



# The Community

Boruch Hashem

12550 Biscayne Boulevard · Suite 310 · North Miami, Florida 33181

(305) 892-1234 · Chabadniami@gmail.com

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Rabbi Avrohom Lipszyc

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## Rabbi's Article

### Holy Smoke!

On the verse (-Exodus 24:18), "And Moses came within the cloud," Rashi comments, "'within the cloud': This cloud was a kind of smoke, and the Holy One, blessed is He, made a path within it." Now, clouds and smoke are not only different, but antithetical! Smoke comes from fire, while clouds come from water!? Even more so, why did Rashi feel obliged to give any comment at all here?

So too, the, "And the Holy One, blessed is He, made a path within it," comes from the Talmud (-Yoma 4b), as an answer to a contradiction between two verses --("It is written (-Exodus 40:35), 'And Moses was not able to enter into the Tent of Meeting because the cloud dwelt on it,' And it is written (-ibid 24:18), 'And Moses came into the cloud.' This teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He, grabbed Moses and brought him into the cloud... It is stated here, '(And Moses came) into (the cloud),' and it is stated below (-ibid 14:22), 'into' -'And the children of Israel went into the sea'; Just as below, (there was) a path (within the sea), as it is written (-ibid 14:22), 'And the water was a wall for them,' here too, (there was) a path (through the cloud).")-- However, Rashi's rule is that he will not explain a contradiction until it presents itself, which would be later by the second verse (-ibid 40:35), and not here (-ibid 24:18)? Hence, we must say that Rashi brings up the issue of, "And the Holy One, blessed is He, made a path within it," because here in our verse, it is understood that Moses could not enter the cloud on his own. Hence, the question, Rashi himself already explained earlier on the verse (-ibid 20:18), "Moses drew near to the opaque darkness (where G-d was)," "'Drew near to the opaque darkness': Within three partitions: darkness, cloud, and opaque darkness... Opaque darkness is (synonymous with) 'the thickness of the cloud,'" in which Rashi feels no need to explain to the student how it is possible for Moses to enter into, "the thickness of the cloud"?!

The reason why Rashi is obliged to make any comment here at all is because the entire verse seems extra, being that the Torah, but *three verses prior*, states that (-ibid 20:15), "And Moses went up to the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain," so, obviously Moses entered the cloud in his, "went up to the mountain"?! Hence, Rashi sees our, "within the cloud," to must be talking about a different cloud than the earlier, "and the cloud covered the mountain." Hence, Rashi now faces the question, *which other cloud was this cloud?* Thus, being that the first cloud is simply the type of cloud as that of the already mentioned (-ibid 13:21), "(And G-d went before them by day) in a pillar of cloud (to cause it to lead them on the way)," hence, Rashi says that this different type of cloud was, "was a kind of smoke." How does Rashi see that this cloud is a kind of smoke? This Rashi extrapolates from the verses themselves: In between the verses (-ibid, verse 16), "And He (G-d) called to Moses...", and our verse (-verse 18), "And Moses came within the cloud," a verse states (-verse 17), "And the appearance of the glory of G-d was like a consuming fire atop the mountain." If this verse was simply to describe the mountain at the time of G-d giving the Torah, then the verse belongs earlier (*first half* of verse 16) with the, "And the glory of G-d rested on Mount Sinai"! By the verse telling us of the, "like a consuming fire," after, "And He (G-d) called to Moses," clearly means that it is explaining the following verse of, "And Moses came within the cloud," telling us specifically that this cloud that Moses entered is one of, "a kind of smoke," from the, "like a consuming fire atop the mountain."

With this we will understand the emphases of, "the appearance of the glory of G-d was like a consuming fire." Of what value to the, "appearance of the glory of G-d," does the 'consuming' detail make?! Especially so, when we already know that Heavenly Fire is (-ibid 3:2), "the thorn bush was burning with fire, but the thorn bush was not being consumed"! However, now that we understand that this verse is not explaining the, "appearance of the glory of G-d," in as much as it explaining that the, "And Moses came within the cloud," was one of smoke, the detail of, "consuming," makes perfect sense.

Being that the cloud that Moses was to enter was of *smoke*, which comes from a fire disintegrating its fuel, and hence, causes soot, Rashi simply understands that G-d would not have Moses come before Him to receive the *Two Tablets* in such an dishonorable fashion. Hence, Rashi simply understands that most obviously, "the Holy One, blessed is He, made a path within it," to protect Moses from the soot of the smoke. Nevertheless, Rashi is careful to say, "a kind of smoke --unnatural, hence referred to by the verse as, 'cloud'," because actual smoke can only come from a fire disintegrating a consumable matter (not the rock of the mountain itself), of which there isn't any atop a mountain.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2023 \* כו' שבט תשפ"ג  
Shabbat Candle Lighting: 5:57 PM · Kabbalat Shabbat: 5:30 PM

***This Week...***

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2023 \* כז' שבט תשפ"ג  
TORAH READING: [Mishpatim](#) (Exodus 21:1-24:18) & [Shekalim](#) (Exodus 30:11-16)  
HAFTORAH: [Kings II](#) 11:17 - 12:17 · [Shabbat Shekolim](#) · [Blessing of new month](#)  
Shacharit: 9:30 AM · Mincha: 5:15 PM · Shabbat Ends: North Miami: 6:50 PM

TUESDAY-WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21-22, 2023 \* ל' שבט-א' אדר תשפ"ג  
Rosh Chodesh: Resolve to add on this month in Torah-study, prayer, and charity.