

# Portion of *Vayakhel*

## Let's Try Again

And Moses gathered the entire assembly of the children of Israel (*Sh'mos* 35:1)

Some of us think we can go to shul and pray without feeling close to G-d, but praying without feeling close doesn't go.

The Holy Temple is the headquarters of prayer. Before you build the *Beis HaMikdash*, before you build a house of prayer, you have to be close to G-d. Therefore, when Moshe Rabbeinu gathers the *Yidden*, he first tells them about Shabbos and then about the building of the *Beis Hamikdash*. *Yidden*, let's have Shabbos, let's get close to G-d again, close to each other, and then we can start davening.

If you pray just for yourself – it's meaningless. Praying has to be "*b'shem kol Yisrael*" 'in the name of all of Israel.' The Arizal brought down [that] before you daven you have to say, "*Hareini mekabel alai es mitzvas haboreh v'ahavta lerei-acha kamocho*" 'I mamesh accept upon myself to love every person like myself.' When I go to a grocery store, I don't have to buy groceries for somebody else. When I go shopping in G-d's grocery store, and I only order for myself, G-d says, "I'm sorry, I'm sold out." By G-d, it's only when you shop for somebody else as well.

So here it says "*Vayak-hayl Moshe es Kol Adas B'nei Yisrael.*" You must make sure everybody should be close to one another. How could you walk into the *Beis HaMikdash* without praying for somebody else?

## Shabbos after the Golden Calf

And Moses gathered.... On six days work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you” (*Sh'mos* 1:3)

When Moshe Rabbeinu gathers together all the *Yidden*, the first thing he tells us about is the mitzvah of Shabbos. Everyone is asking why didn't Moshe Rabbeinu just tell us about Shabbos in Parashah *Ki Sisa*, before the Golden Calf? Why does he have to tell us about Shabbos again in *Vayak-hayl*?

The answer is cutting right through everything.

Before the Golden Calf, it was enough to have a cute little Shabbos, and make sure you keep all the laws. It was enough to have chicken soup, read the *Jewish Press* and go for a Shabbos walk. After the Golden Calf, after you fall so low you need more than that, you need much more than that. After the Golden Calf you need Shabbos beyond this world. You need a Shabbos you can blow your mind over.

Let me ask you the deepest depths. When are we longing to have more of something?

Sadly enough, when things are good and I feel established, I don't have vessels to ask for anything more than what I currently think I have. Sometimes we go into orthodox shuls and it's sweet and cute, but what is missing? We are not longing for 'more' anymore. We are fine with the way it is, with what we think we have.

When do you long for everything? When you are at the end and there is nothing left.

When did we have vessels for the holy of holies? I want you to open your hearts. If we would have not made the Golden Calf, and would have just had the *Beis HaMikdash*, it would have been a sweet *Beis HaMikdash*, but it would not have been a *Kodesh Kodashim*. But because we made the Golden Calf, and years later we built the Holy Temple, there is a Holy of Holies.

You know what it is, after a husband and wife have a little fight, they better become closer, much closer. Only after I made the Golden Calf do I realize, “*Ribbono shel Olam*, holy is not enough for me, I need the holy of holiest.” When we are in exile we are praying, “*Ribbono shel Olam*, don't just take me back to *Yerushalayim*. *U-l'Kodesh Kodashim*, I need to be so much closer, I need to taste the holy of holiest.”

So here Moshe Rabbeinu is gathering all the *Yidden* and saying, “I want you to know, it's time to be so much closer to each other, it's time to be closer to Shabbos, it's time to be much closer to the *Ribbono shel Olam*.”

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Imagine my child is learning piano and I say to them, “You play beautiful piano but I don’t know if you will be playing for long, you will be tired of rehearsing.” If you tell this to a child three times, they will never try playing the piano again. This is what Amalek did to us. As much as we conquered Amalek, the fact that we met him impacted us with such darkness – so much so that when we stood on Mount Sinai we didn’t even believe in ourselves anymore. We stood there wondering how long this feeling is going to last. Here we are coming out of Egypt, feeling so close to G-d, and Amalek says to us, “Hey folks, don’t kid ourselves, this high won’t last.” And sadly enough, it really didn’t last; we ended up making the Golden Calf.

Amalek comes and cools you off and says, “Listen to me, you really think you can live beyond the world within this world? You are crazy. You can have a little Red Sea attack, and then on Yom Kippur you feel really close to G-d. From time to time you can do this, but you cannot live this way for real.”

But on Purim I’m wiping out Amalek. I stop wondering how long the deep, real, and exalted me will last. Something changes in me. How does this happen? When is it that Amalek can’t touch me?

In the Megillah, Esther says to Mordechai, “Bring all the *Yidden* together” (Esther 4:16) and the Shabbos after Purim we usually read, “*Vayak-hayl Moshe*” ‘Moshe gathered all the *Yidden* together.’ (*Sh’mos* 35:1) Why is Moshe Rabbeinu gathering everyone? Because now is the time to wipe out Amalek; on account of Amalek we made the Golden Calf and the tablets broke.

Amalek says to you, “You have no friends. You are all alone in the world. Nobody cares for you. Your parents don’t care for you. Your friends don’t care for you. Nobody cares for you. Just you.” Cools me off. How do I wipe out Amalek? “*Vayak-hayl Moshe es kol adas Yisrael.*” You do have friends, you do have people who feel close to you and who believe in you. Just come together again.