

## The Nesiim brought the shoham stones and stones for the settings for the eiphod and the Choshen. (35:27)

*Rashi* notes that, concerning the *Chanukas HaMizbayach*, dedication of the Altar, the *Nesiim* were the first to bring their donations. With regard to the donations for the *Mishkan*, however, they waited, saying, “We will donate whatever is needed to complete the *Mishkan* once the people have given their part.” They waited too long, underestimating the zeal with which the nation came forth to donate. Thus, all that was left for them to donate was the setting stones. As a ramification of their waiting too long, a letter (*yud*) is missing from their name. *Chazal* give a number of reasons for this “chastisement”. Most simply suggest that their lack of alacrity was the result of a twinge of indolence on their part. To the casual observer, nothing was obviously wrong with waiting. After all, they were giving a blank check to pay for the shortfall. Hashem, however, sees deeply into a person’s heart and knows his true psyche. He saw indolence. This is a powerful lesson for us. How often do we convince ourselves to wait, not to jump in and be the first to donate, to act, to initiate, thinking that we are doing the correct and noble thing when, in fact, it is our laziness that motivates our lack of initiative?

We may suggest that the failing in their actions was their separation from the rest of the community. It was almost as if it was “them” and “us” – two groups, with the *Nesiim* intimating that they would do their thing after everyone had completed their donating. While their intentions might have been noble, to the casual observer they came across as pretentious.

The barometer of a person’s character and rectitude is his ability to submit himself and join/work with others – especially when their background, lineage, bearing and acumen do not coincide with his level. The attitude of the individual who lacks the *middah*, attribute, of *hishtatfus*, ability to participate and join with others, indicates that he considers himself better than others. If this is the case, he has no business to be in a leadership position. One who leads a group must be acutely involved with said group. If he lords over them because he views them through a narrow-minded, depreciating perspective, he will not be a successful leader.

This applies concerning every endeavor, regardless of how great or how small. If one cannot work with others, because he cannot perceive what they will add to his work, he will undermine whatever success he might achieve. We see this from the building of the *Mishkan* and the *Bais HaMikdash*, whose architectural leadership was comprised of two individuals who were disparate in lineage and distinction. The *Mishkan* was created under the leadership of Betzalel *ben* Uri, a descendant of Yehudah, and Ohaliav *ben* Achisamach of the tribe of Dan. Yehudah was the tribe aligned with *malchus*, monarchy, while Dan, in the sequence of the tribes, was charged with the menial task of traveling last and attending to whatever was left behind by the other tribes. [This does not mean to denigrate *Shevet Dan*’s responsibility. Serving the needs of the holy *shevatim* is certainly important, but it pales in comparison with the monarchy and leadership.] Yet, these two worked side-by-side in creating the *Mishkan*. Betzalel understood that we are all soldiers in Hashem’s

army and, as such, we serve Him equally in whatever capacity He places us.