

פרשת  
כל המאד פסח  
*Parashat Chol HaMoed Pesach*

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*Shemot / Exodus 33:12-34:26, Ezekiel 37:1-14*

### **The Power of Remembering**

Reading through the book of Exodus as the people arrive at the Mountain of Sinai, we are given the imagery of booming thunder and lightning as the cloud of God covered Sinai and of Moshe ascending and descending the mountain. Most people recognize this cinematic dramatization of events at the Mountain of Sinai that is coupled to the giving of the Torah. The actual biblical version of Sinai and the giving of the Torah, however, is much less familiar, even to many devoted readers of the Hebrew Bible. The reason being the giving of the Torah was more extensive than a few simple chapters making the giving of the Torah more difficult to follow. The Scriptures present the giving of the Torah not as a single dramatic event but as a lengthy process that begins at Sinai and does not end until forty years later. According to the Scriptures, Moshe ascends and descends not once but eight times. These things illustrate the process of God working in our lives as a life long process. The Scriptures describe the Lord revealing his Torah to Moshe gradually with Moshe revealing what the Lord had taught him gradually as well. We are told throughout the Scriptures that Moshe taught the people at many times, using different narratives in order to teach how the people were to respond to God's Commands. At times, the narrative in the Torah seems disrupted and repetitive, and as a result it is difficult to read as a continuous whole. (*i.e. the transition from*

*Numbers to Deuteronomy*) This leads us to understand the importance of devoting our lives to studying God's Torah in conjunction with the rest of Scripture. In this week's reading for Chol HaMo'ed Pesach, we are told how Moshe ascended the mountain and the Lord God of Israel gave him two tablets with the ten words. He descended the mountain and found the people deeply involved in sin. As a result, he smashed the tablets of God's commandments. Moshe ascended again in an attempt to seek forgiveness on behalf of the people. The Lord told Him to carve out two more tablets and He will put the ten words upon the tablets a second time. Following these events, we are told when Moshe returned, his face shown with the glory of God. Moshe had gone up the mountain and down previously, but it was only at this time that his face shown with the glory of God, why do you think that is? The *Talmud Bavli Berakhot 6a* states that the one who "*sits and engages Torah study, the divine presence rests upon him.*" The basic conclusion is Moshe had put his hand to do (perform) the word of God in his life, to make two new tablets of stone for the commandments to be written a second time. It is believed by his willingness to obey the Lord and putting God's Word into action, it was for this reason Moshe's face shown with the glory of God. What this teaches us this week is that when we seek to live for the Lord, His glory shines forth in our lives. In addition, we are told the people gazed at Moshe's face and so he covered his face to hide the glory radiating from his face. The people would gaze at Moshe, this suggests that the people were drawn to him because there was something different about him. The commands function in our lives in a similar manner, the word of God works in our lives, changing us from the inside out, and there is something different about us that will draw others to the Lord. This connects us back to *Shemot / Exodus 34:10* and the covenant that is coupled to the Lord dwelling in our midst. *34:10 Then God said, 'Behold, I am going to make a covenant. Before all your people I will perform miracles which have not been produced in all the earth nor among any of the nations; and all the people among whom you live will see the working of the Lord, for it is a fearful thing that I am going to perform with you. 34:11 'Be sure to observe what I am commanding you this day... (NASB)* These things relate to the Pesach (Passover) festival in the sense that the people relied upon a miracle in the blood of the lamb and expectantly waited

for God's salvation in repentance and humility that night they were delivered from Egypt. The Passover festival is a reminder for our lives in the sense that we are to remember the mighty deliverance the Lord has made for us, especially in the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son, Yeshua the Messiah. This is coupled to the continued warning to guard our hearts, to stay away from the ways of the nations, to turn from idolatry, even that which one sets up in the heart (*Ezekiel 14*) due to sin.

This week we are looking at *Shemot / Exodus 34:10-31*.

