

## "And it was on the day that Moshe finished setting up the Mishkan." (7:1)

*Rashi* states that although it was Betzalel, Ohaliav and the entire crew of craftsmen who built the *Mishkan*, the *Torah* ascribes the honor to Moshe. His tenacious dedication to certitude that each artifact was made according to its exact dimensions, and that each craftsmen properly executed his task, earned him this distinction. The *Midrash Tanchuma* in *Parashas Pekudei* relates that Moshe asked Hashem, "How is it possible for a man to set up the walls of the *Mishkan* on his own?" On a simple level, Moshe, of course, is referring to the sheer physical weight of the beams, walls and curtains.

In a homiletic rendering of the *Midrash*, **Horav Moshe Swift, zl**, infers a timely lesson. We are taught that prior to Moshe's involvement in "raising" the *Mishkan*, two schools of thought dominated. One group, says the *Midrash*, wanted to raise it up but were unable to do so. The other group thought of raising it up but it fell. *Horav* Swift suggests that raising the walls of the *Mishkan* is an allusion to raising the walls of *Shechinah*, building a *Torah* community in an age in which destruction is in vogue. The destruction of age old values, the demolition of sacred standards, the uprooting of a tradition for which Jews have died all comprise an acceptable course today. Moshe wonders whether the walls of spirituality can withstand the winds of change.

Two schools of thought - the same ones that exist in every community - are evident. One group wants to do something. They talk about it; they make plans and convene meetings, but nothing is ever achieved. These are individuals whose only accomplishment in life is the rhetoric which they generate. The second group intends appropriate action. In the times of the *Mishkan*, they thought to raise the *Mishkan*, but it fell. If they only thought about raising it, how did it fall? *Horav* Swift suggests that the *Midrash* probably means they thought they had raised it, but it fell. These kind of people really believe they can do it on their own, without any outside help from Hashem. At least they tried. Trying, however, is not sufficient to ward off the changing attitudes. Without some spiritual reinforcement, the walls will just collapse.

What did Moshe do when they came to him? He looked to Hashem, Who said, "You get busy with your hands, and do what is necessary to erect the edifice. It will stand by itself." The key was to continue doing. Those who make plans get nowhere. Those who think they have succeeded are equally misguided. As long as we keep on building, as long as we are actively engaged to performing *mitzvos*, no power in the world can destroy us. It is only when we sit back and think that we have concluded our work that our work suffers a premature demise.

There are those who spout excessive rhetoric about what should be done for Judaism. Others, who believe they have done enough, are not much more successful. The only way we can resist the winds of change is by continuing to perform *mitzvos*, study *Torah* and build centers in which Jewish values can be transmitted and reinforced. Being Jewish is a continuous performance. There is no

time for intermission. It is a never ceasing process of growth and endeavor, seeking Divine assistance in achieving our goal of *kiddush Shem Shomayim*.