



Parashat Shemini: The Tabernacle and the Broken Heart

After Aaron finished offering the sacrifices and blessed the Nation, it says, “*And Moses and Aaron came to the Tent of Meeting and they came out and they blessed the Nation and the Glory of God appeared to all the Nation.*”

Why did Moses and Aaron go inside? Rashi explains: “When Aaron saw that all the sacrifices had been offered and all the acts had been performed and the *Shechinah* did not descend for Israel, he felt sorrow and said: ‘I know that God is angry at me and it is because of me that the *Shechinah* did not descend for Israel’. He said to Moses, “Moses, my brother, this is what you did to me, that I entered and was embarrassed?” Immediately Moses entered with him and they prayed for compassion and the *Shechinah* descended for Israel.

Continuing, Rashi says: “All the Seven Days of Consecration, when Moses constructed the Tabernacle and served in it and deconstructed it every day, the *Shechinah* did not dwell inside it. And Israel was ashamed and said to Moses: Moshe Rabbeinu, all the trouble that we took so that the *Shechinah* would dwell among us and we would know that the Sin of the Golden Calf was atoned! Thus he said to them...’ My brother Aaron is more worthy and important than I, for through his offerings and service the *Shechinah* will dwell among you and you will know that God chose him.”

After all the effort, the *Shechinah* still has not descended. Something seems to be ‘stuck’... Aaron the Priest is embarrassed, the Nation of Israel is ashamed and Moses explicitly admits that the *Shechinah* will not descend through his efforts. Only after all of them are a bit ‘broken’ and after their special prayers for God’s compassion – does God’s glory manifest.

If everything goes smoothly, without crises, it is easy to develop a sense of satisfaction that borders on pride. If that is the case, the *Shechinah* will not descend. Only after all of them – Moses, Aaron, and Israel – reach a state of broken-heartedness and beseech God for His compassion – does the *Shechinah* manifest.