***Shemot / Exodus 34:10-31***

*34:10 Then God said, 'Behold, I am going to make a covenant. Before all your people I will perform miracles which have not been produced in all the earth nor among any of the nations; and all the people among whom you live will see the working of the Lord, for it is a fearful thing that I am going to perform with you.*

*34:11 'Be sure to observe what I am commanding you this day: behold, I am going to drive out the Amorite*

*before you, and the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite.*

*34:12 'Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a snare in your midst. 34:13 'But rather, you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim*

*34:14 for you shall not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God 34:15 otherwise you might make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they would play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone might invite you to eat of his sacrifice, 34:16*

*and you might take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters might play the harlot with their gods and cause your sons also to play the harlot with their gods.*

*34:17 'You shall make for yourself no molten gods. 34:18 'You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days you are to eat unleavened bread,*



*as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in the month of Abib you came out of Egypt. 34:19 'The first offspring from every womb belongs to Me, and all your male livestock, the first offspring from cattle and sheep. 34:20 'You shall redeem with a lamb the first offspring from a donkey; and if you do not redeem it, then you shall break its neck. You shall redeem all the firstborn of your sons. None shall appear before Me empty-handed. 34:21 'You shall work six days, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during plowing time and harvest you shall rest. 34:22 'You shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks, that is, the first fruits of the wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year. 34:23 'Three times a year all your males are to appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. 34:24 'For I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your borders, and no man shall covet your land when you go up three times a year to appear before the Lord your God. 34:25 'You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread, nor is the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover to be left over until morning. 34:26 'You shall bring the very first of the first fruits of your soil into the house of the Lord your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.' 34:27 Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.' 34:28 So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments. 34:29 It came about when Moses was coming down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the testimony were in Moses' hand as he was coming down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because of his speaking with Him. 34:30 So when Aaron and all the sons of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. 34:31*

*Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers in the congregation returned to him; and Moses spoke to them. (NASB)*

In the Torah portion for Chol HaMo'ed Pesach, we are given a reading from Parashat Ki Tisa (*Shemot / Exodus 30:11-34:35*) where the Lord God speaks to Israel in the following way, *34:10 Then God said, 'Behold, I am going to make a covenant. Before all your people I will perform miracles which have not been produced in all the earth nor among any of the nations; and all the people among whom you live will see the working of the Lord, for it is a fearful thing that I am going to perform with you. (NASB)* This covenant the Lord is making with His people provides us with the expectation that the Lord is going to perform a mighty work in our lives. The Lord declares His intentions within the covenant agreement which leads us to the expectation of the miraculous in our lives. As a result, every day we should go with the expectation of the Lord moving powerfully on our behalf. These things are coupled to the statement that follows *34:11 'Be sure to observe what I am commanding you this day: behold, I am going to drive out the Amorite before you, and the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. (NASB)* These words provide us with a warning to guard our hearts, to stay away from the ways of the nations, to turn from idolatry, and to seek to turn from the idols we set up in our hearts (*Ezekiel 14*) due to sin. As we have been studying in the last few Torah portions, the purpose of the Torah is to remind us to do what is righteous, holy, just, and true, and to seek God's anointed one for the forgiveness of sins. This may be why the rabbis and the Talmud speak so extensively in regards to the importance of studying God's Torah.

#### ***Talmud Bavli Berakhot 6a***

ומנין שאפילו אחד שיושב ועוסק בתורה ששכינה עמו  
שנאמר (שמות כ, כד) בכל המקום אשר אזכיר את שמי  
וברכתך *The Gemara returns to Ravin bar Rav Adda's statement: And from where is it derived that when even one who **sits and engages** in Torah study, the Divine Presence is with him? As it is stated: "In every place where I cause My Name to be mentioned, I*



