

Dvar Torah by **Rabbi Chanoch Yeres**

to his community at

Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

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VAYAKHEL-P'KUDEI

There is a phrase which seems repeated over and over in this week's Torah readings. The Torah informs us that the parts of the Mishkan were constructed "as G-d had commanded Moshe". This phrase is found another eighteen times throughout the portion. Why?

The Sages have taught us that the building of the Mishkan served as an atonement for the sin of the Golden Calf. Rabbi M. Alterman pointed out that the Israelites did not initially desire the Calf to be idol worshiping. They had believed that Moshe was no longer coming back to them and they sought a replacement for him as a middle man to G-d. Failing to take into consideration of the Second Commandment in the Tablets "You shall not make a graven image", the Israelites used their own judgment in introducing this image as a "go between" with G-d. It was due to this error in judgment that G-d reacted so seriously, threatening to destroy Israel.

G-d, therefore commanded the

construction of the Mishkan to provide the physical structure from which to serve G-d in stark contrast to the Golden Calf. One could mistaken the Mishkan as another image like the Golden Calf, for several of the Mishkan's utensils were made from pure gold like the Calf was, e.g. the Cherubim on the Ark.

However, with all the apparent similarities, there was one major difference, the command G-d gave to Moshe. The Golden Calf was an attempt by the people to get closer to G-d, according to their own human understanding, forgetting the specific rules against such action. However, the construction of the Mishkan was precipitated by G-d's command and oversight.

This is perhaps why the Torah repeats and emphasis at every level of construction that the Mishkan was being made "as G-d had commanded Moshe".

We too would like to initiate ways to get closer to G-d, yet we maintain the traditions that have served as a moral compass to us for generations. 🏠