

## On six days work may be done, but the seventh shall be holy for you. (35:2)

The Torah introduces the commandments concerning the *Mishkan* with an enjoinder to guard/observe the *Shabbos*. On a simple level, the Torah is intimating that, while the construction of the *Mishkan* is a lofty endeavor with clearly transcendent significance, it does not supersede *Shabbos*. In other words, the construction of the *Mishkan*, regardless of its magnitude, is halted for *Shabbos*. Veritably, one detects an affinity between *Shabbos* and the *Mishkan*. *Chazal* declare that the *Lamed-tes Melachos*, Thirty-nine classifications of work prohibited on *Shabbos*, are derived from the nature of work involved in the construction of the *Mishkan*. What is the connection between *Shabbos* and *Mishkan*?

**Horav Aharon Soloveitchik, zl**, distinguishes between two forms of Creation: *briah* and *yetzirah*. He quotes **Radak** who explains that *briah* is related to destruction. Although *briah* in the total sense of creation is the antithesis of destruction, *briah* involves destructive elements as well. *Chazal* teach that prior to creating the world in which we live, Hashem created many other worlds and destroyed them. Through this perspective, we see that the creation of this world involved the destruction of many others. Hence, the creation of this world entailed the process of *briah*.

*Yetzirah* is a process of creation which does not involve any element of destruction. It is the process through which Hashem continually recreates this world and governs it. We now may understand how *Shabbos* fits into the equation. We may wonder: What is so special about our world that it, too, was not destroyed like its many predecessors? The *Rosh Yeshivah* explains that the principle of causation distinguishes our world from the rest. This world, unlike the others, survives because its operation is based on causation, the principle which ensures harmony and order, “the principle of rest,” the principle of *Shabbos Kodesh*. The other worlds did not survive, because they did not contain the element of *Shabbos*.

When the Torah writes that Hashem rested on the seventh day, it implies that until *Shabbos* there had been no causality, there had been no order. True, there was creation, but it was a process whereby worlds were created, rearranged, destroyed – and then new ones created. So much energy was expended via creation and destruction, but there had been no cause and effect. On the seventh day, Hashem completed the process of *briah*. The process had been in effect for the six days of Creation. On *Shabbos*, the principle of rest was introduced and, with it, harmony and causality. The *yetzirah* mode now began. Thus, *Shabbos* is the day on which man is to dedicate himself to the pursuit of *yetzirah*, creation without destruction.

In the construction of the *Mishkan*, all forms of work involved the principle of *briah* in one way or another. All thirty-nine *melachos*, even that of *boneh*, building, involved some sort of destructive effort, even if only to rearrange the elements of nature. Rearranging nature means altering an object, which is like destroying its original form. *Hotzaah*, carrying, is one exception; therefore, it is

called a *melachah geruah*, inferior type of work. On *Shabbos*, the day when one is to dedicate himself almost exclusively to *yetzirah*, these *melachos* are prohibited.

*Shabbos* celebrates the point of the culmination of *briah* and the initiation of *yetzirah*. This moment represents the basis of creation. Rav Soloveitchik makes a play on words when he points out that on *Shabbos* one must focus on his *tzurah*, image, realizing his individuality and conforming to the image of G-d, the *Tzelem Elokim*, inherent in him. By studying Torah, he brings himself closer to achieving this goal and elevating the world to a higher spiritual plateau.

During the construction of the *Mishkan* the categories of work involved the principle of *briah*, such that its completion was the place for the *Shechinah* to repose among the Jewish People, thus transforming the *Mishkan* into an edifice dedicated to *yetzirah*. Until Hashem rested His Divine Presence on the *Mishkan*, until the spirit of His Glory was not manifest, the Sanctuary was not the Sanctuary. It was a body without a soul, an edifice of *briah*. Only when the *Mishkan* was elevated to the realm of *yetzirah* did it receive its soul. At that point, the *Mishkan* was complete. The *kedushah*, holiness, of *Shabbos* and the *kedushah* of the *Mishkan* are of a similar nature, in that they both embody the principle of *yetzirah*. Until the *Mishkan* became the place where Hashem would repose His Divine Presence, it was yet another edifice – whose construction did not supersede the *kedushah* of *Shabbos*.

The following story is about *Shabbos* and the deep bond that a Torah giant had with this holy day. A number of years ago, a rabbi visiting Miami gave a lecture about the life and character of the saintly *Chafetz Chaim*. He held the group spellbound with vignettes about the *Chafetz Chaim's* righteousness. He was about to relate one last story, but he hesitated. Apparently, he knew only part of the story. Then he changed his mind, deciding that even an unfinished story about the *Chafetz Chaim* was worthy of relating.

A young teenager in the *Chafetz Chaim's* town was caught smoking a cigarette on *Shabbos*. The sacred day of rest had been marred. The *Chafetz Chaim* was notified, and the student was called to report to his "office." No one knew what would happen to the student. The *Chafetz Chaim* took his religion very seriously. The boy entered the office and exited a few minutes later. The rabbi then said that this was all he knew about the incident. He had no idea what had taken place in the office, what the *Chafetz Chaim* had said to him. He did know one thing: "That boy never desecrated *Shabbos* again." He concluded his lecture with the addendum that he would give anything to know what had transpired in the office of the *Chafetz Chaim*.

The hall emptied, as everyone except for one elderly man dispersed. This man sat in his seat, deep in thought. He began to tremble, and his eyes became moist and began to tear. The rabbi approached him and asked, "Is anything wrong?"

"Where did you hear that story?" the man asked.

The rabbi replied, "I really do not remember. On one of my trips, someone related the incident to me."

The man looked up at the rabbi and said, "I was that boy." He then continued with the rest of the story.

"The incident took place in the 1920's, when the *Chafetz Chaim* was already in his eighties. I trembled to go in to face him, but I had no alternative. I was wrong, and now I would have to face the music. The office was in the *Chafetz Chaim's* house – if you could even call it a house. It was nothing more than a ramshackle hut with broken furniture. The poverty was evident throughout. Yet, here was the *gadol ha'dor*, the Torah leader of the generation, the pulse of the Jewish People.

"I entered the room, and there he was. He was a tiny man. He hardly reached up to my shoulders. He said nothing, but took my hand and clasped it tenderly in both of his hands. He then brought my hand up to his face. His eyes were closed. When he opened them, they were filled with tears – burning, hot tears. He looked at me. In a hushed voice filled with pain and disbelief, he cried out, "*Shabbos, Shabbos*, the holy *Shabbos*." That was it. He looked deep into my eyes, as his hot tears rolled down his cheeks, landing on my hand. I thought the tears would burn a hole through my hand. Indeed, I can still feel the heat. That was his rebuke. I felt that he was not angry, just sad and disappointed. I never forgot that moment. I have observed *Shabbos* ever since."

Imagine – no rebuke, no discourse – just sincere pain over another Jew's error. Here was a man who loved each Jew as much as he loved each *mitzvah*. When he heard that a brother had desecrated *Shabbos*, he did not call him names. He cried. Can we say that?