

Parshat Vayakhel

The Mishkan and the Jew

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What is the connection between Parshat Vayakhel and the sin of the golden calf in last week's parsha? To understand this, we must first understand the *cheit ha'egel*. The Ramban explains, along with many other commentators (as we mentioned last week), that the original intention in creating the golden calf was not for idolatry. Rather, Bnei Yisrael thought that Moshe had died and that they needed a new leader. But why did they make an image and not just appoint someone else? They felt that they needed an intermediary between themselves and Hashem. They thought that Moshe Rabbeinu was a "Super Jew," as the Zohar says: "Moshe gathered the entire congregation of Bnei Yisrael" - Moshe gathered them into himself; he had within himself all the abilities of all the Jews. He was 600,000 times better than any individual. He was used to split the sea. He was used to transmit the Torah.

The problem was that the Jews felt they needed a super duper intermediary between them and Hashem; this was what was at the root of *cheit ha'egel*. Our parsha tells of Shabbat and the Mishkan, which were the *tikkun* (rectification) and atonement for the sin of the golden calf. How so?

Hashem told the Jews: "They shall make for Me a Sanctuary, so that I shall dwell amongst them." Chazal explain this to mean that through the Mishkan Hashem will dwell His Shechina within every single Jew. Every Jew will feel inherently connected with Hashem via the sanctity of the Mishkan. The same is true for Shabbat. We feel the Shechina on a much greater level via the sanctity of Shabbat, which Chazal say parallels the Beit Hamikdash. It is through the Mishkan and Shabbat that a Jew realizes that he himself can have a close connection with Hashem, that it is not necessary to have intermediaries, or super-Jews. We all can make the connection, and, believe it or not, we call all be like Moshe Rabbeinu.

The Torah says, "These are the things that Hashem has commanded **to do** them" (Shemot 35:1), and then goes on to say what **not** to do – do not do *melacha* on Shabbat. However, "To **do** them," sounds like Hashem wants to give us a positive commandment, but instead He then commands us with a prohibition. What does the Torah mean?

The Rambam writes in Hil. Teshuva (5:2) that every Jew has the ability to be a tzaddik like Moshe Rabbeinu. The Tiferet Yisrael comments: "Moshe gathered the entire congregation of Bnei Yisrael" - This is what the Zohar says that Moshe included the qualities of all of Israel in his soul and was equivalent to all of Israel. About this quality of Moshe the Torah continues: "**These** are the things that Hashem has commanded to do them." These things - these qualities, the greatness of Moshe Rabbeinu - Hashem is telling us "To do them" - to be like Moshe Rabbeinu. Every one of us can be a tzaddik like Moshe Rabbeinu. Every one of us can have a close connection with Hashem. This realization is the ultimate correction for the sin of the golden calf.