

I have acted according to everything You commanded me (26:14)

Rashi interprets the word *tzivisani*, You commanded me, to *Mah she'gazarta aleinu*; "What You decreed on us." Noticeably, a difference exists between a *tzivui*, command, and a *gezeirah*, decree. A *gezeriah* is more forceful, definitive—no ifs, ands, or buts. The *Kotzker Rebbe, z"l*, makes note of this change in translation. He explains that no more demanding decree exists than to command a *Jew* to declare, "I did everything that You asked me to do. I carried out Your command to perfection. I had all the correct and proper intentions and did everything purely for Your sake." This is an overly tall order for a *Jew*. Who can say that he merited to perform even one *mitzvah* to perfection? Thus, the *Rebbe* explains, *Rashi* added a caveat: "'I did everything as You decreed'—I am stating, 'I did everything that You commanded me,' because You decreed that I say so." Who can say he did it all?

Hashem's standard and our abilities do not really align. *Hashem* is the essence of perfection. We are human beings. Can we ever satisfy *Hashem*? Yes! *Hashem* asks for our hearts—not perfection, but sincerity. He wants us to try, to strive, to stumble and then get up, brush ourselves off and continue the journey. *Hashem* neither wants robots, nor does He want our manner of servitude to be robotic. He wants us to keep getting up, to strive, to grow, to elevate. He wants us to cleave to Him, to establish a relationship which includes only *Hashem* and us. It is all about the journey—not the destination. If one has no destination, however, if he has no purpose and goals, then the journey is not a journey, but chaotic, aimless wandering. Indeed, it is far better to struggle on the road to greatness than to settle for mediocrity.

To be a *Jew* means to strive for growth and perfection, knowing that it is a difficult, 'almost impossible' goal. Yet, we continue on the journey. When we fall short, we try again. When we feel distant, we reach out for *Hashem's* help. We never stop trying, because trying is an important ingredient in a relationship.