

# HEARTS OF GOLD

*by Rabbi Label Lam*

From Moshe's presence they took the entire gift that the Children of Israel had brought for the work for the labor of the Sanctuary, to do it. But they continued to bring him free-willed gifts morning after morning. ... They said to Moshe as follows, "The people are bringing more than enough for the labor of the work that HASHEM has commanded to perform." ...And the people were restrained from bringing, but the work had been enough for the labor of all the work to do it, and there was extra. (Shemos 36:1-7)

One might be lead to believe that Moshe was the most successful fund- raiser of all time. It's an odd characterization for our all time spiritual guide. In the end there were more donations than necessary. Imagine that! How often does that happen? Many would love to know his secret. How did Moshe do it?

We should not forget that the task was complicated by the requirement that the materials and the monies to be collected had to given for HASHEM's sake alone and no other ulterior motivation, as the verse states, "And you should take for Me Terumah! (Shemos 25:2)

Rashi comments, for Me: For My sake! That profound caveat should make the fund-raiser's job that much more difficult if not impossible! It's an awful handicap to burden a fundraiser with! However, ultimately not only was it not an impediment and may even have been a help! How can we understand that to be so?

Rebbetzin Sarah Schwartzman of blessed memory told the following story about Rabbi Aaron Kotler ztl. Once at a parlor meeting where a select group of Torah supporters were gathered to raise funds for the Yeshiva, a speaker outlined all the benefits that would accrue to Klal Yisrael from Lakewood Yeshiva in terms of providing teachers of Torah, etc. for future generations. The Rosh HaYeshiva, however was uneasy about what was being spoken. He stood up and said, "Rabosai (gentlemen), I fear I am being guilty of gneivas hadaas (deception). Yes, our Yeshiva will, with G-d's help, produce heads of Yeshivas and Rabbis and teachers, but I want you to know that the main aim of the Yeshiva is the learning of Torah lishma- learning Torah for learning's sake only, without thinking of career or profession, and it is for that purpose that I am asking for your support!"

The Torah writes, "All generous hearts they should bring Terumah/Offerings to HASHEM! (Shemos 35:5) Rabbi Shmuel Rozovsky reads the verse: "They should bring ...their generous hearts with the Terumah for HASHEM. So the main building of the Mishkan was from the generous hearts!" My

guess is that Moshe used few gimmicks to raise funds. First he lifted aspirations and that lead to the flow of goods. From the strength of his own clear minded conviction he was not so much a classic fund-raiser as an elevator of spirits. Sanctuary was built from pure intentions. There are no alchemist's tricks needed to make gold from hearts of gold. Text Copyright &copy 2006 by Rabbi Label Lam and **Torah.org**.