

Moshe saw the entire work, and behold! They had accomplished it; as G-d had commanded, so they had done. (39:43)

The term *eved Hashem*, servant of Hashem, is one which is not to be taken lightly. Indeed, this is the appellation by which our quintessential leader and *Rebbe* of all *Klal Yisrael* is identified: Moshe, *eved Hashem*. What is the meaning of this unique term? In his commentary to the above *pasuk*, **Horav S. R. Hirsch, zl**, writes, “Moshe inspected all of the work that had been completed, and he observed that the work bore two distinct characteristics, two hallmarks which stood out above the various other attributes. First, *Asu osah*, “It was they who had done it.” Every aspect of the *Mishkan*’s construction, from the most minute to the most preeminent, bespoke the whole personality, the extreme devotion, the spontaneous enthusiasm, and the strength and energies of the entire nation. They did it – all of them, qualitatively as well as quantitatively. Every part of every available Jew was involved in the construction of the *Mishkan*.

Second, *Kaasher tzivah Hashem, kein asu*, “As G-d had commanded, so they had done.” They subordinated all of their zeal and enthusiasm in its sum total, as well as in every detail, completely to the commands of Hashem. They made no attempt to introduce their own ideals, their own *chiddushim*, original, innovative additions or omissions; [The craftsmen followed Hashem’s guidelines to the letter of the law.] Rather, each and every one of the craftsmen considered it his supreme accomplishment to follow instructions, to execute with obedience, to act with scrupulous care and precision – not his own ideas – but the ideas and commandments of Hashem. This free-willed, joyous sense of obedience – reflected in both freedom in obedience and obedience in freedom, meshed together – renders one joyously aware of his own strength and ability, precisely by subordinating his personality completely to the will of Hashem. *Bateil retzoncha mipnei retzono*, “Nullify your will before His will”: This is what constitutes the most significant and critical characteristic of sublime moral perfection in the deeds of a Jewish person. These two attributes characterize a human being as unique and morally sublime. Indeed, this person having achieved the pinnacle of service to the Almighty may now be called an *eved Hashem*.

A servant of Hashem is one who lives a life of spiritual integrity in which every aspect of his life’s endeavor is for the purpose of – and guided by – his spiritual dimension. An individual who exemplified this persona was **Horav Yechezkel Levenstein, zl**, *Mashgiach* of pre-World War II Mir and later Ponevez. A student of Kelm, he personified integrity and calm, and, at the same time, intense service to Hashem. He possessed a spiritual refinement which reflected his complete control over every action in his daily endeavor.

In his eulogy for *Rav Chatzkel*, as he was lovingly and reverently called, **Horav Elazar M. Shach, zl**, *Rosh Yeshivas Ponevez*, said, “I have never known, as far as I could tell, a single person more honest than he was. Even if he had lived five hundred years ago, during the era of the *Rishonim*, he would have been considered pious. Throughout the years that I knew him, there was never an

instant that he searched for some leniency. He always strove to do as much as possible and deal stringently with himself – this is the meaning of the term *chasid*, pious.”

In describing him, **Horav Shlomo Lorincz, zl**, writes that his entire bearing and every aspect of his conduct bespoke his servitude to his Creator. He invested superhuman energies into this service.

When the *yeshivah* students filed past him on Friday night to wish him *Gutt Shabbos*, the *Mashgiach* accepted upon himself to respond to each one of them with a sincere and heartfelt blessing that they truly enjoy a *Gutt Shabbos*. One might ask: “So what?” Almost five hundred people walked past him each *Shabbos* – Friday night and *Shabbos* day – and none of them had any inkling that while they did so, he was channeling all of his energy into fulfilling this undertaking. He took everything seriously.

If he managed to elevate the casual *Gutt Shabbos* that we all toss off without a second thought into a Divine Service, it stands to reason that his daily regimen must have been replete with hundreds, perhaps even thousands, such undertakings. These spiritual efforts were not discernible to the observer and no one knew about them, but they rendered every movement he made a further link in his chain of service to Hashem. This went on daily, from early morning (he rose at five o'clock) until midnight, when he finally went to bed. He never slept during the day. This went on throughout every day of his life.

Horav Zelik Epstein, zl, once remarked that to observe the *Mashgiach* was to see a soldier standing at attention, ready to serve his commanding officer. *Rav* Chatzkel was the consummate servant.