

## You shall not kindle fire in any of your dwellings on the Shabbos day. (35:3)

The *Gemorah* records a debate among *Chazal* (*Shabbos* 70a) about why the Torah singled out the prohibitive *mitzvah* of creating fire on *Shabbos* – as opposed to the other 38 acts of labor. One *Tanna* opines *havarah l'av yatzas*, *havarah*, kindling fire, was singled out to be a mere prohibition – not a capital crime. The other *Tanna* contends *havarah l'chaleik yatzas*, it was singled out to separate the *melachos*, forms of labor, into distinct categories of liability. Each *melachah* is an act of *chillul Shabbos* and carries with it its own punishment. If one performs two *melachos*, he is guilty of two separate offenses, and he is punished accordingly. The debate aside, the obvious question is: What is so special about kindling fire that it should be the one *melachah*, act of labor, to be selected to teach the lesson of *havarah l'chaleik yatzas*.

The *Imrei Emes* explains that Hashem prohibited all other thirty-eight *melachos*, because He rested on the seventh day/*Shabbos*. He employed all these acts of labor in the Creation of the world and everything in it. There was one *melachah* from which Hashem did not rest: *melech havarah*, because fire was not introduced until *Motzoei Shabbos*, when Adam rubbed two stones together and made fire. As such, we had no reason to assume that *havarah* would not be prohibited on *Shabbos*. Thus, the *pasuk* had to inform us that kindling fire on *Shabbos* is prohibited.