



Text:

“And they brought the Mishkan [Tabernacle] to Moses.”

[Exodus 39:33]

“They brought the Mishkan to Moses” – because they were unable to assemble it. Since Moses had done no work on the Mishkan, G-d left its assembly to him. [Therefore] no one had the power to assemble it [except Moses].”

[Rashi]

Moses was distressed at the fact that he did not participate with them in the work on the Mishkan... G-d said to Moses, “Since you were distressed that you had... no portion in the work on the Mishkan, those wise men were unable to assemble it [and the assembly was left to you].”

[Midrash]

Question:

How could Moses feel that he had “no portion” in the Mishkan? He oversaw the entire project! All of the detailed instructions for the Mishkan were communicated by G-d through Moses.

Answer:

Moses missed the chance for hands-on, physical involvement in the work. Despite the critical role he played, he yearned for the opportunity to participate in the actual labor alongside the other Jewish artisans.

Message:

Moses’ legendary accomplishments were unique in history: leading the Jews out of Egypt, splitting the Sea, bringing the Torah down from Sinai. Moses’ role in the Mishkan, too, was irreplaceable. But Moses felt he was missing something because he lacked the opportunity for hands-on involvement. When one truly appreciates the value of a Mitzvah, there is no such thing as “enough.” Every spiritual opportunity is priceless and irreplaceable. G-d had to intervene miraculously, making it impossible for anyone but Moses to erect the Mishkan, in order to satisfy Moses insatiable craving for spirituality.

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Pekudei begins with an accounting of the precious metals – gold, silver and copper – used in construction of the Mishkan [Tabernacle]. The Torah records the quantity of each metal and what it was used for, highlighting the necessity for transparency. Even Moses cannot hold himself above suspicion, and must give an accounting of donated funds. The Torah’s charge to be “clean before G-d and Israel” means that it is not enough to *be* honest; our behavior must *demonstrate* honesty to all, leaving no room for doubt about our personal integrity.

The Parsha continues by recounting how the Jewish craftsmen fashioned the garments of the Kohanim [priests] and the Kohen Gadol [High Priest] according to the precise instructions relayed by Moses.

The Mishkan is finally complete. Its components are brought to Moses, who recognizes that everything has been done exactly as G-d commanded. A gratified Moses blesses the people.

G-d commands Moses to inaugurate the Mishkan in a seven-day ceremony, assembling and disassembling the Mishkan each day. On the first of Nissan – two weeks before the first anniversary of the Exodus –the Mishkan will be assembled permanently, to be dismantled only for the purpose of travel. The Mishkan is put up by Moses himself, who erects the walls, spreads the roof, and places all the furniture in position.

A cloud rests upon the completed Mishkan, symbolizing the Divine Presence. Even Moses may not enter while the cloud hovers over the Mishkan; only when the cloud is removed may Moses come to speak with G-d. The cloud also guides the Jews in their travels; when it rises into the air, it is a sign that they are to journey to a new place.

“For the cloud of G-d was on the Mishkan by day, and a fire was there by night, in view of all Israel, throughout their travels.”

This concludes Exodus, second of the Chumash (Five Books of Moses)

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