

"And Hashem said to Moshe hew out two tablets of stone like the first ones." (34:1) - "And no man shall go up with you and neither let any man be seen throughout all the mountain." (34:3)

Says Rashi: "The first tablets were given amidst great pomp and upheaval, therefore the evil eye had power over them (they did not endure and were destroyed when the Jews worshipped the Golden Calf.) There is no finer quality than modesty."

Rashi explains the apparent contrast between the way the first set of tablets was given and the manner in which the second set was given. Thus the second set of tablets which was given in silence in the presence of only one human being endured. To the modern mind the suggestion that because revelation occurred amidst pomp and glory, in the presence of the whole assembly of people, the evil eye had an adverse power over them, seems somewhat strange. The idea that an "Evil Eye" had the power to influence the people and seemingly overpowered Hashem's work, would be regarded by some as an example of shallow witchery. In reality there is nothing mystical regarding the power of the "eye" of man, the superficial vision that often brings ruin, and creates havoc upon the creation of man's own hands. A religion that appeals to the eye, a service which is beautiful and superficially impressive, will not endure the test of time. It depends on how deeply it strikes into the heart and soul of the human being. The eye is perhaps the most dangerous of man's organs and the most overpowering of human senses. Forty days after the most magnificent and unequalled revelation in the history of mankind, the Jewish people were already questioning Hashem. According to their mistaken calculations, Moshe was late in returning from his forty day stay on Mount Sinai, and the people's impatience overcame them. This illustrated the shallowness of their belief. It was the eye that was moved at Mount Sinai, but the heart remained unchanged. Ing vkgh tk ahtu - Religion must be a deep personal conviction, where every man on his own communes with his own soul. If we are to succeed and endure we must try to appreciate that only through quiet, modest lives will we realize these goals.