

# WE TOIL AND RECEIVE REWARD -- FOR THE TOIL!

*by Rabbi Yissocher Frand*

## Parshas Pekudei

### We Toil And Receive Reward -- For The Toil!

*These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 231, Making a Siyum. Good Shabbos!*

Parshas Pekudei concludes the construction of the Mishkan. After the construction of all the individual components of the Mishkan, they brought the parts to Moshe. Rash"i quotes the Medrash Tanchuma, which explains that the reason why the Mishkan was brought to Moshe was because everyone else was unable to assemble it. The Mishkan was simply too heavy for anyone to lift. Since Moshe had not been personally involved in any part of the construction of the Mishkan, HaShem [G-d] reserved the privilege of final assembly for him.

When HaShem told Moshe to assemble the Mishkan, Moshe protested that it was too heavy for him to lift as well. HaShem told Moshe to make the effort. "Make it look like you are trying to erect it." Moshe made the effort and miraculously, the Mishkan was assembled by itself. Since Moshe made the effort, he received the credit for having put it up.

Rav Meir Rubman explains that we can learn a very important insight regarding spirituality from this Medrash. The Medrash teaches us that regardless of the difficulty of the task, we must make the effort. In other areas of endeavor, a person is only given credit for producing. However, when it comes to Judaism, HaShem is not necessarily interested in results; He is interested in the effort.

The concept that a person receives an "A" for effort is usually a backhanded compliment. In actuality, you received a "D", a near failing grade, but at least you received an "A" for effort. That is the way it is in other areas of life. But when it comes to Mitzvos, all Hashem asks from us that we make the effort. Whether the task is actually accomplished or not is often out of our control and up to Hashem.

At the conclusion of a Mesechta [tractate of the Talmud], we say the prayer "We toil and they toil. We toil and receive reward and they toil and do not receive reward." What does it mean, "they toil and do not receive reward"? This does not seem to be a true statement. People do not work without receiving payment!

The answer is that when we work (at religious tasks), we are paid for the effort, regardless of whether or not we produce. But 'they' are only paid for the bottom line. In all other areas of endeavor, toil that does not produce results does not receive reward.

Not long ago (1992), I was in Atlanta for a Torah retreat. Atlanta is an amazing community. Thirty years ago they did not have a minyan [quorum] of Sabbath observers. Today, over 300 people come to shul on Shabbos -- all of them are in some stage of having intensified their observance of mitzvos.

I asked Rabbi Emanuel Feldman (Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Beth Jacob in Atlanta), "What is the key to your success?" Rabbi Feldman told me that the key is to try to plant seeds. That is all a Rabbi can do. He can try to nurture and water the seeds, but really all he can do is try. He never knows for sure whether his efforts will succeed.

For example, one individual who recently returned to intensive Jewish involvement and observance told Rabbi Feldman that he made his decision because of a Yom Kippur sermon that Rabbi Feldman delivered 15 years earlier. A comment in that sermon had struck home. He did not act upon it then, but 15 years later, he decided to become religious.

Success is not what Kiruv Rechokim is about. Kiruv Rechokim is about effort. Whether or not the Mishkan is actually erected is HaShem's worry. We toil and we receive reward - for the effort.

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This write-up was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tape series on the weekly Torah portion. The complete list of halachic topics covered in this series for Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei are provided below:

- Tape # 047 - Pikuach Nefesh: To Save a Life
- Tape # 090 - The Melacha of Carrying
- Tape # 138 - The Melacha of Tying Knots
- Tape # 185 - The Melacha of Writing
- Tape # 231 - Making A Siyum
- Tape # 275 - Electricity in Halacha
- Tape # 321 - Leap Year and the Second Adar
- Tape # 365 - The Melacha of Tearing
- Tape # 409 - The Melacha of Melabain (Laundering)
- Tape # 453 - Wearing a Watch on Shabbos
- Tape # 497 - The Tefillah of B'rach Sh'mei
- Tape # 541 - Learning Kabbalah
- Tape # 585 - The Melacha of Trapping
- Tape # 629 - Sitting in Judgement on Shabos
- Tape # 672 - The Mishebeirach in Halacha
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