

"And they made the holy vestments ... as Hashem had commanded Moshe." (39:1)

The phrase "*As Hashem had commanded Moshe*," is written eighteen times in the *parsha*. *Chazal* note the *Torah's* emphasis on the people's strict compliance with Hashem's command. We may wonder at the significance of this phrase. Can one do other than "as Hashem commanded"? If one is told to perform a duty in a specific manner, then he should execute said activity in the prescribed manner -- as he was told. Is that unreasonable to expect?

When we explore the tendencies of human nature, we note that even when people are instructed to do something in a specific manner, when all is said and done, they do it their own way. When people are invited to attend an affair or to be at an event at a given time, they usually arrive at approximately that time. It has gotten to the point that "being late" is no longer "fashionable," rather, it has become imperative! To arrive on time might impugn one's reputation!

What is the source of this unbecoming, albeit commonplace, attitude? *Horav Boruch Ezrachi, Shlita*, posits that it emanates from man's deep-rooted resistance to accepting authority, to be dominated by anything. We are driven to be empowered, to give orders rather than to accept them. This subconscious attitude is manifest by so many of us. To do things approximately the prescribed way or to arrive at a destination more or less at the designated time is our way of retaining our own authority, our own sense of control.

The only way to transcend this attitude is to submit oneself totally to his responsibility or -- in the case of the builders of the *Mishkan* -- to Hashem. Eighteen times emphasis is placed upon their unstinting devotion, their punctilious commitment to do everything precisely as they had been commanded. Indeed, this is *Klal Yisrael's* virtue -- to have the capacity to surrender themselves to Hashem, completely and irrevocably. We must add that this submission is not obsequious in nature, but, rather, it reflects our pride in being able to serve the Almighty. The epitome of service to Hashem is exactly that -- service to Hashem, without embellishment or personal agenda, simply to perform "as Hashem commanded."

Horav Ezrachi makes another observation which is relevant. To follow a directive does not necessarily only mean that one does not deviate negatively from his mission. One can integrate his positive ideas or emotions into a given endeavor. This, too, is a deviation from the original mission. We find that Aharon *Ha'Kohen* was lauded for preparing the *Menorah* exactly as he was commanded by Hashem. What is so impressive about Aharon's unbending adherence to Hashem's imperative? Would anything less than perfection be acceptable from Aharon *Ha'Kohen*?

Horav Ezrachi explains that, indeed, Aharon would never deviate in order to do something improper. Perhaps, however, he would have injected a special prayer or a personal emotion. He might have added some extra gold to the *Menorah* or sought to enhance its beauty with jewels or

flowers. No! Aharon listened to Hashem's command and performed the ritual precisely as he was instructed. In no way did he supplement Hashem's *mitzvah* with his own personal feelings or ideas. His devotion to Hashem was total. His entire essence was directed to serving the Divine. His personal emotions were insignificant in regard to executing a *mitzvah* in accordance with the *tzivui* Hashem.

We live in a generation in which the concept of doing things "our way" is no longer an option; it is almost a mandate. Indeed, accepting authority or direction is perceived as demeaning to some and foolish to others. This problem manifests itself in the positive aspect, as well. Some of us have developed our own attitude towards *mitzvah* observance. We are comfortable with one type of ritual, while the other is just not consistent with our orientation. *Tzedakah* is another area in which everyone becomes his own *posek*, judge. We decide who is deserving of charity, which organization is worthy of our support, and which movement is to be advocated. Did we somehow forget that there are clear *halachos* which define these issues? When we look around and take stock of our own behavior, we will develop an appreciation of what it means to perform "*as Hashem commanded*."