

In the first month of the second year on the first of the month that the Mishkan was erected. (40:17)

In an earlier commentary (ibid 39:33), *Rashi* explains how the *Mishkan* was erected. Apparently, the people presented the finished components to Moshe *Rabbeinu*, who had not previously been involved with the actual construction of the *Mishkan*. Hashem had left the placement of the *Mishkan*, its erection, up to Moshe. The reason for this was quite simple: It was too heavy. No one was able to erect the *Mishkan* due to the weight of the *Kerashim*, beams. Moshe was able to stand them upright – by himself. How did he do it? True, he was strong, but not that strong. Moshe asked Hashem, “How can the erection of the *Mishkan* be facilitated by man?” Hashem replied, “Involve yourself in erecting the *Mishkan* with your hand and it will appear as if you were setting it up, but (actually) it will stand upright by itself.” This is the meaning of *hukam ha’Mishkan*, “The *Mishkan* was erected.” The passive verb implies that it was set up on its own.

Horav Mordechai Gifter, zl, comments that this idea was also true with regard to the construction of the *Bais Hamikdash*. In *Melachim* 1:6:7, the *Navi* states, *V’haBayis b’hibanoso*, “And the House (*Bais Hamikdash*).” The *Midrash* explains the use of the passive conjugation that, *meiatzmo hayah nivneh, lefichach b’maasei nissim nivnah*, “From itself it was built; therefore, it was built miraculously.”

The *Rosh Yeshivah* quotes the *Ponevezer Rav, zl*, who posits that concerning anything involving *Olam Hazeh*, this mundane, physical world, nothing is accomplished without *siyata d’Shmaya*, Divine assistance. When it concerns Torah and building a place of Torah study, there is no need for Divine assistance, because Hashem does it all alone. He is neither “assisting” nor “enabling” – He is “doing.” The *Bais Hamikdash* and the *Mishkan* were built solely by Hashem (with man placing his finger/hand on it to make it seem that there was human input). Likewise, every *makom Torah*, Torah edifice, is built by Hashem.

The *Ponevezer Rav* undertook the seemingly impossible; yet, he succeeded. He said the following in a speech delivered at the *yeshivah’s Batei HaNetzivim*, “People are in the habit of extolling the *Ponevezer Rav* as being larger than life... *chas v’challilah*, Heaven forbid... I have no special abilities... Rather, there are those who make calculations regarding building costs and only do what common sense justifies. Whereas we are building *Ponevez* without making those calculations, without knowing from where the necessary funds will come. Everything is being erected by, ‘He, Who performs great wonders alone’ (*Tehillim* 136:4).” True to his word, the *Ponevezer Rav* placed no limits on his undertakings. He did what was necessary, and placed the ‘burden’ on Hashem.

Rav Gifter asks what man’s *tafkid*, role, is in building a Torah edifice. He quotes the *Midrash* (*Yalkut Shimoni, Melachim* I,6 (182)) that relates that when Rabbi Chaninah *ben Dosa* would observe the *olei regel*, pilgrims ascending to Yerushalayim for the Festival, he, too, badly wanted to join them. Sadly, he was unable to do so, as a result of his abject poverty.

Rav Chaninah went outside and chanced upon a large rock: “I will bring this stone to Yerushalayim.” With great skill, he was able to cut it down to size, and then he went to the market in search for porters to carry it. Heaven sent angels in the guise of porters to help him. They insisted, however, on one condition, “You must place your finger alongside us” (to make it appear as if he was participating in carrying it). He did this, and immediately (miraculously), he found himself in Yerushalyim. The angels had vanished. This story teaches us that the only endeavor expected of a man who sincerely wants to build a *makom Torah* is to “place his finger,” apply himself to (what is not much more than) superficial endeavor. Hashem will do the rest. He will complete the project.