*will come to you and bless you” (Exodus 20:21); God blesses even a single person who mentions God’s name, a reference to Torah study (Iyyun Ya’akov). וכי מאחר דאפילו חד תרי מבעיא תרי מכתבן מלייהו בספר הזכרונות The Gemara asks: Since the Divine Presence rests even upon one who engages in Torah study, was it necessary to say that the Divine Presence rests upon two who study Torah together? The Gemara answers: There is a difference between them. Two people, their words of Torah are written in the book of remembrance, as it is stated: “And a book of remembrance was written”; however a single individual’s words of Torah are not written in a book of remembrance. וכי מאחר דאפי’ תרי תלתא מבעיא מהו דתימא דינא שלמא בעלמא הוא ולא אתיא שכינה קמ”ל The Gemara continues: Since the Divine Presence rests even upon two who engage in Torah study, is it necessary to mention three? The Gemara answers: Here too, a special verse is necessary lest you say that judgment is merely to keep the peace among the citizenry, and the Divine Presence does not come and rest upon those who sit in judgment as they are not engaged in Torah study. Ravin bar Rav Adda teaches us that sitting in judgment is also Torah. וכי מאחר דאפי’ תלתא עשרה מבעיא עשרה קדמה שכינה ואתיא תלתא עד דיתבי: The Gemara asks: Since the Divine Presence rests even upon three, is it necessary to mention ten? The Gemara answers: The Divine Presence arrives before a group of ten, as the verse: “God stands in the congregation of God,” indicates that when the ten individuals who comprise a congregation arrive, the Divine Presence is already there. For a group of three judges, however, the Divine Presence does not arrive until they sit and begin their deliberations, as in the midst of the judges He judges. God aids them in their judgment, but does not arrive before them.*

The remembering of God's Word is connected to sitting, studying, and engaging (putting into practice) God's Word in our lives. Studying God's Word, remembering and discussing the Name of God, is connected to His coming and blessing us. When we *"sit and engage"* God's Word, the rabbis believe the Lord writes down what we do in a book of remembrance as a testimony. In addition, the Talmud records the rabbis saying that the one who sits in judgment against another are not engaged in Torah study. Note how the discussion goes when men come together to deliberate a case, this is taken from the context of using the Scriptures (Torah) as a way to discern right and wrong, as opposed to one man sitting in judgment of another. The concepts here is the Torah teaches us to have mercy and to love one another as opposed to being critical of others.

Throughout the Torah we are given a warning to guard our hearts, to stay away from the ways of the nations, to turn from idolatry, and to seek to turn from the idols that one may set up in his heart (*Ezekiel 14*) due to sin. The reasoning is based upon what we find in the Aramaic Targum on the Psalms, which states, ה דיכמתהון יהון עובדיהון כל די :מתרחיץ עליהון: *115:8 May their makers become like them, everyone who relies upon them. (EMC)* and Masoretic Text states, ה כְּמוֹתֵם יִהְיוּ : *115:8 Those who make them will become like them, Everyone who trusts in them. (NASB)* The Psalmist is saying that those who trust in them (idols) *"Will become like them!"* There is a great deception that enters into one's life due to idolatry. The point is that such people who look to idols, the work of men's hands, will have mouths but speak not, eyes but see not, hands that handle not, feet that walk not, and ears that hear not because their hearts are uncircumcised. The deception goes very deep within a man, where based upon Scripture, idols do not necessarily have to be those of wood, stone, and metal as we read according to the book of Ezekiel.

### ***Ezekiel 14:2-8***

*14:2 And the word of the Lord came to me, saying,  
14:3 'Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts and have put right before their faces the stumbling block of their iniquity. Should I be consulted*

*by them at all? 14:4 'Therefore speak to them and tell them, 'Thus says the Lord God, 'Any man of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the Lord will be brought to give him an answer in the matter in view of the multitude of his idols, 14:5 in order to lay hold of the hearts of the house of Israel who are estranged from Me through all their idols.' 14:6 'Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God, 'Repent and turn away from your idols and turn your faces away from all your abominations. 14:7 'For anyone of the house of Israel or of the immigrants who stay in Israel who separates himself from Me, sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and then comes to the prophet to inquire of Me for himself, I the Lord will be brought to answer him in My own person. 14:8 'I will set My face against that man and make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from among My people. So you will know that I am the Lord. (NASB)*

