

For unto Me are the Bnei Yisrael servants, they are My servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt. (26:55)

At the conclusion of the laws dealing with personal freedom, the *Torah* states the reason that our freedom is not for sale: We were redeemed from Egypt by Hashem. We belong to Him - a fact that takes precedence over and precludes our belonging to anyone else. Every fiber of our being, every fraction of our strength and powers, belongs to the Almighty. The principle of a Jew's unalienable freedom is nurtured by Jewish law, to the point that not even the normal contract of a daily worker is considered binding. It can be revoked by the *po'el*, worker, at any time of the day. We must endeavor to understand what there is about our obligation to serve Hashem that overrides every other obligation. Is not the Jewish servant, *eved Ivri*, obliged to observe all *Taryag*, 613, *mitzvos*? How is he revoking the yoke of Heaven by being an *eved*?

Horav Matisyahu Solomon, Shlita, initially suggests that it is not the actual servitude which takes away from his relationship with Hashem. Rather, the name "*eved*," slave, demeans him as a Jew and as a servant to the Almighty. This would be true if it applied only to a slave. We mentioned before, however, that a worker is permitted to break his contract because he has a "prior" commitment to Hashem. Apparently, our servitude to Hashem supersedes everything - even the average working man's contract.

Horav Solomon cites *Horav Simcha Zissel, zl, M'Kelm*, who explains that everyone is obligated in *mitzvah* performance - even an *eved Ivri*. There is something more to serving Hashem, however, than just an obligation to perform His *mitzvos*. An *eved* Hashem is one who has nothing else, no subservience to anyone but Hashem. His mind and heart are totally sublimated to serve the Almighty. Although he can observe *mitzvos* to a certain extent while he is in his master's possession, the *eved Ivri* cannot fulfill his total obligation to Hashem. He cannot give all of himself, all of the time, to Hashem, because of his responsibilities to his master. One who senses the depth and beauty of this relationship will feel the essence of true freedom. His "work" is given primary status while everything else is a distant second place.