

Moshe could not enter the Ohel Moed, for the cloud rested upon it. (40:35)

The *Midrash* explains that Moshe was not afraid to enter through the cloud. Indeed, we find in *Parashas Mishpatim 24:18* that the cloud split open and permitted Moshe to walk through as if the path had been paved for him. Rather, the meaning of "*v'lo yachol*," "Moshe could not enter," is that Moshe gave reverence to the *Shechinah* and did not enter until Hashem called him. We may question the *Torah's* use of the phrase, "*v'lo Yachol*" "He could not." If Moshe's reluctance to enter was due to his remarkable *derech erez*, respect for the Al-mighty, the *Torah* should have so stated. Instead, the *Torah* seems to imply that Moshe did not have the ability to enter.

Horav Shimon Schwab, zl, comments that concerning *middos*, moral characteristics, we accept the axiom that "*hergel na'ase teva*," habit becomes natural. In other words, if a person acts in a certain manner long enough, it becomes second nature for him. Moshe *Rabbeinu* was so diligent in the reverence he accorded the *Shechinah*, it literally became impossible for him to enter the cloud before Hashem called him to enter. The respect he gave the *Shechinah* became natural for him to the point that it went against every fiber of his being to do anything that even remotely suggested a lack of reverence.

With this idea in mind, *Horav Schwab* explains the praise and blessing we say at a *bris milah*, "*As he (the child) entered into the bris, so too shall he enter into (the study of) Torah, chupah (marriage), and good deeds.*" Simply, as the *bris* is performed purely for the sake of Heaven, with the proper intentions and spirit, so, too, should these three seminal occasions in the child's life be *l'shem Shomayim*. We may wonder why the concept of *mitzvah* observance is excluded from the blessing. This phrase seems primarily to address the area of social *mitzvos* without dealing with man's relationship with Hashem.

Horav Schwab explains that this blessing addresses the metamorphosis that takes place within this infant. Until now he was an "*areil*," uncircumcised, and now he becomes a "*mahul*," circumcised. His *teva*, nature, changes. Likewise, we pray that he will change into a *talmid chacham*, *Torah* scholar; will enter matrimony where he will become a new, whole human being; will perform deeds of loving-kindness whereby his nature will change, and he will become naturally predisposed to these good deeds. Conversely, in regard to *mitzvos* that concern themselves with our service to the Al-mighty, they cannot be performed by rote as if they were part of our natural predisposition. We would become complacent in our ritual observance. Indeed, the last thing we want is for our *mitzvah* observance to become something "natural," a performance of habit. Consequently, we do not bless the infant that his "*mitzvah* performance" should have the same attitude and effect as *Torah* study, matrimony, and deeds of loving-kindness.