

Then you shall say before Hashem, your G-d, “I have removed the holy things from the house.” (26:13)

Viduy Maaser, the confession one makes proclaiming that he has fulfilled his sacred duty to give the various tithes and other gifts apportioned from his crops, is a *mitzvas asei*, positive commandment. The commentators struggle with the term *viduy*, a word reserved for confessing a sin or wrongdoing. In this case, however, the person is carrying out a *mitzvah*. Why would confession be necessary? The *Satmar Rebbe, zl* (*Divrei Yoel*), met with the *Vishnitzer Rebbe, zl*, (*Ahavas Yisrael*) and, in the course of the conversation, this question came up. The *Vishnitzer* quoted *Horav Levi Yitzchak, zl, m'Berdichev*, who comments concerning the verse recited in *Mussaf Shemoneh Esrai of Rosh Hashanah, Ki zocher kol ha'nishkachos Atah*, “For it is You Who eternally remember all forgotten things.” When a person performs a *mitzvah* and allows his positive action to go to his head, Hashem “forgets” the good deed. He does not countenance arrogance, even regarding a positive commandment. If a person commits a sin and is troubled by his misstep, if he is unable to forget his wrongdoing – Hashem “forgets” it. The mere fact that the person is troubled is comforting to Hashem. Likewise, if a person “forgets” his positive *mitzvos*, not allowing his good deeds to turn his head, Hashem will then “remember” them. This is the meaning of *Zocher kol ha'nishkachos*, “He remembers the good deeds that we forgot.”

The *Satmar Rebbe* added that, based on this, we may understand why *Viduy Maaser* is called *viduy*, although no sin has been committed. When a person recites *Viduy Maaser*, he declares, *Lo avarti mimitzvosecha v'lo shochachti*: “I did not transgress Your *mitzvos* and I did not forget” (Ibid 26:13). What the person is saying (we may interpret his words as) is, “While I did not transgress Your *mitzvos*, I fulfilled each *mitzvah* correctly in accordance with Your directions. On the one hand, *v'lo shochachti*, “I did not forget.” This means, “I did not forget the good that I have done. It has remained with me, giving me great satisfaction.” While there is certainly nothing wrong/inappropriate about having satisfaction, one should not allow it to go to his head. After all, he is only carrying out Hashem’s command.

This idea applies to life, as well. All too often, someone does well and it is all he can talk about. He feels that he need go no further, do no more, nor continue on. He simply rests on his laurels and basks in the accolades that he has received. Life is about constant upward, forward movement. When one stops moving, he stagnates. When one constantly talks about the wonderful things that he has done, it becomes boring. No one is interested in listening to the same story over and over again. We need new growth; resting on past laurels is still resting, and it does not reflect progress.