

Most of this week's *Parashah* describes the construction of the *Mishkan* / Tabernacle. R' Dovid Kahn *shlita* (the "*Toldos Aharon Rebbe*" in Yerushalayim) writes: The primary purpose of the *Mishkan* was to inspire *Bnei Yisrael* to make a "home" for the *Shechinah* / Divine Presence in their own hearts. Even today, when there is no physical *Mishkan*, we can still create a home for the *Shechinah* within us. We read (*Malachi* 3:6), "For I, *Hashem*, have not changed, and you, sons of Yaakov, have not perished." This verse teaches that just as *Hashem* is eternal, so the souls of the Jewish People are eternal, and there is no circumstance in which they will become separated from their root above. We do not have the same spiritual powers that our ancestors had, especially when they were led by Moshe Rabbeinu, but the spark certainly remains.

R' Kahn continues: Every Jew's actions carry great weight in the Heavens. Every choice a Jew makes literally moves worlds--affecting spiritual worlds above and causing physical manifestations below. As such, one must be very careful in his behavior. Every positive thing that one does for the sake of Heaven, in order to cause satisfaction to G-d, builds one's personal *Mishkan*. Notably, R' Kahn writes, "*Mikdash*" has the same *Gematria* (444) as "*Middot*" / character traits. In order to build his *Mishkan*, one must purify his *Middot*--distancing negative traits such as jealousy, desire, and the pursuit of honor, and improving one's positive traits, such as love and reverence of *Hashem*. (*Derech Edotecha*)

Pesach

R' Moshe ben Maimon *z"l* (*Rambam*; 1135-1204; Spain and Egypt) writes: The 157th *Mitzvah* is that *Hashem* commanded us to relate the story of the Exodus from Egypt at the beginning of the night of the fifteenth of *Nissan*, each person according to his story-telling ability. The more one says--elaborating on what *Hashem* did for us, on the injustice of what the Egyptians did to us and on their cruelty (in Hebrew: "*Chamas*"), and on how *Hashem* took us out of Egypt and took revenge on the Egyptians for what they did--and the more one thanks *Hashem*, the better it is. So our Sages say (in the *Pesach Haggadah*): "The more one tells about the Exodus, the more he is praiseworthy."

Rambam continues: The verse in the Torah that teaches this commandment is (*Shmot* 13:8), "You shall tell your son on that day, saying, 'It is because of this that *Hashem* acted on my behalf when I left Egypt'." Our Sages explain (in the *Midrash* known as *Mechilta*): I might think that one should begin from *Rosh Chodesh*--therefore the Torah says, "On that day." If so, I might think that one should begin while it is still day [*i.e.*, on *Erev Pesach*]-therefore it says, "Because of this" [*i.e.*, *Matzah* and *Maror*], meaning: I only said to perform this *Mitzvah* when *Matzah* and *Maror* are before you [*i.e.*, on the *Seder* night].

Rambam quotes the *Mechilta* further: Since the Torah says (*Shmot* 13:14), "It shall be when your son will ask you," I might think that the *Mitzvah* applies only if your son asks you; if he does not ask, you need not tell him. Therefore it says (*Shmot* 13:8), "You shall tell your son"--even if he does not ask you. Still, I might think that the *Mitzvah* applies only to those who have children. How do I know that one must perform this *Mitzvah* even if he is alone? - **Continued in box inside** -

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“Every wise-hearted person among you shall come and make everything that *Hashem* has commanded.” (35:10)

How did they know who was a “wise-hearted person”? R’ Yehonatan Eyebchutz z”l (Central Europe; 1690-1764) explains: Moshe did not tell the volunteers every detail that *Hashem* had commanded regarding the *Mishkan*. Instead, Moshe gave hints, and whoever was able to “make everything that *Hashem* has commanded” demonstrated thereby that he was a wise-hearted person.

Alternatively, he writes, the phrase “make everything that *Hashem* has commanded” was a commandment that every volunteer participate in every task so that there would be no jealousy or one-upmanship amongst the volunteers. (Tiferet Yehonatan)

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For this purpose, the Torah says (*Shmot* 13:3), “Moshe said to the people, ‘Remember this day on which you departed from Egypt.’” He commanded them to remember it, just as we are commanded to remember *Shabbat* [whether one is alone or with children]. As you already know, *Rambam* writes, our Sages say (in the *Haggadah*): “Even if we are all wise, we are all understanding, and we all know the entire Torah, it still is a *Mitzvah* for us to relate the story of the Exodus, and the more one relates, the more he is praiseworthy.”

