

"And the entire congregation of Bnei Yisrael left Moshe's presence. Each person who was ready to volunteer then came forward. And everyone who wanted to give brought a donation to Hashem for the making of the Ohel Moed, for all its labor and for the sacred vestments."(35:20,21)

There seems to be a disparity between the "*entire congregation*" -- which left Moshe's presence -- and "*each person*" -- who volunteered to donate for the *Mishkan*. What happened to everyone who left Moshe's appeal excited and enthusiastic, ready to respond? When Moshe spoke, the entire *Klal Yisrael* listened eagerly. When it came time to send in their donations, however, only the truly committed actually responded. Regrettably, as the *Chida* notes, there is a chasm between listening and committing oneself. What initially excites the person does not always translate into serious contribution. At times the disparity between intent and implementation is great. People have second thoughts when they realize that they now have to part with their money.

We find, however, that *Bnei Yisrael* once contributed heavily, without any second thoughts. When they decided to build the Golden Calf, they could not give enough. Everyone literally "begged" to have his money taken from him. What makes the matter more ironic is the fact that the *Mishkan* was to serve as an atonement for the sin of the Golden Calf.

We suggest that there are two types of donors: those with vision, who are able to see the future effect of their contribution; and in contrast, those who seek immediate return for their money. Men of vision trust that the money they contribute will bear fruit which may not be readily apparent. The impact of the *Mishkan* on Jewish life, the *kedushah* it inspires in a community is not an immediate elixir. It teaches and influences, while it generates an atmosphere of sacredness that permeates the Jewish people. Only wise men with foresight were able to perceive the great effect the *Mishkan* would have on *Klal Yisrael* from its genesis. The Golden Calf, on the other hand, provided immediate gratification. They brought their money and a golden calf was immediately erected. People were suddenly dancing joyfully before their newly found idol. This represents immediate return on an investment! This was the lesson imparted by the *Mishkan*. Not everything of lasting value is noticed right away. It takes time to produce a perfect vessel. The inability to perceive the effect does not preclude its reality.

A similar situation is relevant today. Years ago men of great vision foresaw what a Jewish world with schools and *yeshivos* would look like. People seem to be much more skeptical when the charities are meaningful and genuine. It is hard to convince careful donors of the merit of contributing to Jewish education. Similarly, the *Mishkan* also needed the wise and truly committed to envision its importance.