

אמר רבי יהודה ברבי שלום מצינו שהיה המשכן שקול כנגד מעשה בראשית. כיצד ביום הראשון נבראו שמים וארץ, וכתוב בהם נוטה שמים כיריעה, ובמשכן כתיב ועשית יריעות עזים, בים השני יהי רקיע ויהי מבדיל, ובמשכן והבדילה הפרוכת, בשלישי יקוו המים, ובמשכן ועשית כיור נחשת ונתת שמה מים. ברביעי יהי מאורות, ובמשכן ועשית מגורת זהב. בחמישי ועוף יעופף, ובמשכן והיו הכרובים פורשי כנפים. בששי תוצא הארץ נפש חיה בהמה, ובמשכן אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן לה' מן הבהמה. בשביעי היה כולו אור, ובמשכן כיון שנכנס האלקים לתוכו התחיל מבהיק מן השכינה לכך סמך ובבא משה וגו'. בהעלותך את הנרות וגו'.

The above Midrash (ילקוט שמעוני סימן תשי"ט) compares the days of creation to the various components of the Tabernacle. Why was it necessary to equate creation with the building of the Tabernacle? What about the Tabernacle was consistent with the period of creation? Why was the Sabbath connected with the building of the Tabernacle? Chazal say that it teaches us that the Sabbath has primary importance and may not be violated even to build the Tabernacle or the Temple. The Sabbath was the last topic conveyed by Gd to Moses prior to his descending the mountain with the Tablets. Yet it was the first topic Moses conveyed to the people, even preceding his commanding them about building the Tabernacle. Why did Moses change the order of presentation to put the Sabbath first?

The Tabernacle, and subsequently the Temple, were intended to provide a place where man and Gd can come together, to unite. The essence of creation was divided into six distinct units, where the fundamental aspect of each day's creation distinguished it from other things created on that day or previously. For example, on the first day, heaven and earth were created by distinguishing them and assigning different characteristics to each. There was an additional sub-division of light and darkness and water into specific bodies. The celestial entities were created and assigned specific roles and characteristics. The animal kingdom was created and the various species divided and distinguished. The cumulative aspects of creation resulted in a living, functioning world, a home where Gd's influence can be recognized and appreciated.

Creation in and of itself represented an act of kindness from Gd. After all, if everything comes from and is a part of Gd there should be no reason to create the world and divide and distinguish among the components of creation. Yet Gd limited His infinity, **צמצום**, to allow for the creation of a physical world that man can comprehend. It is in this structure that Gd saw fit to unite with man.

After the receipt of the Torah at Sinai, Gd intended that we emulate Him. Just as Gd created the world as a structure or home for us to unite with Him, we were commanded to build a home where He can unite with us. Maharal asks of what use would it be for us to build something for the King of Kings who owns everything? It would be akin to someone bringing a cup of water to the ocean and pouring the contents into the ocean, an inconsequential act. How would our building a House for Gd have any value? Yet our connection to and dependence on Gd, as the Maharal says the **עלול**, the dependent who seeks to unite with the **עלה**, primary, requires us to make the effort. So we were commanded to build a Tabernacle for Gd.

The Midrash says that Moses was bewildered when Gd commanded him and the people to build a Tabernacle. Moses asked how does one approach the task of building a house for an infinite Gd to whom everything belongs and from whom everything emanates? Gd instructed him to build a house based on the pattern He used to create the world. We are obligated to follow the ways of Gd, to emulate Him in performing acts of kindness. Mimicry of Gd extends to the design and building of the Tabernacle as well. We were instructed to follow Gd's blueprint for building a house. Gd's house required a separation from the surrounding environment like heaven and earth were separated, **הנוטה שמים כיריעה**. It required sources of light, **מנורה**, to distinguish between light and darkness like the sun and moon and the celestial bodies distinguish between day and night. A home requires fragrances and food, the Tabernacle required altars to offer sacrifices and incense. However the Tabernacle required an additional feature to distinguish between the sanctified and the mundane, **בין קודש לחול**. If the house built by the people for Gd did not include the Sabbath at its foundation, then it would never conform to the blueprint Gd used to create His house. Paradoxically,

the most important part of creation, Sabbath, was a day distinguished by the absence of creation, where creativity and work were forbidden. Instead we reflect on and appreciate the world that Gd created for us, זכרון למעשה בראשית.

When Gd commanded Moses to build the components of the Tabernacle, He associated it with the order of creation, with the Sabbath coming at the end. However when Moses transmitted Gd's commands to the people, he reversed it in order to make sure the people building the Tabernacle understood the proper way to build the Tabernacle and honor the Sabbath appropriately. The light of the Sabbath was a sine qua non for the proper functioning of the house built according to the blueprint of creation itself. Moses had to ensure the people understood the important role the Sabbath played in ensuring the Tabernacle conformed to the blueprint of creation.

This summary is copyright 2019 by Rabbi Josh Rapps. Permission to distribute this summary for individual use, with this notice, is granted. Distribution through electronic or printed media without the author's permission is prohibited.