

Moshe saw the entire work, and behold! They had done it as Hashem had commanded, so had they done, and Moshe blessed them. (39:43)

The construction of the *Mishkan* was concluded: its various vessels and utensils were completed; the *Bigdei Kodesh*, Holy (Priestly) Vestments, were finished. They now brought it all before Moshe *Rabbeinu* to seek his blessing. Everything had been executed according to the precise instruction that he had given them. Moshe was impressed, and he gave them his blessing. He said, “*Yehi ratzon*, May it be the will of Hashem, that the *Shechinah* rest upon the work of your hands.” One might think that he has achieved success, but, without the blessing, *Shechinah b'maasei yedeichem*, “The Divine Presence resting on the work of your hands,” success is short-lived. Moshe then added another *brachah*, blessing, which David *Hamelech* later incorporated in *Sefer Tehillim* (90:17), *Vih noam Hashem Elokeinu aleinu, u'maasei yadeinu konena aleinu u'maasei yadeinu coneneihu*, “May the pleasantness of Hashem, our G-d, be upon us; our handiwork, establish for us; our handiwork, establish it.” What is the meaning of having Hashem’s Presence rest upon something which man has constructed? We all want Hashem’s blessing. What changes when Hashem rests His Divine Presence upon something which we have created?

In his commentary to *Sefer Tehillim*, the **Malbim** offers a powerful insight. One who constructs a magnificent edifice has obviously transformed the physical surroundings, adding beauty and creating pleasing scenery where, quite possibly, the neighboring area had once been bleak and unappealing to the eye. Regardless of the change he engendered in the physical surroundings, he himself has not been changed one iota. Whatever he had been prior to the construction of the edifice, he continues to be afterwards. On the contrary, his ego may have expanded as a result of the acclaim that he received. When a person achieves a milestone in Torah erudition-- he has completed a tractate of *Talmud*, an order of *Mishnayos*, or simply completed an area of learning upon which he had set his sights-- he has thereby transformed himself. He is no longer the same individual that he had been prior to the achievement. He is now a new person, having added breadth and depth to his *neshamah* – something which he will carry with him for the rest of his mortal life. This is what the *pasuk* underscores when it uses the word *aleinu*, upon us: we ask that our handiwork not only be pleasing to Hashem, but that it transform us into better, more spiritually-correct Torah Jews.

I must add that in order for this spiritual transformation to occur, one must act *l'shem Shomayim*, purely for the sake of Heaven. If, however, his handiwork is part of a personal agenda, to promote either himself or his cause, it is self-defeating. He is not acting for the *mitzvah*; rather, he is manipulating the *mitzvah* for his own vested interests. As a result, he not only does not elevate himself spiritually, but rather, he defers to his *yetzer hora*, evil-inclination, by making use of a *mitzvah* for personal use.

In his *A Vort from Rav Pam*, Rabbi Sholom Smith quotes the *Rosh Yeshivah*’s insight into Moshe’s

first *brachah*. “May the *Shechinah* rest upon the work of your hands.” The “work of your hands” refers to the *Mishkan* and its appurtenances. Is there any question that the *Shechinah* will rest on such holy handiwork? These were two receptacles, replete with *kedushah*, holiness. Moshe’s *brachah* was superfluous concerning them. The *Rosh Yeshivah* explains that Moshe was alluding to a far more difficult task – one that regrettably eludes some of us. “One’s hands” is a reference to the mundane work of the individual’s hands: his farm, his field, his business, his individual area of professional endeavor. This is where one spends the bulk of his waking hours, where he spends a good part of his life. This is where the concern regarding spirituality becomes a greater reality. Usually there is no problem, providing, of course, that one earns his livelihood in accordance with Torah dictate, following all of the *halachic*/ethical rules prescribed for the Torah Jew. In such an instance, the *Shechinah* is “comfortable” resting in such a place, thereby bestowing Divine blessing upon this individual’s worldly endeavors. It is when one skirts the law, when his dealings with his fellowman leave much to be desired from an ethical and moral perspective, that Hashem’s blessings are not present.

Every person should aspire to be a *klei kibul*, receptacle worthy of retaining Hashem’s blessing. Torah ethics must be our guide in everything that we do. Our moral compass must be determined by the values imparted to us from the Torah. Anything short of Torah perspective leaves us open to the challenges created by misguided embellishment.