

## In your Presence (In the Cleft of the Rock)

After the dreadful Golden Calf incident, in Ex. 33 Moses realizes that *Adonai* is ready to move on and so he pleads with the Lord to go with them: <sup>13</sup> *Now then, I pray, if I have found grace in Your eyes, show me Your ways, so that I may know You, so that I might find favor in Your sight. Consider also that this nation is Your people...* <sup>15</sup> *But then he said to Him, "If Your presence does not go with me, don't let us go up from here!"* Once the Lord has answered that He would go with them Moses dares to ask: <sup>18</sup> *Then he said, "Please, show me Your glory!"* <sup>19</sup> *So He said, "I will cause all My goodness to pass before you, and call out the Name of Adonai before you. I will be gracious toward whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy on whom I will be merciful."* <sup>20</sup> *But He also said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live."* <sup>21</sup> *Then Adonai said, "See, a place near Me—you will stand on the rock. <sup>22</sup> While My glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and cover you with My hand, until I have passed by. <sup>23</sup> Then I will take away My hand, and you will see My back, but not My face."*

In Chapter 34 the Lord will do just as He said and show Moses a part of Him that up to this moment was unrevealed. In doing so, Moses gets a glimpse at some of the most profound details of the Character of God. The content of these verses are known in Judaism as the Thirteen Attributes of God. BTW, whenever *Adonai* is repeated twice in the same text, it always refers to His dual nature of mercy: <sup>6</sup> *Then Adonai passed before him, and proclaimed, "Adonai, Adonai, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth, <sup>7</sup> showing mercy to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, yet by no means leaving the guilty unpunished, but bringing the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, to the third and fourth generation"*

1. The first attribute is the word *Adonai* [YHVH]. This means that He Himself is a covenant keeping God. By nature He is a forgiving God and is merciful even before a man sins. God's forgiving nature did not develop in reaction to man's sin. He was merciful before man ever sinned.
2. YHVH [Adonai] is then repeated in the text. This repetition emphasizes God's unchanging character. The Lord is merciful after a person has sinned and repented. Man's sin does not alter the nature of God.
3. God [EL] is mentioned next. This lets us know that He is the creator and as Creator He has the right to show mercy. He is all-powerful and does not need to prove that aspect by being cruel. He shows His true power through His mercy to provide to all creatures according to their need.
4. He is merciful [RACHAM]. He is so compassionate that He even loves a child in the womb. So loving is God that He doesn't even want you to be distressed.
5. He is gracious [CHANAN]. God showers the undeserving with favor and grace. If you are already in distress, He, in his mercy, will alleviate your distress.
6. He is longsuffering [EREK APAYIM]. God is slow to anger; He waits patiently for you to repent.
7. He is abundant in goodness [RAV CHESED]. God is good to the righteous, kind to all believers, and is plentiful and abundant beyond all measure.
8. He is abundant in truth [EMET]. God is good even after He has scrutinized your life; He already knows exactly how to fix what is wrong. He is fair to all, and He is equitable.
9. He keeps mercy for thousands [NOTZEIR CHESED L'ALFIM]. God's kindness will extend to your children and to all generations. His devotion to your salvation is boundless. It is true for all of us.
10. He forgives iniquity [NOSEI AVON]. God forgives intentional sins; He forgives willful sins.
11. He forgives transgression [NOSEI PESHA]. He forgives rebellious sins committed in defiance to his will. He forgives sins of self-will.
12. He forgives sin [NOSEI CHATAH]. He forgives sins of ignorance, inadvertent or without knowing sins.

13. He clears [NAKEH]. He cleanses, and acquits only the repentant sinner; He pardons but only those who repent. He will not clear the guilty or the unrepentant sinner.

The 13 attributes of God all relate to mercy and forgiveness. We should always thank Him for the mercy and forgiveness He shows us, and we should pray that He will help us show these same attributes to people in our lives. Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. So when you give an attribute to someone else, it comes back to you. If you forgive, then you shall be forgiven. So let's take these 13 attributes and begin to live by them, and give them to those you come in contact with. Share them, and you will see these same attributes manifested in your own walk with Him.

As this week's reading terminates we see that *Adonai* makes an exclusive covenant with His people and that there will be visual evidence for anyone who spends time with Lord:

<sup>8</sup> Then Moses quickly bowed his head down to the earth and worshipped. <sup>9</sup> He said, "If now I have found grace in Your eyes, my Lord, let my Lord please go within our midst, even though this is a stiff-necked people. Pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for Your own inheritance." <sup>10</sup> Then He said, "I am cutting a covenant. Before all your people I will do wonders, such as have not been done in all the earth, or in any nation. All the people you are among will see the work of *Adonai*—for what I am going to do with you will be awesome! <sup>11</sup> Obey what I am commanding you today. Behold, I am going to drive out the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites before you. <sup>12</sup> Watch yourself, and make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, or they will become a snare among you. <sup>13</sup> Instead you must break down their altars, smash their pillars and cut down their Asherah poles. <sup>14</sup> For you are to bow down to no other god, because *Adonai* is jealous for His Name—He is a jealous God. <sup>15</sup> "See that you do not make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land. Otherwise when they prostitute themselves with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, someone will invite you, and you will eat from their sacrifice. <sup>16</sup> Do not take their daughters for your sons, for their daughters will prostitute themselves with their own gods, and cause your sons to prostitute themselves with their gods. <sup>17</sup> "You are not to make for yourselves metal gods. <sup>18</sup> "You are to keep the Feast of Matzot. For seven days you are eat matzot, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month Aviv, for in the month Aviv you came out from Egypt. <sup>19</sup> "Every firstborn of the womb is Mine, and from all your cattle you are to sanctify the males, the firstborn of the ox and sheep. <sup>20</sup> A firstborn donkey you are to redeem with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, then you are to break its neck. You must redeem all your firstborn sons. No one should appear before Me empty-handed. <sup>21</sup> "For six days you will work, but on the seventh day you will rest. During plowing time and harvest you must rest. <sup>22</sup> "You are to observe the Feast of Shavuot, which is the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, as well as the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year. <sup>23</sup> Three times during the year all your males are to appear before *Adonai Elohim*, God of Israel. <sup>24</sup> For I am going to cast out nations before you, then enlarge your territory. So no one will covet your land when you go up to appear before *Adonai* your God three times in the year. <sup>25</sup> "You are not to offer the blood of My sacrifice with hametz, nor should the sacrifice of the Passover Festival remain until morning. <sup>26</sup> "You are to bring the choicest firstfruits of your land to the House of *Adonai* your God. "You must not boil a kid in its mother's milk." <sup>27</sup> Then *Adonai* said to Moses, "Write these words, for based on these words I have cut a covenant with you and with Israel." <sup>28</sup> So he stayed there with *Adonai* for 40 days and 40 nights, and he did not eat bread or drink water. He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant: the Ten Words.

<sup>29</sup> Now it happened, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hand when he came down from the mountain, that Moses did not know that the skin of his face was radiant, because God had spoken with him. <sup>30</sup> When Aaron and the people saw Moses, the skin of his face shone in rays, so they were afraid to come near him. <sup>31</sup> But Moses called out to them, so Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him, and Moses spoke to them. <sup>32</sup> Afterward all the people came near, and he gave them all the mitzvot that *Adonai* had spoken to him in Mount Sinai. <sup>33</sup> When Moses was done speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. <sup>34</sup> But when Moses went before *Adonai*, so that He could speak with him, he took the veil off until he came out. When he came out and spoke to the people what he was commanded, <sup>35</sup> They saw the face of Moses and that the skin of his face glistened. So Moses put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with Him.