

# Exodus 32:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.

## Analysis

Moses' reaction was visceral: וַיִּחַר־אַף מֹשֶׁה (vayyichar-af Moshe, Moses' anger burned hot)—the same phrase used of God's wrath (v10). His shattering the tablets וַיִּשָּׁבֶר אֹתָם (vayshabber otam, and broke them) at the mountain's foot symbolized Israel's covenant-breaking. The tablets represented God's covenant; their destruction enacted the broken relationship. Moses saw הָעֵגֶל וּמְחֹלֹת (ha'egel umecholot, the calf and dancing)—the מְחֹלֹת (mecholot) suggests whirling, ecstatic pagan-style dancing likely with sexual overtones. Righteous anger at sin against God's glory is appropriate, especially for leaders.

## Historical Context

This is the only time Moses' anger is recorded positively. His rage mirrored God's (v10), showing godly leaders should reflect God's attitude toward sin, particularly idolatry that attacks His unique glory.

## Related Passages

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

2