

"And behold there budded the rod of Aharon for the house of Levi and it put forth buds and blossomed blossoms and bore ripe almonds. (17:23)

It is stated in the *Torah* that Aharon's rod continued to maintain all these qualities at the same time. This is peculiar, since blossoms bloom after the buds have fallen. The *Tosfos Yeshanim* in *Yumah* (52b) asks this question, and responds by saying that this was a miracle. This answer heeds further explanation. What reason was there for such a miracle? To teach us that physical things which shrivel, dry up, and wither away into oblivion. However, spiritual entities do not wither, they perpetuate themselves and last forever.

The fruit of a *mitzvah* is the actual performance of a *mitzvah*, while the ways and means that lead up to its completion are the blossoms. In Hashem's eyes it is not only the fruit of the actual *mitzvah* which endures, but also the various steps along the road, the toil and sacrifice, the enthusiasm and ardor are also an inherent part of the *mitzvah*, and consequently they also exist forever. In the performance of *mitzvos*, we cannot say that the end justifies the means which brought the successful goal, since the means which brought the successful goal must also be performed in the proper manner, and are therefore also a source for reward as well.