

Show me please Your glory. (Shemos 33:18)

The *cheit ha'eigel*, sin of the Golden Calf, was committed forty days after Hashem gave Moshe *Rabbeinu* the *Aseres HaDibros*, Ten Commandments, on *Har Sinai*. It was a sin for which Hashem wanted to destroy the Nation. While only a small group of people actually sinned, the rest of the nation stood by in apathy, either indifferent or unable to do anything to prevent the sin from occurring. As a result, Hashem held all of them in contempt, and He punished them. Hashem revoked His decree to destroy the nation due to Moshe *Rabbeinu's* supplication on their behalf.

Following Hashem's acquiescence to Moshe's prayer, Moshe asked Hashem, *Hareini na es kvodecha*; "Show me, please, Your Glory," which means, "Teach me the way You conduct the world." Hashem replied that it is impossible to see Hashem's Glory directly and survive. To grant Moshe a glimpse, Hashem placed Moshe in a cave until His Glory passed by. As the vision of Hashem's Glory passed, Moshe could look out and gaze at Hashem's back. *Chazal* explain that Moshe was able to see His *Kesher Shel Tefillin*, the knot that secures the *Tefillin Shel Rosh*, *Tefillin* on the head, which is positioned on the back of the neck. Obviously, this is beyond us. What does the *Tefillin* knot, *kesher*, have to do with the Glory of Hashem?

The commentators interpret Moshe's request as an attempt to understand the spiritual quandary of, *Tzaddik v'ra lo, rasha v'tov lo*; "The righteous suffer while the wicked prosper." This dilemma is magnified when we see a *tzaddik* who has lived a perfect life of commitment to Hashem suffer greatly, while the consummate *rasha*, whose life of abandon and rebellion against Hashem is utterly disgusting, seems to be walking on a cloud, enjoying the pleasures of this world to his greatest satisfaction. Our quintessential leader, whose faith in Hashem was without peer, could not fathom why there must exist such a spiritual impasse – one which has plagued and even turned off otherwise (externally) upright and devoted Jews. Furthermore, the eleventh *Ani Maamin*, Principle of Faith, declares that He is a righteous G-d Who rewards good and punishes evil. This is a principle of faith which, in the face of what seems to occur, requires that we make an enormous leap of faith to accept it.

Horav Shimon Schwab, zl (quoted in *My Rebbe, Rav Schwab*), explains that the *kesher* of the *Tefillin Shel Rosh* is tied in a special way. The manner in which we tie it provides us with an insight into Hashem's response to Moshe. A leather strap (*retzuah*) is inserted through a slot in the back of the *Tefillin* box and comes out on the right and left sides of the box. Those two ends are connected by a special knot, causing the *retzuos*, straps, to form a ring the size of the person's head. The knot sits at the back of the head, with the rest of the straps hanging down and worn by the person on the front of the body. Upon examination, we note that each strap enters the knot on one side and exits on the other. The right strap enters on the right and exits on the left and vice versa. Thus, the *kesher* serves as the medium for reversing the *retzuah*, with right becoming left and left becoming right.

This, explains *Rav Schwab*, alludes to the underlying connection between Moshe's question and

the *kesher* of the *Tefillin*. What we perceive as pain and suffering is, in reality, in one's best interest. The righteous person who undergoes suffering simultaneously atones his sins in this world, so that his entrance into his rightful place in the World-to-Come is pure and without sin. The one who lives a life in violation of Hashem's *mitzvos* seems to value this temporal world above the external value of reward in *Olam Habba*, the World-to-Come. Thus, Hashem rewards him for whatever good he does in this world. The *kesher* teaches us that what goes in one end does not necessarily exit that way. Likewise, what we seem to think is "right" is actually "left" and vice versa.