

And it was, in the first month of the second year, on the first of the month, the Mishkan was erected. (40:17)

Sefer Shemos is described by the *Ramban* as *Sefer HaGeulah*, the Book of Redemption. All that is contained therein is *geulah*-related. From the very beginning, when the Jews were enslaved by the Egyptians; to their liberation; followed by the splitting of the Red Sea; and the receiving of the Torah: all led up to the construction of the *Mishkan* for the purpose of *Hashroas HaShechinah*, establishing a resting place for the Divine Presence. *Sefer Vayikra* is where the *avodah*, ritual service, performed in the *Mishkan* is mentioned. Therein the various *Korbanos*, sacrificial offerings, are detailed. It is, therefore, surprising that *Parashas Pikudei* concludes with the *avodah* that Moshe *Rabbeinu* executed in inaugurating the *Mishkan*. Moshe had been the *Kohen Gadol* for a week as Aharon was being invested with and prepared for the position. Should Moshe's *avodah* not have been included in *Sefer Vayikra* – like all of the other ritual services? Apparently, Moshe's use of the vessels is in some way connected to the *Geulah*. How?

Horav Yisrael Belsky, Shlita, explains this based upon the *Ramban's* comments in his introduction to *Sefer Shemos*. He writes: "The exile cannot be considered to have ended until *Klal Yisrael* arrived at their place and returned to the prominence of the *Avos*, Patriarchs. Once they received the Torah, built the *Mishkan*, and Hashem's Presence dwelled amongst them, they had been restored to the prominence achieved by the Patriarchs. At this point, they had reached the spiritual plateau of – *Elokai alai ahaleihem*, 'G-d was upon their tents' (*Iyov* 29:4), similar to the *Avos* that are themselves the *Merkavah*, chariot, of Hashem; *Klal Yisrael* had achieved full redemption. Thus, *Sefer Shemos* concludes with the completion of the *Mishkan*, in which the Glory of Hashem was manifest."

Rav Belsky derives a fundamental principle of *Yiddishkeit* from the *Ramban's* words. *Hashroas HaShechinah* was

accomplished only through the actual *avodah*. The power invested in the edifice and the holy utensils was awe-inspiring, but sanctifying the utensils and erecting the *Mishkan* only created the capacity for *kedushah* and a restoration of the Divine Presence among *Klal Yisrael*. Without the *avodah* in full force – everything else remains simply potential. Unless the *kedushah* is actualized, the Divine Presence will not appear and there is no *Geulah*. This is why it was necessary for Moshe to actualize the plausible *kedushah* in the vessels of the *Mishkan*. In this manner, he created the spiritual climate intrinsic to allowing Hashem's Glory to descend upon the *Mishkan*.

Every Jew has the potential to engender incredible *kedushah*. Aptitude is a wonderful asset, but if it does not translate into achievement, it becomes the symbol of a wasted life spent wallowing in "what could have been." A Jew must garner all of his strength to maximize his potential – especially in the area of bringing his inherent *kedushah* to fruition. I say "especially," because if one truly focuses on his *kedushah*, everything else will follow. It will all fit in. The converse does not

always work. By drawing out our potential, we are able to transform ourselves into a veritable *Mishkan*, regarding which it says, *V'Shochanti b'socham*, "I will reside within them."