

“GOODNESS MAKES US GLOW”

Moses twice came down from Sinai: The first set of tablets he smashed at the foot of the mountain upon seeing the golden calf. Returning to the top of Sinai, Moses is instructed by God to carve a new set of tablets.

In descending the second time Moses undergoes a peculiar change -- his face glows; we are told that he wore a veil when speaking to the people. Why does his face glow the second time and not the first time?

Here is the answer of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks in his new book “To Heal a Fractured World”: “After the first tablets, where he was merely a passive recipient of God’s gift, he was still the same Moses. After the second, he was different. We are changed, not by what we receive, but what we do.”

We are abundantly blessed. With all our blessings, however, we are not so different from those who have gone before us. We complain as fiercely, are as quick to anger, cruelty, injustice as our forebears. Our blessings did not change us. But some have used their blessings for goodness, and they are indeed changed. For it is not the face of good fortune that glows, but the face of goodness.