

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

by Rabbi Yaakov Menken

"Everyone whose heart lifted him up, and everyone whose spirit moved him, came and brought the offering of G-d for the construction of the Tent of Meeting, and for all its work, and for the Holy garments." [35:21]

The *Ramban* says that "everyone whose heart lifted him up" refers to the work itself, which was also an offering. "For there was no one among them who had learned this from a teacher, or [had been an apprentice with] someone to steady his hands. Rather, they found within themselves that they knew how to do it, and their hearts lifted them up in the path of *HaShem* to come before *Moshe* and say, 'I will do whatever my lord says.'"

We find this same concept later on: "And *Betzalel*, and *Ahaliyav*, and everyone with a wise heart, to whom *HaShem* has given wisdom and understanding within them, to know how to do all the Holy works, [they] will do all that *HaShem* commanded." [36:1] The greatness of *Betzalel* was not that he was a fine artist, or a skilled tradesman (the *Betzalel* School of Art notwithstanding). His heart moved him. His spirit pushed him. And because he dedicated himself to doing this Holy work, G-d gave him the necessary talents.

Rabbi Asher Zelig Rubenstein, in a class which I was fortunate to attend in Jerusalem, said that this concept is permanent. "Open up your mouth, and I will fill it." If someone wants to build a Holy Tabernacle, G-d will help him to do it - a school, a synagogue, a House of Study.

This applies just as well to the Tabernacle that we can build within ourselves, and within our homes. We may look at the amount that must be done, and conclude that it is impossible -- that we lack the necessary skill. But it is those who push these thoughts aside, and move forward, who eventually succeed.

There is a well known story of a father, very concerned about his son's ability to learn Torah, who came to the *Chazon Ish*, Rabbi Avraham Y. Karelitz, one of the great Rabbis of the last generation. The father said that his son was unable to achieve any depth of understanding; that he wasn't very intelligent, and couldn't handle complex analysis of many concepts. The Rabbi responded: so let him learn quickly, aiming for a broad but more superficial understanding. The depth would come later.

When the young man was 30, he was still doing this, and apparently wasn't making much progress. But he plodded on. Some said about him, "no one learns the Talmud more, and knows it less."

The father in this story was the *Steipler Rav*, Rabbi Y.Y. Kanievsky, the brother-in-law of Rabbi Karelitz. Today, his son is widely regarded as a great sage and scholar, whose broad knowledge is unbelievable -- as is the depth of his understanding! Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky is widely considered to be in the "next generation" of leading scholars in Israel.

Let no one say it is impossible. If you want to build a Tabernacle, then G-d Himself will help, and make it possible!

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