

## HE DID THE IMPOSSIBLE AND JUMPED OVER THE CRATER!

### PARSHAS PEKUDEI

*The Allies bombed the road that the Germans were building across Poland. The road became full of craters. The Nazis were furious. They took out their anger on the Jews in their concentration camp. In the middle of the night, they awakened the Jews who had been sleeping. The Nazi commander screamed, "Each of you dogs who wants to live must jump over one of the pits and land on the other side. Those who miss will be shot!" It was clear to the prisoners that they would all end up in the pit and would be shot. Even at the best of times, it would have been impossible to jump over the pit, more so, on that cold, dark night. The prisoners standing at the edge of the pits were skeletons, feverish from disease and starvation, and exhausted from slave labor and sleepless nights. How could they possibly jump over the crater? A non-religious Jew turned towards Rabbi Israel Spira, zt"l, the Bluzhever Rebbe and said that he would rather be shot than perform for the Nazis. After all, it was impossible to successfully jump over the crater. Rabbi Spira told the man to hold onto his hand, close his eyes and jump with all his strength. He did so and jumped with the Rebbe. They opened their eyes and miraculously landed on the other side. (Hassidic Tales of the Holocaust by Yaffa Eliach)*

Thomas Edison invented the lightbulb, which profoundly changed peoples' way of life. His success did not come easy or quickly. He failed at thousands of attempts before he succeeded. The Wright brothers invented the airplane. Before their attempts succeeded, they failed thousands of times. Giovanni Marconi invented the wireless telegraph after many failing attempts. Even his father thought he was crazy and demolished his invention. Many technological breakthroughs came the same way. Success was attained after many disappointments and frustrations. These scientists and inventors persevered despite the fact that their goals seemed insurmountable.

After all the parts of the *Mishkan*, the Tabernacle, were completed, no one was able to assemble the *Mishkan* due to the massive weight of the beams. The Jews turned to Moshe for help. Even though Moshe was very strong, he couldn't imagine how a mortal being could lift the beams. **Rashi** (Shmos 39:33) says that Moshe turned to Hashem who told him to place his hands on the beams. It would appear as if he was lifting it. In reality, the

"Then they brought the Tabernacle to Moshe...." (39:33)

beams would miraculously rise on their own accord. Hashem would consider it as if Moshe had lifted the beams on his own, as the **pasuk** (Shmos 40:18) says, "*Moshe set up the Tabernacle....*"

**Rav Avraham Pam** zt"l (Shabbos with Rav Pam by Rabbi Sholom Smith) learns a valuable lesson from this **Rashi**. Sometimes situations arise where the goals seem impossible to attain. One may even be hesitant to attempt to accomplish the goals because he feels that success is impossible. Yet, if a person truly desires to accomplish the task and devotes his energy to it, hopefully he will receive help from Hashem to achieve his objective.

**One should never hesitate to undertake projects that can benefit Klal Yisroel.** Even if success does not seem possible, one may receive help from Hashem to succeed if he tries his hardest.

**Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz** zt"l (Sichas Mussar ma'amer 24) gives an added explanation to this idea. He says that we should always keep in mind that success or failure is in the hands of Hashem. Even herculean efforts do not guarantee success. Hashem

determines the outcome! When one toils and puts in great effort with all his strength, then he merits help from Hashem to succeed in his task.

**Midrash** (Vayikra 26-9) says that Aharon HaCohen had 5 special attributes. One of those attributes was strength. How did he exhibit his strength? Part of the ceremony designating the Leviim for the service of Hashem necessitated that Aharon physically pick up each Levi, and wave him forwards and backwards, up and down. This had to be done on one day. Even picking up one Levi would have required great strength. There were 22,000 Leviim! There are 1,440 minutes in a 24-hour day. That meant that Aharon had to pick up more than 15 Leviim per minute without stopping. If the procedure had to be done only during the 12 hours of daylight, then Aharon would

have had to pick up and wave about 35 Leviim per minute. That was an impossible task! **Rabbeinu Bachya** says that Hashem brought a miracle to enable Aharon to do it. The question is, if Aharon needed a miracle to do this, then why was this considered a proof of his strength?

The only reason Aharon merited this miracle was because he put all his energy and strength into it, doing as much as he physically could. When Hashem sees a person putting in his maximum effort, often Hashem will help him succeed beyond that which he could have accomplished on his own.

Likewise, Pharaoh's daughter, Batya, had stretched her hand to reach baby Moshe's basket when it was floating in the Nile River. Since she truly wanted to reach Moshe, Hashem performed a miracle and enabled her hand to extend a distance which was humanly impossible.

**We should never hesitate to start a project that seems to be impossible. Hashem determines success, not our wisdom or our strength. If we try as hard as we can, often we will receive Divine assistance, and Hashem will help us succeed.**

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