



I Can!

Dear Parents,

One of the saddest comments to come out of a child's mouth, is "I can't", when asked to answer a question or solve a problem that we know they are really capable of being successful at. An attitude of helplessness is far too pervasive among children, but it exists among all people, to one extent or another. Recognizing and understanding it, are the first steps in enabling a person to overcome it.

This week's *Parsha* tells us that when all the parts of the *Mishkan* were complete, the people brought the *Mishkan* to *Moshe Rabbeinu* (*Shemos* 39:33) to erect it. *Rashi* explains that the people were unable to erect the beams, so they turned to *Moshe*. *Moshe* realized that erecting these extremely large and heavy beams was beyond the capacity of a human, and he questioned *Hashem* as to how he should proceed.

Quoting the *Medrash Tanchuma*, *Rashi* tells us *Hashem's* stirring words to *Moshe*: *Involve yourself with your hand. You start putting up the Kerashim (beams) and it will appear as if you are doing it. In reality it will rise upright and miraculously stand by itself!* **Moshe merely needed to take the first step. Once he did that, Hashem took over and miraculously completed the task.**

Looking around our community and the Jewish world today, we see many incredibly successful *Yeshivas*, *Shuls*, *Chesed* organizations, *Kiruv* organizations, *Tzedaka* funds, *Gemachs* etc. They are almost all the brainchild of one individual who took the first step to accomplish a seemingly impossible mission. They strengthened themselves and said "I can!" and merited *Hashem's* miracles along the way. Many people have good ideas and good intentions - it is the rare person who has the courage and faith to attempt the 'impossible'.

A shining example in our recent past of someone who said "I can" to the seemingly impossible task, was *Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman*, the *Ponovezher Rav*. In 1942, with the war raging in Europe and German forces seemingly about to overrun *Eretz Yisrael*, *R'L*, and everyone fearing for their very lives, *Rav Kahaneman* announced that he would begin building a *Yeshiva* in *Bnei Brak*. When confronted by others who told him he must be

dreaming, he responded "I may be dreaming, but I am not asleep." In fact, the entire enterprise of rebuilding the Torah World from the ashes of Europe was a seemingly impossible task. We are fortunate to bear witness today how those long-shot efforts succeeded beyond anyone's wildest dreams.

Another way to view the need for an "I can" attitude comes from, of all places, one of the greatest hockey players ever: **"You miss 100% of the shots you don't take."** So many people go through life and because of a defeatist attitude of "I can't" they never even attempt to try their hand at something that they really would like to accomplish. In truth, that describes almost all of us. We don't see a way to be successful in a natural way, so we don't try. What *Hashem* taught us through *Moshe's* erecting the *Mishkan* is - you take the first step, make the effort and you may merit tremendous *Siyata D'Shmaya* (Heavenly help) that will enable you to succeed.

Returning to our young child who feels unable to succeed and therefore does not try, we must take note of and address such an attitude. If left unchecked, it threatens to greatly minimize what a child can succeed at in life, and more importantly, how capable or incapable they view themselves. Gently correct your child's "I can't" and help them reframe to say "this is hard for me, but I will try," or "I can't do this myself, but I can if you help me" or "I can do this part, but I don't understand how to do that part."

Share stories of how you or other family members or friends were able to succeed at something that you never thought you would. Show your child how many things that seem to be beyond them are made up of small steps and tiny parts that can easily be achieved, one at a time. Part of the bedrock of our *Emuna* in *Hashem* is that if we "lift our hand" and take the first step, we will hopefully, merit the *Siyata D'Shmaya* to succeed.

Have a wonderful *Shabbos*,



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