

Rabbi's Article II

The Power of Smoke Inhalation

Very often, in the Rebbe's *Sicha* (*talk*) on a Rashi, the Rebbe would reveal to us the deeper, "*Wine of Rashi*," in which "*wine*" refers to the esoteric teaching. And so it is with the Rebbe's *talk* concerning the Rashi upon the verse (-Exodus 24:18), "*And Moses came within the cloud*," in which he comments, "*within the cloud*: This cloud was a kind of smoke, and the Holy One, blessed is He, made a path within it." (-See the article: "*Holy Smoke!*")

The fact that there was *smoke* at Mount Sinai is explicitly stated in the Torah (-ibid 19:18), "*And the entire Mount Sinai smoked*," in which the verse clearly calls it, '*smoke*,' while here in our verse, the Torah is referring to the, '*like a kind of smoke*,' as, '*the cloud*'. Why so?

Smoke is created not by fire alone, but by the fire disintegrating its fuel. The coarser the fuel, the longer it takes to disintegrate, the heavier, and the more, is the smoke. While the finer the fuel, the quicker it takes to disintegrate, the finer, and the less, is the smoke. Hence, it is understood that through the smoke one can tell what type of fuel there is to the fire. And, as it is physically, so it is spiritually, when it comes to the *disintegration*, through the revelation of *Heavenly Fire* '*consuming*' the ego, bringing about a self-nullification and a transparency of the world (creation) to *Divinity*¹. This is what '*smoke*' represents, a self-nullification and disintegration to *Divinity*.

1. The Hebrew word for smoke *oshon* -עשן, is the acronym for: (soul; life-force) נפש, (year; time) שנה, (world; space) עולם. Meaning that *smoke* refers to the elevation of the primary properties of the world: *Space*, *Time* and *Live-force*.

The difference between the two verses, in which the first ("*And the entire Mount Sinai smoked*,") refers to it as '*smoke*' and the second ("*And Moses came within the cloud*") as, '*cloud*' is, because:

"*And the entire Mount Sinai smoked*": Is the first stage in refining and preparing the world to becoming "A dwelling place for Him, blessed be He," through *Torah and Mitzvot*. Hence, it came about through, "G-d descended upon Mount Sinai," from *Above to Below*. The world itself was still in its physical, coarse, and unrefined state. Therefore, (i) "*And the entire Mount Sinai smoked*," and (ii) the verse only states, "*because G-d had descended upon it in fire*," without the latter description of, "*a consuming fire*," because the world was not yet of, '*consumable properties*' to the *Heavenly Fire*, and therefore required a miracle that the *Heavenly Fire* itself was producing the *smoke* from its own omnipotent power of disintegration the world's ego.

"*And Moses came within the cloud*": Is the second stage, *after* the *Giving of the Torah*, when the world was already not as coarse. Therefore, the, "*And the appearance of the glory of G-d was like a consuming fire atop the mountain*," did not create an *actual* smoke, but rather (-Torah Ohr 94a), "*Due to its great fineness the Torah does not call it 'smoke' but by the name 'cloud'*." The '*cloud*,' --not *smoke*-- showing that at this point there was no need of disintegration --but rather transformation-- of the physical world, in becoming, "A dwelling place for Him, blessed be He." The post-*Giving of the Torah* service is from *Below to Above*, in which the *Below* yearns for, opens up to, and elevates itself to, the *Above*, and hence, there is a *cloud*, rather than *smoke*.

Nevertheless, Rashi tells us, "*This cloud was a kind of smoke*." Mystically meaning that, "*this*," purpose of having the, "*Dwelling place for Him, blessed be He*," specifically "*within the bottom -lowest physical realm*," demanded that nevertheless, "*this cloud*," had to be, "*a kind of smoke*," coming from the disintegration of the, "*dust-like and turbid-ness*" of the physical material of the world. On the one-hand, being *after* the *Giving of the Torah*, there was no, "*entire... smoked*," while on the other-hand, being that it was transforming the physical into being a dwelling place for G-d, there was, "*a kind of smoke*."

The Lesson: One may ask, "*Why must I engage with the 'physical', rather than just submerge myself into spiritual service? And if it must be with the physical, then why not at least the higher category of the Animal Kingdom, or at the very least, the Botanic Kingdom? Why specifically include the Inanimate Kingdom, which isn't even 'consumable' by the 'Heavenly Fire'?*" Hence, we tell him that the fulfillment of the *Giving of the Torah* is, "*And the entire Mount Sinai --itself; rock; inanimate-- smoked!*"

"However," one continues to ask, "*What about the* (-Tanya, Chapter 28), '*He who wrestles with a filthy person is bound to become soiled himself, with the soot of the smoke?*'!" And for this we answer him: (i) "*And the Holy One, blessed is He, made a path within it*," for Moses. And so too, the (-ibid, Chapter 42), "*Moses within each of us*," will never get soiled, for it (-ibid, Chapter 24), "*Always believes in the One G-d and remains faithful to Him even while the sin is being committed*." (ii) Even more so, not only our *Inner-Moses* --the *Essence of our Soul*--, but even the *Revealed Faculties* of our soul --which are engaging with the physical and the smoke--, remain clean. For, "*This cloud was a kind of smoke*," and not actual smoke. (iii) Ultimately, being that the concealment of the physical upon *Divinity*, *in itself*, is but for the sake of *Holiness* (service to G-d), hence, in essence, it is but a '*cloud of holiness*,' which only externally seems to us as *smoke*, with, "*dust-like and turbid-ness*," through which we serve G-d and bring about an even *greater Light of Holiness*.

Hence, we must each engage with the work of "*smoke*," engaging and transforming the physical, through which we will each, "*And Moses came within the cloud*," and stay there for, "*Forty days and forty nights*," receiving the Torah in its entirety, after which we descend and transform all of our physical possessions into the (-Exodus 25:8), "*And they shall make Me a sanctuary and I will dwell in their midst*."