

The  
**CHASSIDUS**  
**PERSPECTIVE**  
 with Reb Yoel Kahn



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## AUTOMATIC BUSINESS

At the beginning of *parshas* Vayakhel, it says that Moshe gathered all the Yidden together, and said, "These are the matters that Hashem commanded to be done." What are these matters? Simply, it refers to the earlier *pesukim* that discuss the laws of Shabbos. Others understand it to refer to the subsequent *pesukim*, which discuss the building of the Mishkan. But regarding the building of the Mishkan the *possuk* repeats itself, "And Moshe said, this is the matter that Hashem has commanded saying..." This implies that the first is a different "statement," referring to Shabbos.

So what was this special occasion? Why was there a special gathering to inform them of the laws of Shabbos? They already knew about Shabbos. Already in Mara they learned about Shabbos. Furthermore, when did this gathering take place? Rashi says it was on the day following Yom Kippur. Is it such a special occasion that the day following Yom Kippur they gathered to hear about Shabbos? They already knew about Shabbos!

Additionally, there are several more questions. One is that the *possuk* says, "Six days you shall do work, and the seventh day ... Shabbos Shabboson for Hashem." What exactly is the commandment here? That in the middle of the week we should work? That's obvious. We don't need to be told that. The command relates to the seventh day. So why does it say, "Six days you shall do work." The truth is it does not say "you shall do work," but "work shall be done." *Tei'o'seh* rather than *ta'aseh*.

### WHOM DO WE THANK?

The Rebbe explains all these questions with one general point. It was the day after Yom Kippur. What happened on Yom Kippur? On Yom Kippur the atonement for the sin of the *eigel hazahav*, the sin of idol worship, was completed.

What does idol worship, *avodah zara*, mean? The Rambam writes that the first to serve *avodah zara* were in the times of Enosh. They knew that all influence derives from Hashem. There was no question about that. But it arose because the influence comes by way of an intermediary. For example the *possuk* says, "The sweetness of the produce of the sun, and with the sweetness of the moon's yield." The growth of fruit comes to a large degree via the light from the sun and moon. There are also various constellations that cause growth. They held that though one must give thanks to Hashem, one must also give thanks to the sun and the moon, and likewise to the other constellation that help out in the influence. Comparable to this is the command to honor our parents. Who creates the newborn? Hashem. But the parents are the intermediaries, therefore we must honor them. They held that

the same applies to stars and constellations.

But the facts are otherwise. Parents have free will. Certainly this is due to Hashem's power, which gives them the ability to procreate. But Hashem's power is channeled through them, and if they chose to act in a certain way they open the way for Hashem's power and the child is born. However the sun and the moon, and likewise the other constellations, have no say in the matter. They are forced to act, and because they are forced they deserve no thanks. And if you hold that there is a partnership, here begins the notion of "*shittuf*," that the influence comes from both, from Hashem and also from the sun and the moon. How much is in the hands of Hashem, and how much in those of the stars and constellations, may be subject to question. But it is all a question of quantity, how much here and how much here. The point is that *avodah zara* is when we take an intermediary and accord it significance. This all pertains to *avodah zara* in the simple sense.

### IDOLATROUS BUSINESS

Similarly, in a subtle and delicate way, there is work. This is not stars and constellations, but things that a person must do to earn a livelihood. He must be involved in business, or do a certain job, through which he receives his livelihood from Hashem. It could occur that a Yid believes that Hashem provides, that Hashem sustains him - he always *bentches* after

he eats, saying that Hashem "sustains the world in his goodness" - but because Hashem sustains him through the business that he does, he reasons that the business must also be accorded honor. What does it mean to accord honor to the business? There can be differences as to what degree.

One person might claim that it is enough to say a *kapittel tehillim*, and see to it that the business should be strong. The business may be not exactly as the Torah requires, a little overpricing, a little over-aggressive competition, or similar, "Nu, what does it matter? The main thing is to fulfill the requirements of the business, we need to fill Hashem's requirements too, but the main thing is to fulfill the business requirements."

Another person might say, "No. The main thing is Hashem. However, in order for the business to be a fit receptacle that it should be the intermediary through which livelihood comes from Hashem, the business must be as complete as possible. The more work, the more schemes - of course in accord with the Torah, overpricing, over aggressive competition, *chas veshalom!* that would be against Hashem - we must meet the requirements of both partners. For Hashem we must guard against any suspicion of transgression, but we must also invest our minds in the business as much as possible,

and the one more one invests effort and schemes, the more we will earn." Both of these people see it as a partnership, the question is only which partner is greater.

