



Chol HaMoed Sukkot

Shemot (Exodus) 33:12 - 34:26

The Torah reading for this Shabbat, the Shabbat of *Chol HaMoed Sukkot* is taken from the book of *Shemot*. After the incident of the *Egel HaZahav* the Golden Calf, and perhaps at a moment of personal crisis regarding his role as leader of the Jewish people, Moses asked G-d for a greater knowledge of His ways, and a more intimate understanding of how G-d deals with humanity. The Medieval scholars Maimonides and Nachmanides debated what Moses actually asked for. Maimonides understood Moses' request to be for a greater knowledge of G-d's reality beyond that which was observable through normal human channels. Nachmanides, on the other hand, taught that Moses asked for glimpse of the Divine Presence. No matter how we may understand the exact nature of Moses' request, G-d answered that ultimately, there was a limit as to how much any human being can behold. (33:19-20).

Following this event, Moses once again ascends Mt. Sinai for a renewal of the covenant between G-d and the Jewish People. The smashed Tablets of the Law are replaced, and G-d proclaims the attributes by which all humanity may know Him. These verses (34:6-7) are known as the "13 Attributes of G-d", and are expressed liturgically in the well known hymn "Yigdal" with which we conclude our Friday evening services. They are also found in the Torah service for Holidays.

With the exception of the *Shabbat Chol HaMoed Sukkot*, the Torah readings for *Chol HaMoed Sukkot*, the intermediate days of Sukkot, are taken from the 29th chapter of Bamidbar (Numbers). They describe the various sacrifices ordained for each of the days of Sukkot.

