

## Handout: Exodus Lesson 17

In Ex 33:18 Moses petitions God to show him God's glory. The word translated "glory" is the Hebrew word *kavod*. One of the most significant terms in Biblical theology, *kavod* often signifies God's self-manifestation in a visible sign of His Divine Presence. At the rendezvous at Mt. Sinai, the *kavod* of Yahweh appeared to the people as a fiery visual and acoustical display on the mountain summit; however, in Ex 33:18 Moses is asking for a personal revelation of God's Divine Presence. In other instances of God's visible *kavod* in the Pentateuch, three features are present (Ex 13:21-22; 16:10; 19:16-25; 24:17):

1. It is an experience shared by a large number of people.
2. God's glory is visible at a considerable distance from the observers.
3. God initiates the supernatural manifestation and He selects the time, location and duration.

God fulfills Moses' petition to know the "ways" of God (Ex 33:13) by revealing His divine attributes (Ex 34:6-9). These are not human attributes of God but rather the "ways" in which God governs the universe and the destiny of man in dispensing both mercy and justice: *6 Then Yahweh passed before him and called out, 'Yahweh, Yahweh, God [El] of tenderness [rachum] and compassion [hanan], slow to anger [erech appayim], rich in faithful love [rav hesed] and constancy [truth = emet], 7 maintaining his faithful love to thousands [notzer hesed laalafim], forgiving fault [noseh avon], crime [noseh peshah] and sin [noseh hattah], yet letting nothing go unchecked, and punishing the parent's fault in the children and in the grandchildren to the third and fourth generation!'* *8 Moses immediately bowed to the ground in worship, 9 then he said, 'If indeed I do enjoy your favor, please, my Lord, come with us, although they are an obstinate [stiff-necked] people; and forgive [pardoning = venakeh] our faults and sins, and adopt us as your heritage.'* [...] =literal translation (*Interlineal Bible: Hebrew-English*, page 235).

Known in Jewish tradition as *Shelosh 'Esreh Middot*: "Thirteen Attributes of Mercy," the list was composed from Talmudic and rabbinic tradition and is built on the thirteen Hebrew words found in Ex 34:6-7a and 9b. In Jewish Synagogues it is recited as a prayer of forgiveness on various holy days, fast days, and other penitential occasions:

- (1) *Adonai*—compassion before man sins \*
- (2) *Adonai*—compassion after man has sinned
- (3) *El* (God): mighty in compassion to give all creatures according to their need
- (4) *Rachum*—merciful, that mankind may not be distressed
- (5) *Hanan/Chanun*—gracious if mankind is already in distress
- (6) *Erech appayim*—slow to anger
- (7) *Rav hesed/chesed*—plenteous in mercy
- (8) *Emet*—truth
- (9) *Notzer hesed/chesed laalafim*—keeping mercy unto the thousands
- (10) *Noseh avon*—forgiving iniquity
- (11) *Noseh peshah*—forgiving transgression
- (12) *Noseh hatah/chatah*—forgiving sin
- (13) *Venakeh*—and pardoning

\* Instead of using YHWH, which is in the Hebrew text, the Jews never write or pronounce the Divine Name but substitute the word "Adonai" (Lord) or "Ha-Shem" (The Name). Notice God's attribute of just judgment for sins is ignored in the list, just as Moses ignored God's statement in vs. 7b.