

For over the Tabernacle a cloud of the Lord rested by day, and fire would appear in it by night, in view of all the House of Israel throughout their journeys. --- Exod. 40:38

But immediately before (v. 36) it said that the cloud was raised up when they journeyed! It means that during any journey which they would make, the cloud would rest wherever they camped; these places are also included when the Torah speaks of their journeys. (Rashi) Thus, we should always remember that wherever we dwell, this too is temporary, and we will have new travels and wanderings. --- **Yalkut Yehudah**, Rabbi Yehuda Ginsberg, Russia and U.S., 1888-1946

Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar said: How do we know that the Israelites never had need of light during the forty years' wandering, but that even when one would enter into a room within a room, it was as if there was a lantern? Because it says, *in view of all the House of Israel throughout their journeys*. Thus even in an enclosed area, the pillar of fire would appear before them. --- **Sifrei Beha'alotekha** 25

Rabbi Shimon ben Yosi said: The Israelites needed neither the light of the sun by day nor the light of the moon by night during the forty years' wandering, but only these clouds...and could even see the insides of their barrels by this light!...And so it will be in the future, as it says: *Arise, shine, for your light has dawned; the Presence of the Lord has shone upon you!* (Isaiah 60:1) --- **Midrash Meleket ha-Mishkan** 17

These miracles were renewed so that the Israelites would follow the Lord in such a way as to deserve individual divine providence. --- Gersonides

Both were continually there, but the cloud was visible during the day, and at night, when it was too dark to see the cloud, the light within it was visible. --- Abarbanel

He spread a cloud for a cover, and fire to light up the night (Ps. 105:39). Rabbi Meir said: There were two clouds, for it says: *For over the Tabernacle a cloud of the Lord rested by day*. Rabbi Eliezer ben Shamua said: There was one cloud, for it says: *He spread a cloud for a cover*. Hezekiah said: God would change it for them, on account of those afflicted with various impurities, so that they would know when it was evening and when it was morning. --- **Midrash Tehillim** 105:12

When he finished his work and stood up, immediately the **Shekhinah** descended upon him, *For over the Tabernacle a cloud of the Lord rested by day.* And so it will be in time to come; *The Lord will create over the whole shrine and meeting place of Mount Zion cloud by day and smoke, with a glow of flaming fire by night* (Isa. 4:5). --- a midrash from the genizah, noted in **Torah Shleimah** 23:103

For over the Tabernacle a cloud of the Lord rested by day, and fire would appear in it by night; this teaches that the pillar of fire completed the pillar of the cloud, and the pillar of the cloud, completed the pillar of fire. --- **Midrash Lekach Tov**

When Israel saw the pillar of the cloud resting on the Tabernacle, they celebrated and said: Now we are truly desired by God. And when the pillar of fire came down and encircled the Tabernacle, and they saw it all ablaze in fire, they began to worry and weep, saying: Woe upon us, for we have labored in vain; what we made and built will burn up quickly. When they awakened in the morning and saw the pillar of fire once again encircling the Tabernacle, their joy was redoubled, and they said: this proves to all the world that they could never make something like this, due to the great love of God for Israel. And so it says: *I delight to sit in his shade, and his fruit is sweet in my mouth.* (Song of Songs 2:3) --- **Midrash ha-Gadol**

How do we know that if one of the Jews withdrew from under the wings of the cloud, it withdrew with him until he returned? *And the cloud of God was above them* (Numb. 10:34). Perhaps just as it protected them by day, so it protected them by night? No, for it is written: *by day*, meaning it protected them by day and not at night. Granted that the pillar of cloud did not protect them at night, but perhaps the pillar of fire provided light for them in the day; ah, but it says, *and fire would appear in it by night*; it gave light at night, but not in the daytime. Perhaps just as it gave light for Israel, so it gave light to idolaters (i.e., others)? But it says, *in view of all the House of Israel*, meaning, it gave light for Israel, but not for the idolaters. Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says: From where is it derived that all the forty years that Israel were in the desert, they did not require a lamp, and even if one entered a room within a room, a kind of torch entered with him until he returned? *In view of all the House of Israel throughout their journeys*, meaning that even if one entered a room within a room, the pillar of fire would give light before him. --- **Sifrei, Beha'alotekha** 83