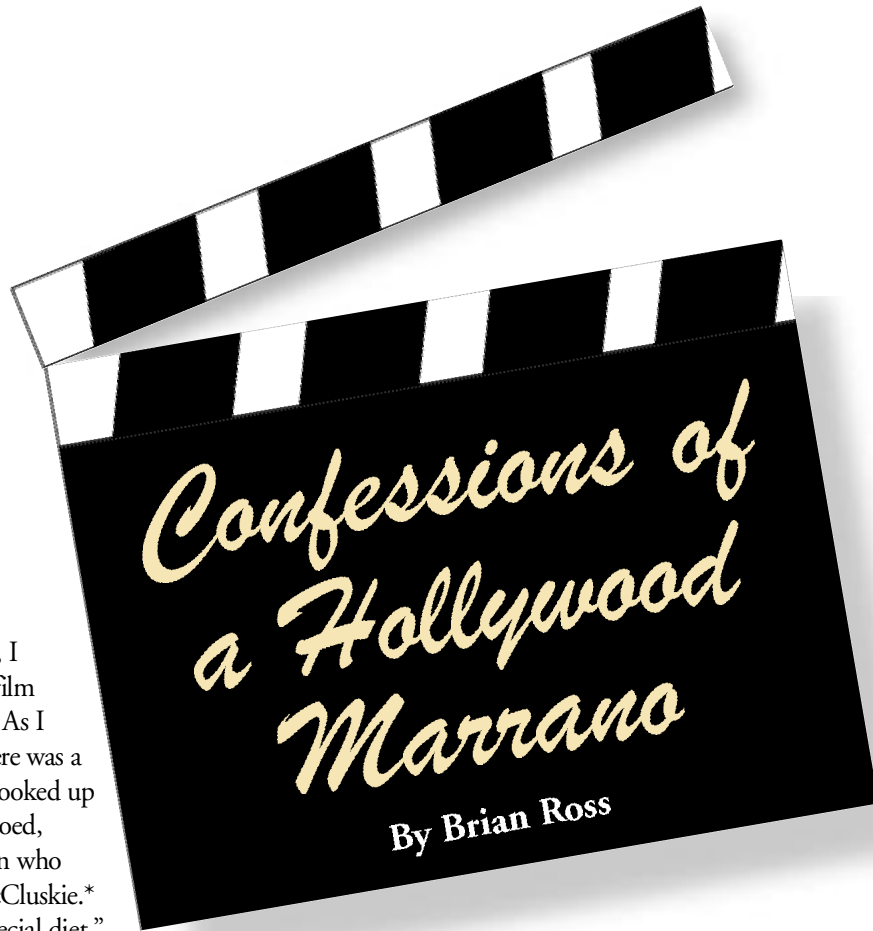


Musar from



Several years ago, I arrived on location for a film shoot in North Carolina. As I settled into my office, there was a knock at the door and I looked up to see a long-haired, tattooed, tough-looking young man who introduced himself as McCluskie.* "I hear you have some special diet," he said.

"Yes," I said, wondering what his interest could be in the matter. He held out his hand.

"I'm the caterer."

Silenced, all I could do was take his hand and think, "Boy, this is going to be good...".

Brian Ross received an M.A. in English and Creative Writing from the University of Windsor, and completed an M.F.A. in Screenwriting at the UCLA film school. He has written for all the major networks, as well as basic cable and first-run syndication. His credits span genres from period docu-drama to contemporary thriller, and include the acclaimed CBS miniseries "Gone in the Night" and Lifetime's "Against Her Will: The Carrie Buck Story." Brian lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Susan and new daughter Cohava.

kept kosher and though he'd heard the term, he said he wasn't familiar with its details and invited me to his catering truck to show him what I could and couldn't eat. In the truck, he took out a notepad and scribbled as I went through his inventory, showing him certification symbols and explaining my preparation needs. He didn't say much that day, other than registering surprise that fully one-half to two-thirds of the products he regularly used were kosher without his ever knowing it.

A few days later, he approached me on the set and asked if we could talk. We stepped aside, and as we sat down outside his truck I prepared for what I was sure was going to be a grievance about the difficulties of *kashrut*.

