
*The cloud of
glory...*

Rabbi Alon Meltzer

A New Page of Talmud

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Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting, because the cloud had settled upon it and the Presence of God filled the Tabernacle. When the cloud lifted from the Tabernacle, the Israelites would set out, on their various journeys; but if the cloud did not lift, they would not set out until such time as it did lift. For over the Tabernacle a cloud of God rested by day, and fire would appear in it by night, in the view of all the house of Israel throughout their journeys. **Shemot 40:35-38**¹ It seems strange that the "cloud" prevented Moses from entering the Tent

seeing that the Torah had told us in Exodus 24:18 that "Moses went inside the cloud, etc." The difference is clear. In *Parshat Mishpatim* Moses entered the cloud after God had

summoned him. In this instance no summons from God had been forthcoming.

Or HaChaim on Shemot 40:35² Rabbi Zerika raised a contradiction between verses before Rabbi Elazar, and some say that Rabbi Zerika said that Rabbi Elazar raised a contradiction: It is written in one place: "And Moses was not able to enter into the Tent of Meeting because the cloud dwelt on it" (Exodus 40:35), as Moses was unable to enter the cloud. And it is written elsewhere: "And Moses came into the cloud" (Exodus 24:18). This teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He, grabbed Moses and brought him into the cloud since he could not enter on his own. **Babylonian Talmud, tractate yoma 4b**³ God revealed Himself to Israel – in the opacity of the cloud. Thus, we read,

"The cloud covered the mountain. The Glory of the Lord dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud hid it for six days. On the seventh day, He called to Moshe from the midst of the cloud" (Shemot 24:15-16).

The cloud connotes an exalted and sublime divine revelation, beyond human comprehension. Yet through the fog and cloud, one can reach an understanding of the divine, albeit only partially, in accordance with his capabilities. **Prinei Halakha, Days of Awe**⁴ The Mishkan, where the [Tablets] were housed, alludes

...because the cloud had settled upon it and the Presence of God...

כי־שכן עליו הענן וכבוד ה' **Shemot 40:35**

to a Torah scholar. If a Torah scholar publicizes himself as the *day* is public, [God] will bring a *cloud* of obscurity over him. However, if a Torah scholar conceals himself like an

object concealed at *night*, [God] will spread his fame as a *fire* is seen from a distance. – **Siyach Yitzchak**⁵

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