Holy One declared about Himself. For purposes of this study, just suffice it to say that if Moshe had sat down prior to the golden calf incident and written down what he thought were the most significant characteristics of the Holy One, things like MERCY, COMPASSION, and FORGIVENESS would not have even been on his list.

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<sup>11</sup> The Hebrew verb used here is a form of *nasa, nun, sin, alef* – i.e. to lift, carry, and transport. As a characteristic of the Holy One, this defines His Priority and Tendency as being to willingly come alongside His People, take their iniquity, their rebellion, and their sin off their shoulders, and carry the burden of all of these things personally.

<sup>12</sup> The Hebrew verb used here is a form of *paqad, peh, qof, dalet* – i.e. to visit a place, a person, or a generation as a concerned friend, mentor, or overseer, for the purpose of personally inspecting and upgrading his possession. If a person knows he or she will be visited and inspected by another, it tends to keep him or her aware/conscious of his or her need to progress, improve, and bear fruit.

As a wise teacher once said however *He who is forgiven much, loves much*. What will take to make us love Him? Experiencing His Mercy, His Compassion, and His Forgiveness. It is His kindness that leads us to repentance.

### ***The Transfiguration of Moshe's Face***

The encounter with the Holy One of which we have been speaking had a dramatic effect on every facet of Moshe's personality. The effect was so dramatic in fact that Torah tells us that after this particular encounter *qaran ohr paneiu* ['the skin of his face shone/glowed/ was radiant'] by reason of his speaking with the Holy One.

*It happened when Moshe came down from Har Sineh [Mount Sinai]  
with the two tablets of the testimony in Moshe's hand,  
when he came down from the mountain, that Moshe didn't know that  
qaran ohr pane'u [the skin of his face shone/glowed/ was radiant]  
by reason of his speaking with Him.*

*When Moshe was done speaking with them,  
he put a masveh [i.e. veil/covering] on his face.*

*But when Moshe went in before the Holy One to speak with him,  
he took the masveh off, until he came out;  
and he came out, and spoke to the children of Yisra'el that which he was instructed.*

*The children of Yisra'el saw Moshe's face,  
ki qaran ohr panei Moshe  
[the skin of Moshe's face shone/glowed/ was radiant]  
and Moshe put the masveh on his face again, until he went in to speak with him.  
[Exodus 34:33-35]*

If you will receive it this is the Torah 'seed' for the 'transfiguration' of Yeshua as reported in Matthew 17:1-9 and Mark 9:2-8. It is a part of the progression of the theme of Divine Light that began in Genesis 1:3 and flows throughout the Bible. This theme will resurface many times - recurring in such passages as Isaiah 42:6, Isaiah 60:1-3, Daniel 12:3, in Matthew 5:14-16, in John 1:4-9, II Corinthians 4:4-6, Philippians 2:15, Revelation 21:23-24 and 22:5<sup>13</sup>.

Remember as well that the Holy One's betrothal plan is to gradually wean the people away from reliance upon Moshe, and reliance instead upon Himself and His Words. The veil that Moshe will wear when speaking with the people is designed to start that process in motion. They will not be able to look at Moshe's face when he speaks. They will, therefore, finally begin to recognize and accept that it was not Moshe who brought them forth out of Egypt [cf. what the people said in Exodus 32:1], and that it is not Moshe upon whose presence or whose words they should rise and fall, but upon His and His alone. Moshe is not being taken from them – but

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<sup>13</sup>See also Shaul of Tarsus' confusing drash on the veil and Moshe's shining countenance located at II Corinthians 3:6-18.



his role is being put back into its proper context in order that the next phase of the Great Redemptive Plan can go forward.

### *Questions for Today's Study*

1. After interceding for the Holy One to dwell among (in the camp of) the Redeemed Community, Moshe ascends *Har Sineh* [Mt. Sinai] again to “present himself” anew to the Holy One, carrying with him two new stone tablets symbolizing his desire for a renewal of the covenant between the Redeemed Community and the Holy One.

[A] How does Torah describe the way the Holy One met Moshe on this occasion?

[B] How is this manifestation of the Holy One *like* the first manifestation on *Har Sineh* [Mt. Sinai]?

[C] How does this manifestation *differ from* the first manifestation on Mt. Sinai?

