

And I led you erect. (26. 13)

Being a true servant of Hashem is not compatible with being/walking erect. Indeed, a little crimp in his walk, a slight curvature, rather than standing fully erect, demonstrates a sense of humility before Whom he stands. *Horav Baruch, zl, m'Medziboz*, explains that the epitome of *hishtachavus*, bowing, genuflection, is achieved when one stands straight, externally manifesting a regal, dignified, appearance, while internally he bows before Hashem. In other words, one does not have to show that he is bowing – as long as, in his mind and psyche, he is bent over.

Horav Menachem Mendel, zl, m'Vorko, was wont to say: “A *chasid* should ‘know’ how to execute three things: To dance while sitting; to bow while standing; to cry out when silent.” It is all in one’s concentration. When a person meditates, he transports himself in an almost out-of-body sensation to the point that: he can bow down while his body stands erect; he can dance, while his body sits; he can cry out, while his body is silent. Thus, one trains himself to transcend his body to live on a higher plane, to spiritually connect without being bogged down by his physicality.

It is all about connecting to a higher realm, a different standard, a set of values unlike that to which he is presently exposed. In dealing with men and women incarcerated in an environment totally antithetical to Jewish life and dictate, I am often confronted with this question: How does one act and think Jewish in an environment where the people – both incarcerated and administrative – are of a different, almost antagonistic, culture and lifestyle? In order to experience this consciousness one must elevate himself by transforming his mind, by thinking of a different realm, a holy world. When reading a *sefer*, he must become part of the story – involved – not observing. So many just want to remain spectators, for fear that, if they involve themselves, it might “rub off” on them. They should be so lucky!