

And they made... as Hashem had commanded Moshe. (39:1)

The Torah emphasizes the fact that all of the work for the *Mishkan* was done according to Hashem's command to Moshe Rabbeinu. This means that they followed the word of G-d to a "T." One wonders concerning the superfluity of this statement. Is there a question for one moment that Hashem's instructions would not be followed to the most minute detail? What, then, is the meaning of underscoring the people's adherence to Hashem's command to Moshe? **Horav Meir Rubman, zl**, derives a powerful lesson from here. Being Jewish means being completely, totally and unequivocally Jewish. "Almost" – "just about" – "sort of" – is not Jewish. One either does it right, or it is not done – period!

Every *mitzvah* has *halachos* that guide us in the proper and correct observance of the *mitzvah*. Anything less than total commitment is no commitment. Imagine owing someone five thousand dollars and paying half of the loan. Certainly, this would not be acceptable. Why should Judaism be any different?

We are taught that one must toil in Torah. Without exerting toil, the actual study is not only deficient, it will lead to a lack of *mitzvah* observance-which is the beginning of one's ultimate alienation from Judaism. Why is this? Just because he did not follow the required path of Torah study, does that make him a deficient Jew? It is "almost" right – is it not? Apparently, "almost" is nothing! One either carries out the *mitzvah* in accordance with the prescribed outline given by Hashem as interpreted by *Chazal* – or he does not. There is no grey area in our allegiance to Hashem. One is either loyal – or he is not.

Likewise, diligence in Torah study is determined by the *pasuk V'higissa bo yomam valaylah*, "You should delve in it day and night." In *Mishlei* 2, Shlomo *Hamelech* writes that one should seek Torah "like silver and precious jewels." Are we at that point yet? One can be studious, diligent and committed, but if his Torah devotion does not meet the above standards, he is failing. True, he is doing well, but "doing well" and "almost there" do not achieve one's obligation as a Jew. This is why the Torah underscores the phenomenon of completing everything in accordance with Hashem's command.

Horav Mordechai Gifter, zl, personified the concept of total immersion in Torah. The *Rosh Yeshivah* was concerned that this would be a problem for the American mindset, which viewed material achievement as a primary goal with which to infuse their children. He worried that the American Jewish parent would want to raise a *frum*, observant, child, but not one who would place *gadlus*, greatness, in Torah as his overriding priority in life. In a letter to Jewish parents, he wrote, "If Jewish parents wish to guarantee a truly Jewish life of *mitzvah* performance (for their child), they must expend the greatest possible effort and they must sacrifice to help create outstanding Torah personalities from among the American youth." A *frum* Jew who is a mediocre scholar and who views Torah study as secondary to everything else is risking his observance. One is either "in" or "out."

"We understand the need for a Jonas Salk to combat the crippling effect of infantile paralysis, but we do not even begin to comprehend our need for the Torah giant who will combat the paralysis caused by superficiality in Jewish life, and, because of this, we fail to respond to the most compelling needs of our time."

"*Kaasher tzivah Hashem es Moshe*" is viewed from a spiritual perspective as the recipe for *mitzvah* observance: all or nothing. We do not settle for partial observance. It must be executed accurately, according to Hashem's command. Perusing through Rabbi Yechiel Spero's biography of *Rav Gifter*, I came across an episode that teaches the significance of this perspective from a practical point of view.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* traveled to Mexico on a fund-raising trip on behalf of the *yeshivah*. He attempted to meet with a man who was well-known both for his wealth and for his lack of time for appointments. It was hardly possible to meet with him, he was so immersed in his businesses. Finally, *Rav Gifter* was able to obtain an appointment for very early in the morning, a few hours before the traditional workday began. When he entered the office, he saw the man was completely immersed in his business. The man was respectful, and he told the *Rosh Yeshivah*, "I am very sorry, but I simply do not have the time to talk to you now."

Rav Gifter was undeterred, "Let us not converse about money. I simply want to ask you a question. When I first tried to meet with you, I went to your house. I was greatly impressed by its beauty, its sheer magnificence, and the various amenities that adorn the rooms of your mansion. My question is: Since you work so hard and are so engrossed in your business, when do you have the time to enjoy your home?"

The Jew looked at *Rav Gifter*, somewhat incredulously, and said, "*Rebbe*, the house is not for me. I have nothing from my mansion. It is for my wife and children. My life is my business, and this is where I spend my every waking moment. *Rebbe, oib mir villen matzliach zein, broch men liggen in gesheft*. 'If one wants to achieve success (in business), he must be totally immersed in (his) business.'"

Rav Gifter looked at the man, and said, "You do not have to give me any money. You have given me something more precious than money. You have taught me a lesson which I can impart to my students. If you want to succeed, you must be totally immersed in your business. Our business is Torah!"

Oib mir villen matzliach zein, broch men liggen in gesheft. One is either in the business or he is out. Part time businessmen are not very successful.