

ויקהל

VAYAKHEL/AND HE ASSEMBLED

Shemot/Exodus 35:1- 38:20

It would seem that the parashiot of **Vayakhel** and next week's **Pekudei** merely repeat the details of parashiot **Terumah** and **Tetzaveh**. Since the Almighty already spent so much time on these specifics, what can be learned from these repetitions? The topic of all four of these readings concerns the Tabernacle and its priesthood. In **Terumah/Tetzaveh**, the words “**and you shall make**” (וַעֲשִׂיתָ - ve'asita) are used repeatedly to introduce יהוה's instructions on how to make everything. And then in **Vayakhel/ Pekudei**, the repeated phrase is past tense, “**and he made**” (וַיַּעַשׂ - va-ya'as).

Every single detail, down to the exact measurements, which was instructed to Moshe with a “**ve'asita**,” was accomplished – “**va'ya'as**.” In other words, all the planning (**Terumah/Tetzaveh**) became a reality (**Vayakhel/Pekudei**). All goals were realized. Everything that came from the heart of the Father was received by the heart of His people. The building of the Tabernacle was accomplished through the unity of working together. For us, this is the lesson. The inspiration and the motivation that the Holy Spirit places in our hearts must be brought to fulfillment in our lives as we work together and encourage one another!

However, there are other things going on in our parashiot. Parashat **Ki Tisa** with its sin of the golden calf was in between the instructions of “**ve'asita**” and the “**va'ya'as**.” Before the actual construction, the heart of the community had to be seriously confronted. And so, this week we begin with...

Shemot/Exodus 35:1 And Moshe assembled (וַיִּקְהַל - Vayakhel) all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said to them, "These *are* the words which יהוה has commanded *you* to do:

There are many times when Moshe “**assembled**” (וַיִּקְהַל - Vayakhel) the people together, but what is so unique about this gathering is that it occurs directly after the sin of the golden calf. If we go back, Torah tells us that when Israel gathered at Sinai, they did so as one people with one heart. Israel was completely unified when they spoke as “**one**” and said “**all that יהוה has spoken we will do.**”

Shemot 19:8 Then all the people answered together and said, "All that יהוה has spoken we will do." So Moshe brought back the words of the people to יהוה.⁹ And יהוה said to Moshe, "Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever." So Moshe told the words of the people to יהוה.

But tragically, the unity they had before the receiving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai lasted less than 40 days. While Moshe was up on the Mountain, a remnant of the people became idolatrous, causing the glory of יהוה to retreat from all of Israel. Let's talk about that rebellious remnant for a moment. **Shemot 32:28**

says it was about “**3,000 people**” who were slain by the sons of Levi. Plus, an unidentified number who יהוה killed by a plague:

Shemot 32:28 So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moshe. And about **three thousand men of the people fell that day.**

Shemot 32:35 So **יהוה plagued** the people because of what they did with the calf which Aharon made.

When Moshe came down the mountain, were all 3 million Israelites dancing around the golden calf? For sure not! We do not know the exact number, but taking the 3,000 and adding perhaps 20,000 who may have been killed in “יהוה’s plague,” that total number is still less than 1% of the people. Why then, was יהוה so angry with them all when 99% did nothing wrong? The answer to that question may be found in the sin of Adam. Adam was not deceived by the serpent and failed to guard Eve against the deception. The majority of the Israelites failed to stop the minority from worshipping the golden calf, resulting in a split in their unity. They went from being united as “**one person with one heart**” to fragmentation. Disunity causes retreat of the glory of יהוה every time. We really are our brother’s keeper.

To convey the importance and necessity of reuniting, Moshe did not transmit his teachings in the usual manner, through the priests and the 70 elders. Instead, he gathered all of the people together and spoke to them in community. The word “**vayakhel**” (וַיַּקְהֵל) is significant, for it implies the fusion of the people into a “**kahal**” (קָהָל) or a community defined as far more than a collection of individuals. An ordinary group that gathers together can also move apart, and even while together there may not be unity. But with a “**kahal**” there is “**unity**,” because there is some kind of a bond that joins them together. Sadly, a “**kahal**” can also gather together for a less than holy purpose:

Shemot 32:1 Now when the people saw that Moshe delayed coming down from the mountain, the people **gathered together** (וַיִּקְהֵל) to Aharon, and said to him, "Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for *as for* this Moshe, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."

