



Slumped shoulders and heavy sighs attested to the utter helplessness Yakov felt. The harsh winds of today's *nisyonos* knocked him over time and again, destroying all his good intentions that "next time would be different".

After facing defeat too many times, Yakov could no longer contain his despair and feelings of failure, and he resolved to visit his *Rebbe*.

The Rebbe listened intently to Yakov's sobbing as he poured out his misery for having disappointed his Father repeatedly, and although there were time that he prevailed, there were plenty of others that he unfortunately succumbed to.

The Rebbe placed a reassuring hand on his *talmid*'s arm and gazed with holy eyes into those of the troubled soul hunched before him.

"Tell me Yanke'le, do you appreciate art?" the Rebbe questioned.

"Of course!" he responded, surprised at the Rebbe's seemingly random question. "There is nothing like a beautiful piece of art, especially handcrafted original pieces. However, they are quite a fortune."

"Is that so? Then let me ask you," the Rebbe probed. "If one would take a picture of a scene and print the picture on a canvas, how much would the cost be?"

Yakov contemplated for a moment before replying. "I suppose it would be around twenty or thirty dollars."

The Rebbe lifted his eyes and looked intently at his *talmid*. "Isn't it ironic that a manmade product, constructed by a person's hand, would be of more value than that of a flawlessly taken picture?"

Yakov had never thought about it; that's just how it was. He was unsure what the Rebbe was trying to point out.

The Rebbe didn't leave him in suspense for too long. "The reason for this," the Rebbe continued, "is simple. Technological advancements allow

for perfect and precise results and therefore does not require much skill. On the other hand, a painting crafted by man requires time, effort, and real talent, as one wrong move can damage the full picture and ultimately spoil the piece of work.”

The Rebbe paused and then pursued. “This is my message to you, Yankle’le: The *Bashefer* has many *malachim* (angels) to carry out the missions that He lays out for them, with exact precision. Yet our *Tatte* in *Himmel* created man to draw a hand-crafted image, one that only you can portray, even though it is not perfect. Your desire, unlimited efforts, and dedication, are what truly matter, and it is deeply treasured up there. Your persistence to persevere through life’s pitfalls and constantly pick yourself up is what raises your value above the heavenly angels.”

Let us internalize this message to strengthen our morals when facing today’s challenges. Our perseverance to rise above the *nisyonos* is what is painting a breathtaking picture! Every time one overcomes his trials, he is masterfully painting his piece of art, which will await him in the World to Come.