When we observe sin and its effect upon our lives, it becomes apparent that sin causes one to become more and more unrighteous with the passage of time. Ezekiel speaks of men who set up in their hearts an idol. The Lord God of Israel speaks to Ezekiel saying that these idols are the placing of the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. (*Ezekiel 14:3*) This is reiterated in *Ezekiel 14:3* saying that the one who does this thing and then comes to inquire of the Lord, the Lord will bring an answer to him in the multitude of his idols (or sins). This suggests it is possible to set more than one idol in the heart due to sin. The Lord calls us to repent and turn from the idols of the heart (*Ezekiel 14:6*). Ezekiel says that the one who sets up an idol in his heart separates himself from the Lord. The one who does this, the Lord will set His face against him and cut him off from his people. The psalmist describes the idols as not having the ability to do anything and those who do such things will also not have the ability to do anything. Those who make them will become



like them (*Tehillim / Psalms 115:8*). The point is that if we establish something in our hearts, we will become like that thing. Establishing our hearts for the Lord takes a process of time. It involves a conscious effort on our part to set up our hearts to be rooted and grounded in the things of God. This is why it is so important for remembering (*Talmud Bavli Berakhot 6a*) what the Lord has done for us in the Moedim such as in the Passover festival. A person who has invested time with the Lord, in the Word, and in prayer, and in serving others, receives a strength from within that is given by the Spirit of God that increases our faith, which neither time nor circumstances can weaken. It actually takes the establishment of heart for a person to fulfill the purpose of God for his life. For example, Noah was preparing for rain (*Bereshit / Genesis 6 and 7*) knowing the Lord would bring a flood, something of which Noah did not know anything about. Noah however proclaimed the coming flood (*2 Peter 2:5*) but the people would not listen. Noah was preparing for a flood that he knew nothing about, but his faith in the Lord kept him going because he had established his heart to serve the Lord and to call men to repentance.

Paul speaks to the Ephesians in the following way:

***Ephesians 3:14-20***

*3:14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 3:15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, 3:16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, 3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 3:18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 3:19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. 3:20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, (NASB)*

<sup>14</sup>Τούτου χάριν κάμπω τὰ γόνατά μου πρὸς τὸν πατέρα,

<sup>15</sup>ἐξ οὗ πᾶσα πατριὰ ἐν οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς ὀνομάζεται, <sup>16</sup>ἵνα δῶ ὑμῖν κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ δυνάμει κραταιωθῆναι διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον, <sup>17</sup>κατοικῆσαι τὸν Χριστὸν διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, ἐν ἀγάπῃ **ἐρριζωμένοι** καὶ **τεθεμελιωμένοι**, <sup>18</sup>ἵνα ἐξισχύσητε καταλαβέσθαι σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἁγίοις τί τὸ πλάτος καὶ μῆκος καὶ ὕψος καὶ βάθος, <sup>19</sup>γνῶναί τε τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν τῆς γνώσεως ἀγάπην τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα πληρωθῆτε εἰς πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ θεοῦ. <sup>20</sup>Τῷ δὲ δυναμένῳ ὑπὲρ πάντα ποιῆσαι ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ ὧν αἰτούμεθα ἢ νοοῦμεν κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν τὴν ἐνεργουμένην ἐν ἡμῖν

Paul speaks of “*having been rooted and grounded,*” in love. The terms ἐρριζωμένοι, τεθεμελιωμένοι, are used in context of the Greek root ρίζοῦν, meaning simply to establish something firmly. Here these two words express the simple idea of being securely settled and deeply founded upon something. Paul’s conclusion is that we are to be thoroughly established in love, having it not as an uncertain feeling changing with every change of experience through the day, but as the stable and principle of life that is lived out in the life of the believer.