The laws of this *Mitzvah*, *Rambam* adds, are explained at the end of Tractate *Pesachim*. (Sefer Ha’mitzvot: Asin 157)

R’ Dovid Yitzchok Eizek Rabinowitz z”l (1896-1979; *Skolye Rebbe* in Brooklyn, NY) writes that remembering the Exodus is equated with remembering *Shabbat* (see above) for another reason also: Just as *Shabbat* reminds us that *Hashem* is the G-d of the universe Who created the world, so the wonders at the time of the Exodus awaken our belief that He is the One Power who controls everything.

(Mekor Ha’berachah: Mitzvat Aseh 21)

R’ Moshe Schick z”l (1805-1879; a leading rabbi and *Rosh Yeshiva* in Hungary) writes: From where did *Rambam* derive that the *Mitzvah* is “at the beginning of the night”? He explains: Since this *Mitzvah* applies equally to one who has children and one who does not, why does the Torah say, “You shall tell your son”? Because of this question, *Rambam* understood that the Torah is telling us to perform this *Mitzvah* when children are still awake, *i.e.*, at the beginning of the night.

(Maharam Schick Al Taryag Mitzvot #21)

“Moshe assembled the entire assembly of *Bnei Yisrael* and said to them: ‘These are the things that *Hashem* commanded, to do them. On six days, work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for *Hashem*; whoever does work on it shall be put to death.’” (35:1-2)

Our Sages teach that the *Mitzvah* of *Shabbat* is juxtaposed to the commandment to assemble the *Mishkan* in order to teach that assembling the *Mishkan* does not take precedence over observing *Shabbat*. But why would one think that assembling the *Mishkan* does supersede *Shabbat*, such that the Torah must tell us that it does not? asks R’ Tuvya Ha’levi z”l (Tzefat, *Eretz Yisrael*; died circa 1605).

He answers: One might reason that since the service in the *Mishkan*, and later the *Bet Hamikdash*, may be performed on *Shabbat*, building the tabernacle within which the service is performed also is permitted on *Shabbat*. However, writes R’ Tuvya, that reasoning is faulty because our Sages say that the *Mishkan* and the *Bet Hamikdash* both miraculously constructed themselves, with all of man’s efforts being for show only. (Commentaries explain that even though *Hashem* rests His *Shechinah* on us, we must take initiative to show that we desire His presence.) If man’s efforts were necessary in order to build a tabernacle, perhaps those efforts would be permitted even on *Shabbat* in order that the *Mishkan/Bet Hamikdash* be completed as soon as possible. However, those efforts were not necessary; therefore, even going through the motions of assembling the *Mishkan* or *Bet Hamikdash* is prohibited on *Shabbat*.

R’ Tuvya Halevi continues: Specifically because the above reasoning is very subtle and someone might make a mistake, Moshe found it necessary to assemble all of *Bnei Yisrael*, men and women alike, to teach that assembling the *Mishkan* is not permitted on *Shabbat*. He taught them: “On six days, work may be done,” *i.e.*, the work of building the *Mishkan*. “But the seventh day shall be holy for you,” *i.e.*, even though the Temple service is permitted to be done on *Shabbat*, the day shall otherwise be holy, and you should not derive from the law regarding the Temple service that the *Mishkan* itself may be assembled. (Chen Tov)

Others offer the following reason why the service in the *Mishkan/Bet Hamikdash* may be performed on *Shabbat*, while building a tabernacle itself is not permitted on *Shabbat*: The real service that *Hashem* wants from us is consistency, represented by the *Korban Tamid*, the offering brought twice daily, day-in-and-day out, with no exceptions. In contrast, serving *Hashem* in a way that leads to one-time highs, which the construction of the *Mishkan* and *Bet Hamikdash* represent, is not the ideal.

(Heard from R’ Meir Schlesinger *shlita*, founder of Yeshivat Sha’alvim)