

## PARSHAT KI TISSA, YEAR 3

**Exodus 33** <sup>12</sup> Moses said to יהוה, “See, You say to me, ‘Bring up this people,’ yet You, You have not made known to me whom You will send with me. And You, You have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found favor in My eyes.’ <sup>13</sup> And now, if, pray, I have found favor in Your eyes, let me know, pray, Your ways, that I may know You, so that I may find favor in Your eyes. For consider: this nation is Your people.” <sup>14</sup> And He said, “My presence\* shall go†, and I will grant you rest.†” <sup>15</sup> And he said to Him, “If Your presence does not go, do not take us up from here. <sup>16</sup> For how shall it be known that Your people have gained Your favor unless You go with us, so that we may be distinguished, I and Your people, from every people on the face of the earth?” <sup>17</sup> And יהוה said to Moses, “I will also do this thing that you have asked; for you have found favor in My eyes and I have known you by name.” <sup>18</sup> [Moses] said, “Show me, pray, Your *kavod*§!” <sup>19</sup> And He answered, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will call out the name יהוה in your presence, and I shall grant grace to whom I will and shall be merciful to whom I will.” <sup>20</sup> And He said, “You shall not be able to see My face, for no human can see Me and live.” <sup>21</sup> And יהוה said, “See, there is a place near Me, and you shall take your stance on the crag. <sup>22</sup> And so, when My *kavod* passes by, I will put you in a cleft of the crag and shield you with My palm until I have passed by. <sup>23</sup> Then I will take My palm away and you will see My back; but My face will not be seen.”

**34** <sup>1</sup> And יהוה said to Moses: “Carve yourself two tablets of stone like the first\*\*, and I will inscribe upon the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you smashed. <sup>2</sup> Be ready by morning, and in the morning come up to Mount Sinai and take

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\* “presence” used here to translate *panim*, lit. “face”; so again in the next verse. The same Hebrew word also appears in vv 20 and 23, where it is translated “face.”

† God’s answer is somewhat cryptic, only four words in Hebrew; this translation attempts to mirror that cryptic effect. The effect is to show God yielding to Moses’ request, but with a certain reluctance. Presumably God means go “with or before you,” – the verse is traditionally translated “My presence shall go with you” --but since this is unstated, Moses is still not reassured (v 15).

‡ “rest” here is probably tantamount to safety. “Deliver to a safe haven” is a common meaning of the verb (Deut. 3.20; 25.19).

§ *Kavod* has multiple meanings (e.g., weight, honor). In this and in similar contexts in the Torah, often translated “glory.” “Emboldened by God’s favorable reply, Moses supplements his request to know God’s ways (v. 13) with a request to behold God’s Presence, that is, to know Him visually as well (see vv. 20– 23). He seeks total familiarity with God.” (*Jewish Study Bible*)

\*\* In contrast to the first set of tablets, which God provided himself. As Rashi comments, “You broke the original ones – now you carve yourself the replacements.”

your stance before Me, on the top of the mountain. <sup>3</sup>No one else shall come up with you, and no one else shall be seen anywhere on the mountain; neither shall the flocks and the herds graze at the foot of this mountain.” <sup>4</sup>So Moses carved two tablets of stone, like the first, and early in the morning he went up on Mount Sinai, as יהוה had commanded him, taking the two stone tablets with him. <sup>5</sup>And יהוה came down in a cloud; [Moses]<sup>††</sup> stationed himself with him there, and called out the name יהוה. <sup>6</sup> And יהוה passed before him and called out, “יהוה, יהוה, a God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness and good faith, <sup>7</sup>keeping kindness to the thousandth generation, forgiving crime, transgression, and sin; yet He does not wholly acquit, reckoning the crime of parents upon children and children’s children, upon the third and fourth generations.” <sup>8</sup>Moses hastened and prostrated himself on the ground and bowed low. <sup>9</sup>And he said, “If, pray, I have found favor in Your eyes, my Lord, pray let my Lord go in our midst, even though this is a stiffnecked people. Pardon our crime and our sin, and take us for Your own!”

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<sup>††</sup> As is often the case in Hebrew, the subject is implied rather than stated explicitly. Most translations assume that it is God doing the stationing and the invoking, since God is the subject of the previous verb (“came down”), but “station yourself” is the same root (נצב *natzav*) as “take your stance,” which is the action God commands Moses to take in v. 2. God, after all, is not stationary in this encounter, but “passes before” Moses. In this reading, *both* God and Moses call out (קרא *qara*) the divine name: Moses as an invocation (34:5), God as a revelation of the divine nature (34:6; cf. 33:19).