

# THE Chabad WEEKLY

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This week's Torah portion, Ki Tisa, contains an interesting exchange between Moses and G-d. "Show me, I pray, Your glory," asks Moses. G-d replies, "You cannot see My face... you will see My back, but My face shall not be seen." The Torah is obviously speaking in symbolic terms. "Face" refers to a clear and unequivocal revelation of G-dliness, in much the same way that an individual's face reveals his inner self; glimpsing a person's "back" reveals far less about the person. But what did G-d show Moses?

The great commentator, Rashi, explains that G-d showed Moses the knot of His tefillin (phylacteries). What kind of answer to Moses' petition was that? In order to understand, we must first place the exchange in its proper context. Moses made this request after the Jews sinned by making the Golden Calf. After such a grave sin, how could they ever be forgiven? What possible merit did the Jews have for G-d to absolve them of idolatry? Rashi explains that G-d's answer was to teach Moses the proper way for a Jew to pray for Divine mercy.

Sin itself defies logic. How could it be that a Jew, a member of a nation described as "believers, the children of believers," should sin? How can a Jew, who believes in his innermost heart that G-d created the world and continues to sustain it every minute of the day, denies this by transgressing G-d's will?

The answer is that all sin stems from forgetfulness. It is only when a Jew forgets the true nature of the world that he transgresses; when he forgets that G-d is the only absolute reality he strays from the right path. The minute a Jew is reminded of this, there is no room for sin and it ceases to exist.

This, then, is the significance of the knot of the tefillin. If sin is only the result of a Jew's forgetfulness, he need only be reminded of G-d and he will not transgress. This is accomplished by the tallit and tzitzit (ritual fringes), whose purpose is to remind the Jew of his task in life, as it states in the Torah, "And you shall see it, and remember." The tefillin serve the same purpose: "And it shall be as a remembrance between your eyes."

Most specifically, it is the knot of the tefillin that symbolizes this, as a knot serves both as a reminder (such as when one ties a knot around one's finger to remember something), and as a symbol of the binding knot between G-d and the Jewish people. By showing Moses the knot of the tefillin, G-d was instructing him how to seek atonement, for if we always bear in mind that there is nothing but G-d, there is no room for sin. (From: Living with Moshiach 5759, www.moshiach.net)

***This they shall give... half a shekel (30:13)*** The mitzvah of the half-shekel is that each should contribute a coin that [is valued at] half of the dominant coin of that time. If the prevailing coin is takal, they should give a half-takal; if it is a selah, they should give a half-selah; if it is a darcon, they should give a half-darcon. (Midrash HaGadol)

Why not a complete coin? To teach us that no man is a complete entity unto himself. Only by joining with another can a person become a "whole thing". (The Chassidic Masters)

***The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less (30:15)*** People differ in their intellect, character and talents, in the quantity of their material resources and the timbre of their spiritual sensitivities. But all are equal in the very basis of their bond with G-d: the intrinsic commitment to Him that resides at the core of their souls. So while every man contributed to the making of the various components of the Sanctuary in accordance with their individual capacity, all gave equally of the silver of which its foundation was made. As regards the foundation of the relationship between man and G-d, the "rich man" cannot give more, and the "pauper" cannot give less. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

***And the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to make the Sabbath (31:16)*** There are two dimensions to Shabbat, referred to in the dual commandment to "keep" it and to "make" it. It is a day possessing an intrinsic holiness from the very beginning of time; this holiness the people of Israel are commanded to keep and preserve. And then there is the command "to make the Shabbat"--to impart greater sanctity and meaning to it by our actions. (Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch)

***When Moses went in before G-d to speak with him, he removed the veil... and [so he] spoke to the children of Israel that which he was commanded... [After that] Moses put the veil upon his face again (34:33-35)*** Moses did not use his "veil" when teaching Torah to the people--even though the divine radiance emitted by his face was overpowering for them--covering his face only after he finished communicating G-d's laws to them. This teaches us how we are to approach the various involvements of life.

The study of Torah and the observance of the mitzvot should always be approached without inhibition or constraint. No matter how lofty and overwhelming the endeavor may seem, here we are in our element, since G-dliness is the natural habitat of the Jew. But when it comes to our other, everyday pursuits, we are treading on alien, spiritually dangerous ground. Here we must use a "veil," qualifying and filtering our involvement with the material world. Enjoined to exploit the positive potential that resides within each of G-d's creations, we must exercise great caution in doing so, shielding ourselves against the negative effects of excessive involvement in material things. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe)  
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MY FATHER WRITES IN ONE OF HIS MAAMARIM: "REGARDING S'UDA SHLISHIT (THE THIRD SHABBAT MEAL): THE ALLUSION TO THE VERSE, "TODAY YOU WILL NOT FIND IT" (THE MANNA, I.E., SHABBAT BREAD) ETC., (1) MEANS ONLY THAT BREAD IS NOT REQUIRED AT THAT MEAL, BUT WE MUST PARTAKE OF SOME FOOD. R. YOSI DID SAY, MAY MY LOT BE WITH THOSE WHO PARTAKE OF THREE SHABBAT MEALS. (2) \* THE ALTER REBBE TAUGHT, SHORTLY AFTER HE CAME TO LYOZNA: ONE MUST ALWAYS (L'OLAM) BE SCRUPULOUS (ZAHIR) ABOUT THE MINCHA DAVENING. (3) THE SPECIAL QUALITY OF MINCHA OVER SHACHARIT AND MAARIV IS THAT IT COMES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY, WHEN PEOPLE ARE OCCUPIED AND BUSY WITH THEIR PERSONAL AFFAIRS, YET THEY INTERRUPT TO DAVEN MINCHA. THEREFORE, L'OLAM ("ALWAYS," OR MORE LITERALLY: "FOR THE WORLD"), MAN'S AVODA IN THIS WORLD IS... ..Y'HEI ADAM (LIT. "MAN MUST BE," BUT THE HEBREW WORDS ALSO IMPLY "BE A MAN" I.E. THAT HIS INTELLECT (4) ILLUMINATE AND AFFECT HIS EMOTIONS. ...ZAHIR (LIT. "SCRUPULOUS,"BUT ALSO:) "LUMINOUS," I.E., THAT FORM (THE SPIRITUAL) (5) "ILLUMINATE" OR HAVE DOMINANCE OVER THE MATERIAL. THIS BECOMES EVIDENT THROUGH THE MINCHA DAVENING. (FROM REBBE'S HAYOM YOM ADAR 22)

***The people never got used to Egypt. They never felt they belonged there. They never said, "They are the masters and we are the slaves and that's the way it is." So when Moses came and told them they were going to leave, they believed him. Everyone has their Egypt. You've got to know who you are and what are your limitations. But heaven forbids to make peace with them. The soul within you knows no limits.***

Be Within, Stay Above - More meditations from the wisdom of the Rebbe