The truth is that they are mistaken. The business is not an intermediary. Not only is it not the source of livelihood; it is not even like parents. The business has no authority. The entire concept is that it so rose in Hashem's will, for whatever reason, that livelihood should come through business. The "Hashem shall bless you" through "all that you work." That which you do is inconsequential. It's not that there are two factors, Hashem's blessing and that which you do. It's not even a primary thing and a secondary thing. The only reason why there is "all that you work" is only because so Hashem decided. Not because it's essentially significant.

What's the practical difference? The difference is that if you only need to do "all that you work" because so Hashem said that His blessing will come through "all that you work," then how much do you need to do? Exactly what Hashem directed. More than that will not achieve any profit. If we are engrossed in schemes, this idea and another idea, these are all things that Hashem did not command. Hashem commanded "all that you work" with your hands. "Toil with your hand that your should eat." It doesn't say "toil with you head." The mind of a Yid must be engrossed in Torah study. Learning Torah, and spreading Torah. But Hashem wanted that livelihood should come through the toil of our hands. If the whole thing is only because Hashem wanted it so, then what He directed we must do, and other things not.

#### TRUE FAITH

There is a Gemara that cites a possuk with six words and says that they correspond to the six tractates of the Mishna. The first word "emunas," meaning faith, corresponds to Zera'im. What is the connection between faith and Zera'im? Tosfos comments "one believes in He who gives life to the world, sows seed." Seemingly this is a very strange Tosfos. If you want to illustrate faith, do you illustrate it by one who seeds the earth? Does a heretic who does not believe not sow seeds? Everyone sows. An illustration of someone who has faith would be one who doesn't make any receptacle and has complete faith that Hashem will provide. The Rebbe explains that this is the point. He sows seeds, simply speaking this is something which is natural. Seeds grow. But why does a Yid sow seeds? The fact that according to nature they will grow does not interest him. He believes in He who gives life to the world. Hashem said that "in all that you work" He will send you blessing. That is what he relies on, and therefore he sows seeds.

The Rebbe once expressed it like this: What does it mean that someone takes a seed and puts it in the earth so it rots? He is physically destroying the seed. Why would he do such a thing? But does so because he trust in Hashem. Because Hashem said that if

he sows seed he will have livelihood.

After the sin of the *eigel hazahav*, atonement was required to wash away the problem of *avodah zara* even in the most subtle sense. During the six days of the week we must work. Hashem said "in all that you work." However how should this work be done? Not with the head but with the hands, because this is all that Hashem commanded, even if there is no prohibition involved. If there is a prohibition then it is *against* Hashem. But even when it is not *against* Hashem and there is no prohibition, the fact that we think that this is something with its own significance is a problem. If we knew that the whole thing is only because "Hashem shall bless you" then we wouldn't invest yourself so much in it. We would only do as much as you were told is necessary. Therefore one actually works, and

runs a business, but in what kind of way?

As though it is an automatic process, not that we are overly engrossed in it. Certainly we have to use a bit of intellect too, not only the toil of our hands. But it's not our entire head, only that which is relevant to practicalities. This is what is meant by "Six days work shall be done." Not "you shall work," but "work shall be done." You have to work in such a way that it will be done in an automatic kind of way. As though it is happening of itself.

#### HOLY WEEK – HOLY SHABBOS

This was why Moshe gathered all the Yidden. It was, as the commentaries

explain, connected to the Mishkan, and also to the laws of Shabbos. The purpose of the Mishkan was that Hashem should once again dwell among them, atoning for the sin of the *eigel*. But the main achievement, the main command, was not to keep Shabbos. The main point was that "Six days work shall be done," regarding what should be done during the six days of the week. How should it be during the week? Passive "*tei'o'seh*" not active "*ta'aseh*." We shouldn't be entirely engrossed in it. When during the six days work is done automatically, then "on the seventh day it will be a Shabbos of rest."

Sometimes there is a Yid who knows that Shabbos is a holy day, he wants to learn, he wants to daven, but he can't. He is so full and overloaded with the six days of the week, with the active "shall do," rather than the passive "shall be done," that it is difficult for him to celebrate Shabbos. When on Shabbos he wants to involve himself in holy matters it is very difficult. But when "six days work shall be done," with a passive approach, - not the regular "*ta'aseh*," which leads a Yid to have a 'regular Shabbos' although he is involved in davening and learning, rather than other things but it is a "Shabbos of rest." When it is "*tei'o'seh*" then it is not a regular Shabbos but a "Shabbos Shabboson," a holier Shabbos. And this is a preparation for the building of the Mishkan, that Hashem should dwell in them, within every individual Jew, every Jew becomes a dwelling for Hashem.

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