It was a “**kahal**” that first kept the Passover in Egypt, united by the slaughter of the Pesach lamb:

Shemot 'Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole **assembly** (קָהָל - kahal) of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.

“**Kahal**” typically is translated into Greek as “**ekklesia**.” “**Ekklesia**” is a common term used throughout the **Greek Septuagint** and is generally used to speak of the assembled worshippers in the Temple, or the whole assembly of Israel. However, when it occurs in the **Brit Chadasha**, English translators do not translate it as “**assembly**,” but instead we read it as “**church**.” The subject of biased translation is a whole topic in itself, but it should be considered that “**ekklesia**” was never intended by the inspired writers to be a completely new and different institution known as the “**church**.”

So, Moshe assembles the “**kahal**” and begins by teaching that the “**Shabbat**” is the source of their unity. If they want to build a holy Tabernacle for יהוה, this can only be possible if they are truly united. For only then will the Holy Spirit be able to dwell in their midst:

Shemot 35:1 Then Moshe assembled all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said to them, "These *are* the words which יהוה has commanded *you* to do: ² "Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh day shall be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of rest to יהוה. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. ³ "You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day."

When we are united and focused on Him, when we truly care about each other, the Shekinah glory (the Presence of יהוה who dwells with us) prevents us from desiring to make any kind of a golden calf. But if we are divided, He is not in our midst, and we can become spiritually adulterous, making idols that further divide us. Some of our most dangerous idols can be the theologies and ideas that we tightly hang onto. The greatest barrier to the truth is the presumption that we already have it.

According to Moshe, the first sanctuary of the children of Israel was to be the “**Shabbat**,” a sanctuary in time, not the physical Tabernacle. The “**Shabbat**” and the “**Tabernacle**” are both holy, yet they are polar opposites – holiness of rest and holiness of work. The Sabbath rest, the idea of the cessation of all creative works, is where Moshe began to refocus the “**kahal**” of people after the sin of the golden calf.

Did you ever consider there are two ways to observe the **Shabbat**? One is with community and one is privately. The commandments as they are given actually ascribe two verbs to the “**Sabbath day**”:

Shemot 20:8 " Remember (זָכַר - zakor) the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 5:12 ' Guard (שָׁמַר - shamor) the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as יהוה your Elohim commanded you.



Rabbi Berel Wein teaches that the nature of “**zakor**” – the way we “**remember the Sabbath day**” is accomplished by how we privately set it apart. For most observant Jews and for many other Torah believers, this means lighting candles, wine, challah, special meals and leisurely rest combined with Torah study.

But the other side of the commandment is to “**shamor the Shabbat**.” It is the concept of a community resting, a time of restraint and the absence of the everyday hustle and bustle of commercial and daily life. The blessings of a quiet community, of closed shops and the serenity of Friday nights and Saturday afternoons are the hallmarks of the public Shabbat.

The community Shabbat stands “**guard**” to protect the “**private**” Shabbat, safeguarding its observance and guaranteeing its survival and holiness. The Talmud states that “**zachor**” and “**shamor**” were uttered at Sinai simultaneously in one breath. The total success of Shabbat can only be realized when both the community and private Shabbat are present together. Sadly, this ideal may not be possible in diaspora.

It is really something to observe a religious community keeping Shabbat in Israel. You can feel the shalom of His Presence. The streets are quiet, with blocked off traffic. Families are laughing and taking leisurely strolls through neighborhood parks. People gather together in synagogues for prayer and study.



Yet, the community Shabbat has been drastically weakened in many areas of Israel in the last decade. The world and its golden calves are beginning to infringe upon the holiness of the day in many towns. More and more shops are beginning to stay open on Shabbat, serving meals and catering to those who don't mind desecrating the day. This is all dangerous, as the Father has made it clear how He feels about His set-apart day.

So how do we “**do**” Shabbat? We assemble. We gather together in community (if possible), refraining from our ordinary jobs and activities. We pray, sing, learn, eat and love each other. Perhaps this is why the writer of the book of Hebrews admonishes the believers:

Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider one another in order to **stir up love and good works,** ²⁵ **not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,** as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Following the teaching of the Shabbat, Moshe begins the instruction for the Tabernacle. Their giving was to be from a “**willing heart**”:

Shemot 35:4 And Moshe spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, "This *is* the thing which **יְהוָה** commanded, saying: ⁵ 'Take from among you an offering to **יְהוָה**. Whoever *is* of a **willing heart**, let him bring it as an offering to **יְהוָה**: gold, silver, and bronze; ⁶ 'blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, fine linen, and goats' *hair*; ⁷ 'ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; ⁸ 'oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; ⁹ 'onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate.

