

“Because you did not serve Hashem, your G-d, amid gladness and goodness of heart.” (28:47)

Joy in *mitzvah* performance, aside from being an essential prerequisite to the actual fulfillment of the *mitzvah*, also has a very practical application. *Horav Moshe Feinstein, z.l.*, explains why so many children of European immigrants who came to America after World War I did not remain observant. Their parents were deeply committed to *Yiddishkeit*. They slaved long hours, performing all kinds of backbreaking labor to eke out a meager living. They would never compromise their observance of Torah and *mitzvos*. *Shabbos* was paramount, and *Kashrus* was a standard in their homes. So, what went wrong? Why did so many Jews who were *moser nefesh*, sacrificed themselves for Torah, fail to see *nachas* from their children?

They were not happy. “*Oy! Es is shver tzu zein a Yid*, It is difficult to be a Jew.” When they came home after a difficult day in the sweatshops – they complained. When they observed *Shabbos*, sometimes at the expense of their jobs – they complained. When the price of *kosher* meat was too much for their meager paychecks – they complained. Their children heard nothing but complaints. This was surely not a strong motivating factor for them. They grew up viewing Judaism as a pain, as a religion that imposed hardship, poverty and unhappiness. Their reaction was simple: they did not want to be miserable like their parents. Therefore, they dropped the source of their parents’ misery: religious observance. Now they could be happy. Regrettably, now their children would follow them – until they would see for themselves the beauty and joy inherent in *mitzvah* observance. The home serves as the greatest and most important training ground for our children. The way we act at home can either inspire or impede. We have only ourselves to credit or to blame.