

“These are the reckonings of the Mishkan, the Tabernacle of Testimony.” (38:21)

Lecha Hashem ha'gedulah..., “Yours, Hashem, is the greatness, the strength, the splendor, the triumph, and the glory, even everything in Heaven and earth” (*Divrei HaYamim* I, 29:11). In *Midrash*

Tanchuma, *Chazal* suggest that this *pasuk* – which we recite daily in the *Va'yivarech David* prayer – alludes to the fact that the building of the *Mishkan* had a profound relationship with the creation of Heaven and earth. *Horav Nissan Alpert, z.l.*, renders a penetrating interpretation of this *Midrash*, which we take the liberty of citing.

On the First Day of Creation, Hashem created *Shomayim va'aretz*, “Heaven and earth.” This creation corresponds with the *Yerios HaMishkan*, “Curtains of the *Mishkan*”, as it is written, *Noteh Shomayim ka'yeriah*, “stretching out the Heavens like a curtain” (*Tehillim* 104:2). The *Mishkan* perse was comprised of ten *Yerios*, Curtains. Interestingly, the term *Mishkan* is given specifically to the Curtains. *Rav Alpert* explains that the ten Curtains which served as a roof for the *Mishkan* symbolize the creation of Heaven. This teaches us that the purpose and function of the *Mishkan* is to bring heaven down to earth. By gazing up at the *Yerios*, we reflect upon our obligation to look Heavenward for Divine assistance.

The *Keruvim*, facing each other with their wings spread upward, were an integral part of the *Kapores*, Cover of the *Aron HaKodesh*, Holy Ark. This also demonstrated the intrinsic relationship between Heaven and earth. Moreover, Hashem's unity encompasses everything that exists, and every creation that exists on earth has its corresponding entity in Heaven. In truth, every physical entity has a spiritual aspect within it. There are spiritual powers and forces that exist within the physical realm. It is up to man to seek to uncover these entities.

On the Second Day, Hashem created the *rokiah*, sky, to serve as a partition between the Heavenly waters and the earthly waters. Likewise, the *Paroches*, Curtain, divided the area that was *Kadosh*, Holy, and that which was *Kodshei Kodoshim*, the Holy of Holies. Hashem created His world with boundaries and parameters. He separated between places, nations, men and women, Jew and gentile. The earth belongs to Hashem, and He elevated *Eretz Yisrael*, distinguishing it from the rest of the world. There is Holy and there is the “Holy of Holies”, the *Paroches*, serves as the partition between the two. One is not to trespass beyond the line of demarcation that has been delineated by Hashem.

On the Third Day of Creation, Hashem said, “Let the waters beneath the Heaven be gathered into one area, and let dry land appear.” The oceans, lakes and rivers came into being. The creation of “water” coincided with the construction of the *Kiyor*, Laver, from which the *Kohanim* would be *metaher*, cleanse/purify themselves. Water has the power to purify because it is a part of the

Heavens which was untouched by man. The rivers and lakes constrain man's ability to vanquish. It prevents him from passing further. Water indicates to man that he is only human. He has his limitations which impede him from going wherever he pleases. Water represents man's weakness. It is for this reason that the *Kohanim* would wash their hands and feet from the *Kiyor* prior to entering the Sanctuary to perform their service. Hands and feet are the active organs of the body which represent movement. Water connotes the limitations of that movement. Hence, the *Kohanim* washed their hands and feet in water from the *Kiyor*, symbolizing the restraint that is imposed upon man.

Hashem placed the great luminaries in the sky on the Fourth Day. The golden *Menorah*, which illuminates the *Mishkan*, whose light drives away the darkness, refers to the Torah, which lights up a path for the Jew with its *chochmas HaTorah*, wisdom derived from the Torah.

Hashem created fowl on the Fifth Day. Coinciding with this are the *Keruvim*, whose wings spread upward. There is a spiritual aspect to fowl, represented by their ability to soar upward. Perhaps this is why a fowl does not become *tamei*, spiritually contaminated, except from contact with a *neveilah*, carcass of a dead fowl, which is *metamei* only in the *bais ha'beliyah*, place where one swallows. It is only through human consumption, when the fowl becomes a part of man – who is an *artzi*, earth-bound and cannot ascend on his own from his stationary perch on earth – that the fowl becomes *tamei*.

On *Yom ha'Shishi*, the Sixth Day, Hashem created man. In the *Mishkan*, the *Kohen Gadol*, the man at his spiritual zenith, was designated to serve Hashem.

On the Seventh Day, the Torah writes, *Vayechulu*, "and Hashem completed His Creation". Regarding the *Mishkan*, the Torah says, *Vateichel kol avodas Mishkan*, "All the work of the *Mishkan* was completed" (*Shemos* 39:32). The Seventh Day introduced a new form of Creation: rest and *kedushah*, holiness. The *koach ha'perishah*, ability to desist, to say "enough", is in itself a powerful force. To complete a project in accordance with the exact instructions, no more and no less than the given word, in exact accordance with Hashem's command – all this is reflected in the completion of the *Mishkan*. There is sanctity in doing something the right way, exactly according to instructions. Moshe *Rabbeinu* followed Hashem's command to the letter. Betzalel constructed the *Mishkan* "as Hashem commanded Moshe" - exactly – according to the guidelines given to him by his *rebbe*, who heard it from Hashem. This is *kedushah*. It was all according to what Hashem wanted. To listen – to halt one's work when he is told to do so is to sanctify his endeavor, because he does not act on his own – he listens to