

### Living the Mitvot We Perform

There are some things that simply cannot be conveyed verbally; they must be experienced personally in order to be effective. There are certain emotions that the human psyche must experience before the mind can accept them intellectually. Horav Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz, zl, the legendary menahel of Mesivta Torah Vodaath, was an individual who did not simply perform or observe mitzvos; he lived them. Carrying out a mitzvah was an experience that penetrated his entire essence. Once, as a group of his students returned from Tashlich on Rosh Hashanah, Rav Shraga Feivel summoned them to come over. He was already sick at the time, nearing the end of his life. He said to them, "After an entire day of davening, I still do not feel that I have reached the level of Malchiyos, of declaring the total sovereignty of Hashem. Please help me. Perhaps together we might arouse ourselves to sense a taste of Malchiyos." He then began to sing slowly from the Rosh Hashanah davening: V'yeida kol pa'ul ki Atah Po'alto, "Let everything that has been made know that You are his Creator," drawing the students into the niggun, melody, with him. They sang one niggun after another, and then Rav Shraga Feivel drew them into a dance to the words, V'al kein nekaveh Lecha, "Therefore we put our trust in You." They sang and danced with pure ecstasy. When they concluded, Rav Shraga Feivel thanked his students for helping him to achieve his goal. The students also achieved a goal as tears of hisorerus, spiritual arousal, streamed down their faces. They had gone beyond reciting the words; they had experienced the declaration of Hashem's sovereignty.