The psalmist continues saying, **ט** יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּטַח בִּיהוָה עֲזָרָם וּמִגְּנָם הוּא: *Tehillim / Psalms 115:9 O Israel, trust in the Lord; He is their help and their shield. 115:10 O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord; He is their help and their shield. (NASB)* **ט** יִשְׂרָאֵל רַחֵץ בְּמִמְרָא דִּיהוּה, סְעִידָהוֹן וְתַרְסִיָּהוֹן הוּא: *115:9 O Israel, trust in the word of the Lord; he is their helper and their shield. 115:10 Those of the house of Aaron, trust in the word of the Lord; he is their helper and their shield. (EMC)* The psalmist calls to the priesthood to trust in the Lord (115:10). Why do you think that is? Could it be by reason of their not receiving an inheritance in the Land? This idea of being rooted and grounded is a principle that runs deep with Torah context, i.e. in the imagery of the Tabernacle. The Tanach describes God’s people as firm and established trees (*Tehillim / Psalm 1:3, Psalm 92:12-13, and Jeremiah 17:8*), and also as solid stones of the great Temple which rest ultimately upon the mercy and

compassion of God. We are built and being built upon and in the foundation stone, Yeshua, which was done in love on our behalf. (*Romans 8:39*). This is the point of the psalmist who speaks of placing our trust in the Lord because he is our help and shield. The Targum states that our trust is “*in the Word of the Lord*” (במימרא דיהוה) illustrating the importance of remaining in the Word, in the Scriptures, daily.

Both Rambam and Rashi state the following:

***Ramban on Shemot / Exodus 20:21 Part 1***

*An earth alter you will do to me. Rabbi Avraham explained that he said לא תעשון אתי אלהי כסף ואלהי זהב (you are not to make a god of silver or a god of gold) to receive the power from above in their image to be intermediators between me and you all. Because בכל המקום (in all the places that you remember my name I will come to you) I with my presence וברכתיך (and I will bless you) You do not need a mediator...and in everyplace that they will remember his name he will come with his presence upon them to make his presence amongst them and bless them.*

Rambam reiterates the idea to not fashion for ourselves idols and to remember the name of the Lord in every place we go and He will come and bless us. The Aramaic Targum states, יב מימרא דיהוה דכר יתנא, לטב יברך יברך ית בית ישראל יברך ית בית אהרן: יג יברך דחליא דיהוה: *115:12 The word of the Lord has remembered us for good, he will bless; he will bless the house of Israel, he will bless the house of Aaron. 115:13 He will bless those who fear the Lord, the small with the great. (EMC)* The Targum translates the Word (Memra, מימרא) of God will go forth to remember and bless us.

***Rashi on Shemot / Exodus 34:10***

***Part 1***

*ברית כרת [BEHOLD, I] MAKE A COVENANT about this.*

**Part 2**

אעשה נפלאה — *The word נפלאה is an expression of the same meaning as ונפלינו (Exodus 33:16; so that the phrase means: I will make a difference) meaning that you shall be different in this respect from all other peoples — in that My Shechinah will not rest upon them.*

The idea in the difference between us and the nations is found in the presence of God being in our midst, and His Shechina resting upon His people. The power of memory is a vital part of preparing our hearts before the Lord. According to the Torah, the Lord warned the children of Israel not to forget the mighty works He had performed for them lest they turn away from following Him (see *Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:9, 4:23, 6:12, 8:11-14, and 8:19*). This again is why it is so important for remembering (*Talmud Bavli Berakhot 6a*) what the Lord has done for us in the Moedim such as in the Passover festival. The Lord linked our memory to staying true to His covenant, remembering the Lord, and not turning towards the gods of the nations. If the history of Israel is to be our example, failing to determine our hearts to seek the Lord (*2 Chronicles 12:14*) results in what we read happened to Rehoboam, “*And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD.*” (*NASB*) History bears out that failing to prepare our hearts daily may result in war and the division of kingdoms. The Passover festival is a reminder not only of the Lord delivering us from slavery and idolatry, but also of a call to turn from idolatry and those things that we have set up in our hearts before the Lord.

In this week’s Torah portion for Chol HaMo’ed Pesach, The Passover festival is a reminder for our lives in the sense that we are to remember the mighty deliverance the Lord has made for us, especially in the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son, Yeshua the Messiah. This is coupled to the continued warning to guard our hearts, to stay away from the ways of the nations, to turn from idolatry, even that which one sets up in the heart (*Ezekiel 14*) due to sin.

