

Parshat Mishpatim, Exodus 24

¹And to Moses He said, "Go up to YHVH, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel, and you shall bow down from afar. ² And Moses alone shall come near to ADONAI, but they shall not come near, and the people shall not go up with him."

³And Moses came and recounted to the people all YHVH's utterances and all the laws, and the people answered with a single voice and said, "All the words that YHVH has spoken we will do." ⁴And Moses wrote down all YHVH's words, and he rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain with twelve standing stones for the twelve tribes of Israel.

⁵And he sent the lads of the Israelites and they offered up burnt offerings and sacrificed bulls as sacrifices of wellbeing to YHVH. ⁶And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he threw upon the altar. ⁷And he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people, and they said, "All that YHVH has spoken we will do and we will hearken." ⁸And Moses took the blood and threw it upon the people, and he said, "Look, the blood of the covenant that YHVH has sworn with you in accordance with all these words."

⁹And Moses went up, and with him Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel. ¹⁰And they saw the God of Israel, and beneath His feet was something like the work of sapphire tiles, like the very heavens for pureness. ¹¹Yet against the representatives of the Israelites He did not raise His hand, and they beheld God and ate and drank.

¹²And YHVH said to Moses, "Go up to me to the mountain and remain there, that I may give you the stone tablets and the teaching and the commandments that I have written to instruct them. ¹³ And Moses arose, and Joshua his attendant with him, and Moses went up the mountain of God. ¹⁴And to the elders he had said, "Wait here for us until we return to you, and, look, Aaron and Hur are with you. Whoever has a legal matter may approach them."

¹⁵And Moses went up, and the cloud covered the mountain. ¹⁶ And the *kavod*¹ of YHVH abode on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called out to Moses from the midst of the cloud. ¹⁷And the sight of the *kavod* of YHVH was like consuming fire at the mountaintop before the eyes of the Israelites. ¹⁸And Moses entered within the cloud and went up the mountain, and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

¹ Hebrew כבוד, from a root meaning "be heavy," and so relates to honor, *gravitas*. Here usually translated "Glory" or "Presence"; it refers to the luminous essence at the heart of the cloud.