

# WE CAN DO ANYTHING TOGETHER

by Rabbi Yaakov Menken

*"And the princes [heads of the tribes] brought the onyx stones, and the stones to be set for the ephod and the breastplate." (35:27)*

Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhoki quotes a *Midrash* which explains how this came to be. It seems that the heads of the tribes said, "let the people bring what they will, and we will make up the difference." But as it turns out, the people brought everything necessary for construction of the Tabernacle, so these stones were all that remained. Although what the princes said might have been a fundraiser's dream, the Torah tells us that the real reason for their declaration was simply laziness - and as a result the word "*Nesi'im*", princes, is written here with a letter missing.

The *Chofetz Chaim* of Radin contrasts this with the first sacrifices offered by the same princes, found later in *Parshas Naso*. There the *Torah* repeats again and again what each prince brought to the Temple, even though each and every sacrifice was exactly the same as the others. All of this, he explains, is to teach us the great value of working together, and energetically. When people rush forward to work on behalf of the entire group - instead of holding themselves above others, or looking out for their personal interests - then this is valued dearly by G-d, the *Torah*... and by others, as well.

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