

Where People Let G*d In

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Rabbi Zev-Hayyim Feyer

Shavuot

Shavuot. The Festival of the Giving of the Torah. The celebration of the Theophany at Sinai. **The Eternal descended upon Mount Sinai . . . and Moses ascended.** (Exodus 19:20)

It was not a one-way process; it could not be. It was not enough that G*d came down upon Mount Sinai. Before the Torah could be given, Moses also had to go up to receive it.

*A young man (later to be known as Rebbe Yitzhak Meir of Ger) approached our master and teacher Rebbe Menahem Mendel of Kotzk, hoping to become his student. (Over the course of time, he became the Kotzker's student, closest friend, and brother-in-law.) The rebbe questioned him, asking, "Young man, can you tell me where G*d is?"*

*"Rebbe," the young man replied, amazed by the very question, "G*d is everywhere. There is no place from which G*d is absent!"*

*"Young man!" the Kotzker continued forcefully, "I told you to tell me where G*d is!"*

*"But, Rebbe," young Yitzhak Meir replied tremulously, "are we not taught that all the world is filled with G*d's Glory?"*

*"Young man," Rebbe Menahem Mendel shouted (for he was known as the master of anger, able to use anger most effectively as a teaching tool), "why do you not tell me where G*d is!"*

"Rebbe," replied the young man, finally attaining a firmness of attitude, "since I obviously do not know, you must tell me."

*"Young man," the rebbe said firmly, "G*d is everywhere that people permit G*d in!"*

Certainly, as young Yitzhak Meir said, G*d is everywhere. But there is a deeper and higher level of G*d's being present – openly present – that depends on our coöperation.

Shavuot is the Festival which celebrates G*d's giving of the Torah. It is our responsibility to complete that act of giving by our receiving.

Hag Same'ah; may you have a joyous Festival.

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