

These are the objects that Hashem has commanded that they be made. (35:2)

Horav S. R. Hirsch, zl, observes that the above *pasuk*, *Eilah ha'devarim*, "These are the objects," alludes to the various categories of labor required to construct the *Mishkan*. It represents the concept of *melechtes Shabbos*, that which constitutes labor on *Shabbos*. In *pasuk 4*, the orders for building the *Mishkan* are introduced in a similar vernacular, *Zeh hadavar asher tzivah Hashem laasos*, "This is what G-d has commanded." Thus, the (*eilah ha*)'devarim of the above *pasuk* refer only to those forms of labor which are vital to the construction of the *Mishkan*. These are the forms of labor which are specifically prohibited on *Shabbos* – even for the purpose of the construction of the *Mishkan*. *Chazal* posit that, indeed, all of the activities required for the construction of the *Mishkan* constitute and define that which is considered a *melachah*, acts of labor prohibited on *Shabbos*. Each one of the activities which are necessary *laasos osam*, "that they be made" (which means that they are requisites for the construction of the *Mishkan*) may only be undertaken during the six work days of the week.

Chazal compute thirty-nine *avos melachos*, heads of labor categories, which comprise *melechtes ha'Mishkan*, and, thus, comprise the 39 *avos melachah* of *Shabbos*, the list of acts of labor prohibited on *Shabbos*. As Rav Hirsch explains, the building of the *Mishkan* is a sanctification of human labor for a sublime ideal. When man refrains from executing these forms of labor on *Shabbos*, he thereby acknowledges his allegiance to Hashem, since he now eschews that labor which has up until now been dedicated to Hashem. Every activity which was critical to the *Mishkan* is, likewise, represented among the 39 *avos melachos* of *Shabbos*. These activities are not merely acts of "doing." They must be *laasos osam* – with intention to produce the actual result of the action. Thus, *melachah she'einah tzerichah l'gufah*, labor that is not needed or performed for its purpose and result, is not prohibited. The same is true for: *davar she'ein miskaven*, work that is unintended; and *mekalkel*, destructive, non-productive labor. Creating-- production, with intention for the result-- defines the thirty-nine forms of restricted *Shabbos* labor.

Our Sages have divided the thirty-nine *avos melachah* into those labors critical for making bread, sewing, writing and building. Together, they amount to thirty-eight forms of productive labor. Finally, there is number thirty-nine, *hotzaah*, the act of transferring an object from one domain to another, such as from a public domain to a private domain, or vice versa, or carrying an object four cubits in a public domain. *Hotzaah* is called a *melachah geruah*, small, weak, example of labor. One would be hard-pressed to posit that transferring an object is a productive or constructive activity. Clearly, it is not on the same level of labor as the other thirty-eight. Nonetheless, despite being called a *melachah geruah*, it has distinction equal to that of the other *melachos*. Indeed, the *Navi Yirmiyahu* strongly exhorts the nation concerning the prohibition of carrying on *Shabbos*. How are we to understand the *melachah* of *hotzaah* in the context of the thirty-nine *melachos*?

Rav Hirsch masterfully explains the underlying motif of *melechtes Shabbos*, thereby giving us an

insight into all *melachos*, including *melaches hotzaah*. With regard to the *melachos*, we observe one common thread: they are all productive or constructive activities, by which the object becomes transformed by the intentional work performed. Man's power and mastery over matter is thus demonstrated. Therefore, when man refrains from exercising his "power" on *Shabbos*, it becomes his way of indicating his allegiance to the Creator, to Whom man, in his mastery over matter and with his creative powers, is nothing more than a leasee, a servant. It is only the last – the thirty-ninth *melachah*-- the transfer of an object from one domain to another, which does not seem to coincide with the other *melachos* with regard to our concept of productive or constructive activity. In transferring, nothing changes. The object stays the same. It has simply moved.

We have affirmed that all *melachos* show that man lords over physical matter. *Hotzaah*, however, is an activity that finds itself more closely associated with the social world. Social life means not living in an isolated world, devoid of friends and community. Social activity represents the individual's act of giving to the community and the reciprocity through which the community gives the individual. Likewise, what the individual takes from his private/personal possessions and pays to the community collective, and vice versa, what he receives from the community, and the furthering of one's public purposes and needs in the public domain – are all represented by *meleches hotzaah*.

If, accordingly, the prohibition of *meleches Shabbos* expresses the idea of man's subordination of the use of his powers over physical matter to the will of Hashem, then, the prohibition of *hotzaah* may well express the notion of placing man's social life all under the dictates of Hashem. Thus, *Shabbos* provides us with the idea that, as the conceptualization of our world is comprised of both nature/physical matter and community, social engagement, so too, does G-d's mastery over the world include both nature and history. The establishment of *Malchus Hashem*, G-d's Kingdom, on earth will be built upon the recognition of the *Shabbos*: That man makes the rules for his own working life – both with regard to his connection with physical matter, and concerning his social/national life – all dedicated and adhering to Divine dictate. We now have an idea why *Shabbos* is so significant in the life and religious demeanor of a Jew. Without *Shabbos* observance one undermines, and, quite possibly, denies Hashem's sovereignty over the world.

We now better understand the dual motives that the Torah gives us for *Shabbos* observance: the creation of heaven and earth; the exodus from Egypt. These two motives actually complement one another. The creation of the world is the premise upon which Hashem's mastery over the world rests. The *geulah*, liberation from Egypt, represents Hashem's mastery over state/social life.

In summation: the prohibition of *hotzaah* places the Jewish community and the activities of the individual Jew vis-à-vis the community, as well as governance of all affairs of the Jewish community, obediently under the rule and law of Hashem. This is why the *Navi Yirmiyahu* was so adamant in his admonition of *Klal Yisrael* concerning their desecrating *Shabbos* by transgressing the prohibition of *hotzaah*. The prohibition of carrying on *Shabbos* imprints the seal of Hashem on the community of *Klal Yisrael*. Carrying on *Shabbos* wrests Hashem's banner from the collective

community of the Jewish People.