2. In verses 6 and 7 the Holy One responds to Moshe’s request that the Holy One not only *show him His Glory*, but also *teach Moshe (and the Redeemed Community) His “ways”*. This is a *requirement of betrothal* – that the prospective bridegroom *make the most important and over-riding aspects of his personality and characteristics known to the prospective bride*. The Holy One reveals, in this encounter, all the basic things the prospective Bride needs to know about Him. This teaching of the Holy One concerning His ways is called by the rabbis “the 13 characteristics” [Hebrew *midot*] and is quoted in many Hebrew prayers.

[A] Can you find 13 characteristics of the Holy One in these verses? List as many as you can find.

[B] Now go back to Exodus 20, where the Holy One proclaimed over all the Redeemed Community His *Aseret HaDibrot* [ten words]. What attributes do you find that the Holy One declared concerning Himself at that time, and how do those attributes compare to what the Holy One revealed to Moshe today?

3. After the Holy One declared His ways in this manner to Moshe, Moshe responded by bowing and “worshipping”.

*Moshe hurried and bowed his head toward the eretz and worshiped.*

**[Exodus 34:8]**

In the midst of his worship however he again went into intercession for the Redeemed Community.

*He said, "If now I have found favor in your sight, Holy One, please let the Holy One go in the midst of us; although this is a stiff-necked people; pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance."*

**[Exodus 34:9]**

[A] What two requests did Moshe make of the Holy One in this verse?

[B] Had not this already been decided in the people's favor by the Holy One?

[C] What were the Holy One's promises in response to this intercession?

4. After Moshe's prayer concludes the Holy One says something strange to Moshe - He tells Moshe He is "**making a covenant**" [Hebrew, *b'rit*]

*He said, **Behold, I make** [in Hebrew, the verb used is *karat*<sup>14</sup>] **a covenant: before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been worked in all the eretz, nor in any nation; and all the people among which you are shall see the work of the Holy One; for it is an awesome thing that I do with you.***

[Exodus 34:10]

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*And the Holy One said to Moshe, **Write you these words: for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Yisra'el.***

[Exodus 34:27]

[A] Is the covenant the Holy One promises in this verse a "new" covenant? If so, what is "new" about it? How exactly do the terms of this covenant differ from the terms of the covenant in effect before *chet ha-egel* [calf-sin]?

[B] The Holy One goes over a series of subjects with Moshe during this encounter [Exodus 34:10-26]. List all the subjects the Holy One covers.

[C] The two main subjects of this set of instructions appear to be the celebration of *Pesach* [Passover] and the observance (treasuring and keeping as a priceless gift) of Shabbat. Why do you think the Holy One decided to emphasize these particular *mitzvot* at this time [i.e. in the aftermath of the calf-sin]?

5. This encounter with the Holy One [not Moshe's first, of course] had a dramatic effect on Moshe.

[A] What effect did this encounter with the Holy One have on Moshe's appearance?

[B] In whose presence did Moshe wear the "veil", and why?

[C] How does this differ from Yeshua's "transfiguration" [Matthew 17:1-5]?

[D] In Strong's and Gesenius, look up the Hebrew words translated in our text as "veil" and "shone". Write the Hebrew words in Hebrew letters, with vowel markings. Seek out the verb roots of both of these words, and write those in Hebrew consonants, with vowel markings. Then, describe, for each verb root, the Hebraic word picture you see developing around it.

[E] Read Song of Songs 6:7-10, and then re-read the passage quoted above, plugging into it the Hebraic word pictures you just observed through searching out the ancient Hebrew verb roots. Does this exercise change your perspective on the

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<sup>14</sup> *Karat* is *kaf, resh, tav*, Strong's Hebrew word #3772. It depicts the action of *cutting* or *hewing*.

passage in question? If so, explain.

