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by Rabbi Yaakov Finestone

Refua Shelema Monir Malka bat Zaghi
Leiluy Nishmat Zaghi bat Yechezkel

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE? TRY IT AND SEE WHAT YOU THINK!

PARSHAS TERUMAH

A King promised a great reward to anyone who would climb a ladder and reach the top of a certain tower. The challenge was that the ladder was several feet away from the top floor and the ladder was at an angle. It was a seemingly impossible task. The King insisted that anyone who tried should wear a certain helmet while climbing the ladder. The climb was difficult. Many who tried would get to a third of the way up the ladder or halfway up, look up and wonder why they were even bothering to try. One after another, they gave up trying. One man was very determined. He climbed higher and higher, sweating profusely until he reached the top rung of the ladder. But he was still too far from the top floor. He did not know that there was a strong magnet on the top of his helmet as well as on the top floor. As soon as he reached the top rung, the magnet pulled him up the rest of the way. (Rabbi Frand in the name of Rav Gifter z"l)

The pasuk (25:31) says, "תִּעָשֶׂה הַמְנוֹרָה", The Menorah shall be made. **Rashi** points out that the passive form is used here instead of the the active form of "עָשָׂה" which is used in connection with the making of the other items of the Mishkan. Apparently, Moshe had difficulty visualizing how to make the Menorah. Hashem told him to throw the block of gold into fire and the Menorah would be made.

A later pasuk (25:40) says, "Observe and make the Menorah like the pattern that will be shown to you on the mountain." **Rashi** explains that Moshe was puzzled as to how to make the Menorah. So Hashem showed him a fiery Menorah, illustrating how the Menorah should be made.

In one place **Rashi** says that the Menorah was made by itself. In another place, **Rashi** says that Hashem showed Moshe a picture of fire of how the Menorah should be made. Which actually occurred?

The **Sfas Emes** answers that both teachings are correct. Moshe could not figure out how to make the Menorah which was so intricate. Some commentaries explain that Moshe's difficulty was how to include all the deep and hidden spiritual meanings that the Menorah would represent. Hashem showed Moshe a

"You shall make a Menorah of pure gold. Hammered out shall the Menorah be made...."
(Shmos 25:31) "Observe and make them according to the form that will be shown to you on the mountain." (Shmos 25:40)

picture in fire of how the Menorah should look. However, Moshe was still unable to make it. At that point, Hashem told Moshe to throw the gold into the fire and the Menorah would emerge.

The **Sfas Emes** asks, if Hashem saw that Moshe Rabbeinu was

having difficulty constructing the Menorah, why didn't Hashem immediately tell him to throw the gold in to the fire? Why did Hashem first have Moshe go through the process of seeing the fiery picture of the Menorah? The **Sfas Emes** explains that this teaches us a very valuable lesson. The importance of learning Torah and growing in spirituality is about the process. Success is a gift from Hashem.

At times, understanding a part of the Torah or the ability to do a specific mitzvah seems to be overwhelming. How will I ever understand this? How will I ever be able to accomplish this? The answer is that all that we have to do is to try, to make the effort to succeed. The end result often "emerges by itself", just as the Menorah did.

Similarly, the **Maharal** says that once one makes the effort, then Hashem is willing to help him succeed. But if a person sits back with folded hands and just waits for a miracle to happen, then it is not going to

happen! (based in part on Rabbi Yissoher Frand on Torah.org)

A few days after our forefather Avraham had his bris mila, he welcomed and cared for three travelers. Although the guests appeared to be Arabs, they were actually angels. The **Talmud** (Bava Metzia 86B) says that Avraham's descendants were rewarded for each of his actions. When the Jewish People were in the desert, after leaving Egypt, they benefited from Avraham's kindness. In reward for Avraham providing his guests with food, Bnei Yisroel were provided with the mann. In reward for Avraham providing them with water, Bnei Yisroel were provided with water from a well that traveled with them. In reward for Avraham standing over his guests to serve them, Bnei Yisroel were rewarded with the Clouds of Glory that protected them in the desert.

The basic understanding of this Gemorah is that because of Avraham's actions, Bnei Yisroel were provided with these three miraculous gifts for the entire 40 years that they were in the desert! **Maharsha** says that in Avraham's merit the Jews received these 3 initially. That itself was a significant reward for Avraham's actions. However, for the remainder of the time that the Jews were in the desert, they received these 3 rewards in the merits of Moshe, Aharon, and Miriam. When Miriam died, the well of water disappeared. When Aharon died, the Clouds of Glory dissipated. When Moshe died, the Mann stopped falling.

Rav Michel Zilber in Bayam HaDerech (quoted by Rabbi Dovid Ashear in Living Emunah 2) asks why this particular act of hospitality by Avraham resulted in such an amazing reward. After all, Avraham's entire life was devoted to hospitality and to bringing others to have an awareness of Hashem. Why was this particular act of hospitality so special? Furthermore, this act did not benefit anyone since these guests were angels and not people. **Rabbi Zilber** answers that the value of a mitzvah is not dependent upon the outcome but on the effort. Avraham was 99 years old. He had his bris mila only 3 days prior and his pain was at its peak. The day was abnormally hot since Hashem had purposely made it so, to save Avraham from the trouble of giving hospitality while he was recovering from the bris mila. Due to all of this, Avraham's efforts of hospitality on this particular day were extraordinary! That is why his mitzvah was so valuable and that is why he was rewarded so greatly!

At times, one may put a lot of effort into trying to do a mitzvah while in the end, he is not successful in performing the mitzvah. One may spend weeks organizing a special shiur and only two people attend. One should not feel that his time was wasted! **Hashem is not concerned about the results, but only the efforts!**

Rabbi Henach Leibowitz zt"l used to say that our job is to teach Torah and try to bring Jews closer to Hashem. Whether or not we succeed is up to Hashem.

**The value of our Torah learning and our other mitzvos, is not dependent upon the outcome.
Rather it is dependent on the effort that we invest into it.**

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Rabbi Yaakov Finestone is the director of JEP Queens. For almost 50 years JEP Queens has been in the forefront of kiruv. JEP has changed the lives of thousands of Jewish children enrolled in public schools and kiruv schools. Many are shomrei Torah and mitzvos today because of JEP.

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