

## Torah Portion Preview for Chol HaMo-eid Pesach

*Shabbat beginning April 7, 2023*

This Shabbat includes the middle days of Pesach. Instead of a distinct Torah portion, we substitute part of last month's Ki Tisa. The relevant passage tells of the display of God's back to Moses, the inscription of the two tablets, the attributes of God, the covenant, the Feasts of Pesach and Shavuot, the sacrifice of firstborn animals, the bringing of first fruits to God, and the redemption of firstborn males.<sup>3</sup>

Robert Tornberg, formerly an HUC-JIR education program director, wrote a developmental application of theology reprinted on [reformjudaism.org](http://reformjudaism.org). He argued that the anthropomorphic display of God's back was not literal, but metaphorical. This recategorization opens possibilities to ask the enduring theological question of how to recognize God in our midst. "Seeing God's back" meant seeing God's influence on the world. This view enables a more coherent connection between God's back and the more abstract list of attributes. God is whatever is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in enduring kindness, faithful, forgiving of iniquity, transgression, and sin, but still bearing consequences for generations to come due to our violations of obligations to each other and God's creation. The metaphor helps us reflect on how Pesach connects us better to God.