6. Today's concluding aliyah of Haftarah *Ki Tisa* contains the dramatic climax of the confrontation on *Har Karmel* (Mount Carmel) between Eliyahu [Elijah] and the prophets of Ba'al. Eliyahu is preparing to call upon the Holy One the way the prophets of Ba'al called (unsuccessfully) upon Ba'al. This is the critical moment. Let's look in on the action:

*Eliyahu said to all the people, "Come near to me";  
and all the people came near to him.  
He repaired the altar of the Holy One that was thrown down.  
Eliyahu took twelve stones,  
according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Ya'akov,  
to whom the word of the Holy One came, saying, "Yisra'el shall be your name."  
With the stones he built an altar in the name of the Holy One;  
and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.  
He put the wood in order, and cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood.  
He said, "Fill four jars with water and pour it on the burnt offering, and on the wood."  
He said, "Do it the second time"; and they did it the second time.  
He said, "Do it the third time"; and they did it the third time.  
The water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.  
It happened at the time of the offering of the [evening] offering,  
that Eliyahu the prophet came near, and said,  
"O Holy One, God of Avraham, of Yitzchak, and of Yisra'el,  
let it be known this day that you are God in Yisra'el, and that I am your servant,  
and that I have done all these things at your word.  
Sh'ma me, O Holy One, sh'ma me, that this people may know  
that you O Holy One are God, and [that] you have turned their heart back again.  
Then the fire of the Holy One fell, and consumed the burnt offering,  
and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.  
When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces:  
and they said, "the Holy One, he is God; the Holy One, he is God.  
[1Kings 18:30-39]*

[A] Eliyahu takes great care to do something very important before beginning to call upon the Holy One to send fire. What did he do, according to our text, "at the time of the evening offering"?

[B] What verse of Torah is our text referring to when it uses the phrase "at the time of the evening offering"? Cite book, chapter, and verse.

[C] Our text refers to Eliyahu "repairing" the "altar of The Holy One" which was thrown down (verse 31). *When* could an altar of The Holy One have been erected at this location [Remember, at Sinai Moshe received instructions that the only altar to The Holy One which was to be erected after the Redeemed Community entered Kana'an was at "the Place where I shall choose to Place my Name" – definitely not *Har Karmel*. *Who* do you think originally built the altar

Eliyahu “repaired”?

[D] Why, according to Eliyahu’s prayer, did he want the Holy One to *sh’ma* him? [the text lists *two specific reasons*].

[E] When fire fell what was consumed besides the “offering”?

7. Today’s concluding aliyah from the Apostolic Scriptures consists of the conclusion of Shaul’s *drash* [teaching] regarding the effect of a believer [Jew or Gentile] eating food that has been sacrificed to idols (by extension, enjoying anything the revenue from which will go to support ungodly enterprises).

Shaul has already stunned us by telling us that to partake of such things is spiritually *lethal* to some (those with a “conscience”). He has told us our partaking of such things can cause those with a conscience to perish [I Cor. 8:10]. And now here are Shaul’s concluding remarks.

*And through your knowledge, he who is weak perishes –  
the brother for whose sake Messiah died!*

*Thus, sinning against the brothers, and wounding the conscience of the weak,  
you sin against Messiah.*

*Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will eat no food forevermore,  
that I don't cause my brother to stumble.*

[1Corinthians 8:11-13]

[A] What is Shaul saying in I Cor. 8:11-13? Before you answer, reread Ex. 34:12-16, Ex. 33:13, and I Kings 18:21. Is it what you *avoid*, or what you *pursue* that makes the most difference?

[B] Shaul speaks of sinning, by eating food sacrificed to idols, in two contexts. First, he speaks of how it constitutes “sinning against the brothers”. How does eating food sacrificed to idols (or enjoying products or entertainment sold by people or companies who use the proceeds for ungodly purposes) violate Torah? What provision(s) of Torah do such actions violate?

[C] Secondly, Shaul speaks of how eating food sacrificed to idols constitutes sinning “against Messiah”. How does eating food sacrificed to idols (or enjoying products or entertainment sold by people or companies who use the proceeds for ungodly purposes) violate specific teachings of Messiah? What specific teachings of Messiah do such actions violate?

*May His Presence transform us all,  
And May His attributes become our attributes.*

***The Rabbi’s son***

***Meditation for Today's Study***  
**Psalm 119:169-176 [TAV]**

*Let my cry come before you O HOLY ONE.  
Give me understanding according to your word.*

*Let my supplication come before you. Deliver me according to your word.  
Let my lips utter praise, for you teach me your statutes.*

*Let my tongue sing of your word, For all your mitzvot are righteousness.  
Let your hand be ready to help me, For I have chosen your precepts.*

*I have longed for your yeshu`ah, O HOLY ONE. Your Torah is my delight.  
Let my soul live, that I may praise you. Let your ordinances help me.*

*I have gone astray like a lost sheep.  
Seek your servant, for I don't forget your mitzvot.*