

## It came to pass, on the day Moshe finished erecting the Mishkan. (7:1)

*Rashi* observes that the *pasuk* does not write, “On the day Moshe erected...” This teaches us that, throughout the seven days of inauguration, Moshe *Rabbeinu* erected and dismantled the *Mishkan*. On the eighth day, he erected it without dismantling it. This is why the Torah writes, “On the day Moshe finished erecting...” It was on this auspicious day that he culminated his building. Why was it necessary for our quintessential leader to erect and dismantle the *Mishkan* repeatedly for seven days – only to erect it and not dismantle it on the eighth day? Why could he not have erected it once, and it would remain in place? **Horav Zaidel Epstein, zl**, derives from here, that in order to merit to establish a lasting and great enduring/organization/edifice, anything of impressive value and influence, one must be prepared to dismantle and erect it over and over again a number of times.

Great successes do not come easy; trial and error; falling on one’s face; clean yourself up, and do it again until you have it right. We do not throw in the towel if at first we do not succeed. Shlomo *Hamelech* says (*Mishlei* 24:16), “For a righteous man can fall seven times and rise, but the wicked shall stumble upon evil.” The **Ralbag** notes that the number “seven” denoted many (times) even more than seven. He explains the *pasuk* as teaching us an important lesson for achieving spiritual success in life. People think that the difference between a *tzaddik*, righteous person, and a *rasha*, wicked person, is that a *rasha* falls and a *tzaddik* does not fall. The *tzaddik* also falls – many times. The difference between the *tzaddik* and the *rasha* is the individual reaction of each to his fall. When the *rasha* falls, he simply gives up and lays there. The *tzaddik*, however, brushes himself off and starts over again. Sooner or later he will get it right.

In a letter to a student whose bright star was slowly rising, **Horav Yitzchak Hutner, zl**, writes: “It is a sickness that we have, whereupon studying the lives of our great *gedolim*, Torah leaders, we place them on a high pedestal and look only at their culminating success. We speak of their outstanding achievements, exemplary erudition, and spiritual perfection, but fail to delve into their many trials and turbulent times which they, after much difficulty, were able to surmount and triumph.

“One would think that these *gedolim* were born perfect, fully formed as Torah leaders. We marvel at the *Chafetz Chaim*’s incredible self-control concerning *lashon hora*, slanderous speech. Does one have any idea how many battles he fought to achieve such self-control? Do you think that he was born that way? The *yetzer hora* battled fiercely with the *Chafetz Chaim*. He lost – but only because the holy sage waged a bitter battle against it – and won!

“Every young student must take this into consideration. He will encounter bumps in the road, obstacles along one’s path. He will stumble; he will fall; he will have moments of despair. Great people achieve their pinnacle of success because they keep on climbing.”

There is no shortage of stories to support the notion that one must learn to accept and overcome challenge in order to achieve success in his spiritual development. The following story, which I found in Rabbi Yechiel Spero's first volume of "Touched By A Story," is a perfect fit. A student in Ofakim, the *yeshivah* under the direction of **Rav Shimshon Pincus, zl**, found it difficult to stick to his spiritual commitments. The *Rosh Yeshivah's* talks were inspirational, and they motivated him to commit himself to greater self-improvement, but when it came to realizing his promise, he fell short. A student who took his spiritual growth seriously, he was deeply concerned. *Rav Shimshon* saw him deep in thought, and recognizing that his student was not thinking anything positive, he approached him and inquired about his condition. The student broke down, as he conveyed his feelings of failure to his *rebbe*.

*Rav Shimshon* sat down next to the boy and related the following story. "It was during the *Yom Kippur* War, and I was sitting in the emergency room of Shaarei Tzedek Hospital with one of my children. He had a cut which required stitches. Suddenly, I noticed a commotion in front of the emergency room, as doctors from various stations in the hospital converged to discuss a patient who had been brought in.

"I went over to a nurse to ask what had happened and was informed that a soldier had been shot, and he had been brought to the hospital for treatment. The doctor had removed the bullet from the soldier's leg, while the soldier remained awake during the entire procedure. Following a quick check of the wound site, the doctor released the soldier, so that he could go home to convalesce. The young, nineteen year old soldier, still grimacing from the pain as he struggled to slide off the operating table, said that he was not going home. Beads of sweat had formed on his forehead from the pain, but he was adamant – he was not going home.

"You think I am going home as long as a war is raging? My brothers are fighting, and I will go home? Never! My friends need me on the battlefield. What support can I give them from my bedroom?' With these parting words, the soldier hobbled out of the emergency room."

*Rav Shimshon* now turned to his student, and, with his characteristic warm smile said, "My dear student, stumbling is not unusual. I will not try to convince you that stumbling is not a setback, but that is all it should be. One falls and immediately dusts himself off and continues to climb. There is a battle raging for the souls of every Jewish child. Retreat is not an option. We stumble; sometimes, we even fall, but we rise up, clean ourselves off and continue climbing! Losing a battle does not mean losing the war. Without everyone's participation, we cannot triumph over the enemy. We need you to fight alongside the rest of us!"

It would serve us well to remember and reiterate the *Rosh Yeshivah's* analogy. Stumbling is a part of life – losing does not have to be.