The Tabernacle project brought the children of Israel together in a unique manner that unified them in the service and worship of the Almighty. Recall that the people's initial intention in forming the golden calf was to make a physical representation of their perception of Elohim. But a man-made representation, no matter how pure its intention, leads to idol worship:

Shemot 20:3 " You shall have no other gods before Me. ⁴ " You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth

This does not mean, however, יהוה cannot ever be represented by something physical. The pattern for the Tabernacle was given as a reflection of what was going on in the heavenly realm. It was HIS idea for a physical Tabernacle to be constructed. But everything was to be made exact, “**according to the pattern.**”

Shemot 25:40 "And see to it that you make *them* **according to the pattern** which was shown you on the mountain.

The Tabernacle was a shadow picture of something else physical - Yeshua “**tabernacling**” among His people (kahal/ecclesia).

John 1:14 And the **Word became flesh**, and **did tabernacle among us**, and we beheld his glory, glory as of an only begotten of a father, full of grace and truth.

Together, the Israelites built a structure that beautifully illustrated how the fellowship and unity of His chosen ones could bring about the manifestation of His Holy Spirit on earth. Have you ever had questions, “what happened to the Presence of the Holy Spirit?” “Why do we not experience the power and the healing miracles we read about in the book of **Acts**?” Let’s take a look at the believers in **Acts**:

Acts 2:1 When the Day of Shavuot had fully come, **they were all with one accord** in one place.
² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. ⁴ And **they were all filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

They continued on with “**one accord**” and “**singleness of heart**,” while the “**Holy Spirit**” was evident in their midst through “**many wonders and signs.**”

Acts 2:43 ... **many wonders and signs** were done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ Now **all who believed were together**, and had all things in common, ⁴⁵ and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. ⁴⁶ So continuing daily with **one accord in the temple**, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with **gladness and singleness of heart**, ⁴⁷ praising Yah and having favor with all the people. And Adonai added to the assembly daily those who were being saved.

Are not all these phrases repetitions that went along with the commands we read earlier about keeping the “**Shabbat**” and building the “**Tabernacle**?” It continues...

Acts 4:31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were **assembled together** was shaken; and they were all **filled with the Holy Spirit**, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. ³² Now the multitude of those who believed were of **one heart and one soul**; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had **all things in common**. ³³ And with **great power** the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of Adonai Yeshua. And great grace was upon them all.

And just as those who were rebellious with the worship of the golden calf had to be dealt with, so were **Ananias and Sapphira** punished for making idols of wealth in their hearts:

Acts 5:1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. ² And he kept back *part* of the proceeds, his wife also being aware *of it*, and brought a certain part and laid *it* at the apostles' feet. ³ But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself? ⁴ "While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to Yah." ⁵ Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things. ⁶ And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried *him* out, and buried *him*. ⁷ Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ And Peter answered her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?" She said, "Yes, for so much." ⁹ Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of Adonai? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband *are* at the door, and they will carry you out." ¹⁰ Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying *her* out, buried *her* by her husband.

Today our Heavenly Father is in the process of restoring all things. He is calling us into a “**unity**,” where each soul He has created functions in the role he/she was designed to fill. Just as the Tabernacle came together piece by piece, so will the body of Messiah come together. When we do what we’re designed to do...the result is harmony. And that’s an invite to the Holy Spirit to come with power and reside in our midst.

We’re all still learning, so sometimes we will see things differently. It takes courage to make a change when a new truth is revealed to us. Yeshua prayed for us to be “**one...that the world may believe that the Father sent Yeshua.**” Wow, could it be that our disunity keeps others from seeing Yeshua?

John 17:20 " I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹ "that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

We’ll end with a powerful prayer for “**unity**” from the book of **Ephesians**:

Ephesians 4:1 I, therefore, the prisoner of Adonai, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, ² with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, ³ endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ one Adonai, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one Elohim and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

Shabbat Shalom!

Ardelle

