

This is the workmanship of the Menorah...according to the vision that Hashem showed Moshe, so did he make the Menorah. (8:4)

Chazal tell us that Moshe had difficulty in forging the *Menorah*. They say that Hashem "showed" Moshe by pointing a "finger" and describing the exact image of the *Menorah*. In the end, according to one statement of *Chazal*, Moshe threw the talent of gold into the fire and a finished *Menorah* emerged. A number of explanations address Moshe's difficulty in perceiving the image of the *Menorah*. **Horav Nissan Alpert, zl**, views this from an homiletic point of view. He suggests an analogy between the fabrication of the *Menorah* and two people who were given the necessary materials for building a house. Each was supplied with wood, mortar, nails, bricks, etc. There was one problem - neither one knew anything about building a house. What did they do? One of them went to a builder to be taught "housebuilding." After awhile he felt proficient enough to undertake building the house on his own. The other man decided to take a "course" in "self-study;" he undertook to build the house without any instruction. He decided to use common sense and through trial and error to create a suitable home for himself. He was certainly correct about the trial and error approach. Indeed, he became an accomplished builder. By the time he "graduated" from his self-study program, however, he no longer had enough material left to build the house. The trial and error program had nearly depleted his resources.

The same concept can be applied to life. The time is short, and the amount we must accomplish is great. We have no time for error. When the moment comes that we confront the truth at the end of our lives, we will regretfully see how much time we have wasted. Hashem, therefore, gave us His *Torah*, which is our blueprint for life. By following its commands and dictates, we learn the correct way to live, thereby circumventing any errors we might have committed on our own.

The *Menorah* represents Hashem's *Torah*. Hashem pointed to the *Menorah* and told Moshe, "Follow this; look through the wisdom of *Torah*, Hashem's Heavenly mirror of life. See what it has to tell you. The 'light' of *Torah* will guide you and show you how to live."