"What's the difference," McCluskie began, "between an O-U, and an O-K?"

was caught off guard by the question, and explained what I knew about the two agencies. McCluskie listened intently, then conducted a battery of other questions. I quickly regretted my lack of familiarity with him. He had a

keen and thoughtful mind, and as we spoke a lot over the next month, our conversations migrated from *kashrut* to more general considerations of Judaism. McCluskie said his own religion (which he didn't practice) had never made any sense to him, and he was intrigued by the consistency and meaning in what I had told him about Judaism. He wasn't interested in converting, but did go so far as to pick up some books from a local store and return with increasingly perceptive questions and insights.

On the last night of the shoot, we ran particularly late, but at about 3:00 AM, McCluskie was intent on serving the celebration he had prepared. As

McCluskie

the crew flooded into the food tent, I sat packing up my things and McCluskie came over. “Come on,” he said. “You’re going to miss the party.”

I told him thanks, but I just wanted to get to bed.

“There’s great food, stuff you can eat, too....”

“Really, I’m wiped....”

Just then a teamster walked by, stuffing his face from a dessert plate.

“McCluskie,” he called, “Awesome cheesecake!”

McCluskie smiled and waved his thanks, then turned to me. “Star-K,” he winked, “Rabbi Heinemann.”

M

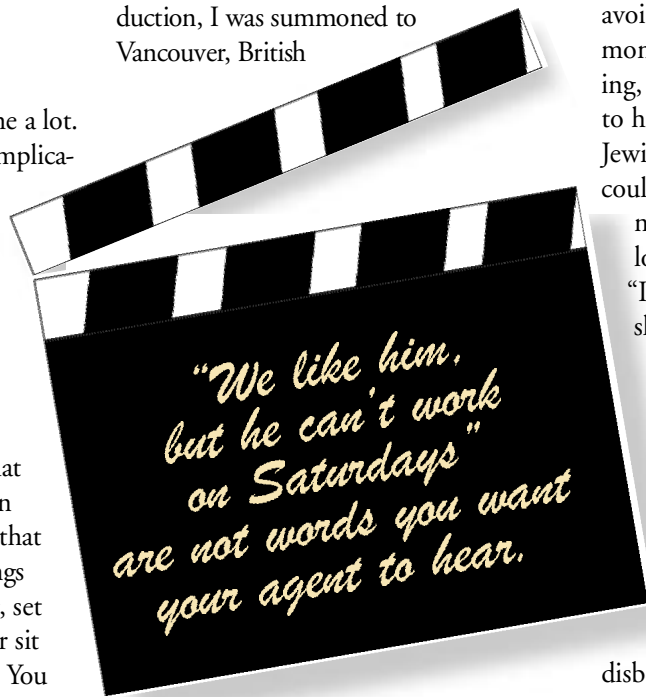
cCluskie taught me a lot.

As a writer working alone, the complications of keeping *mitzvot* do not generally rear their head until a project goes into production. While writing, your hours are your own, and nobody cares or even has to know what days you did or didn’t work, as long as the script comes in as ordered. Your ardent hope during this time is that the project *will* go into production (it’s rarely guaranteed), but when that “green light” finally comes, it brings with it a new, and often daunting, set of work conditions. You no longer sit alone in a room with a computer. You now interact constantly with a director, producers, prop people, costumers and the myriad others it takes to make a movie, all of whom usually work long

hours, seven days a week to make it happen. Like it or not, as an observant Jew, you are about to be “outed.”

My own experience, and the experience of most of my colleagues, has been to postpone this inevitable exposure as long as possible, to exist as a type of Hollywood Marrano, *tzitzit* under t-shirt, making baseball-capped *berachot* and mysterious disappearances for *Minchah*. The entertainment industry is competitive enough without offering extra cannon fire to the arsenal of potential rejecters. “We like him, but he can’t work on Saturdays” are not words you want your agent to hear.

On my first movie ordered for production, I was summoned to Vancouver, British



Columbia, during Chol HaMoed Sukkot. A lengthy set of revisions helped me finesse Shemini

Atzeret and Simchat Torah during pre-production (I worked round the clock both before and after), but the first *erev Shabbat* of actual shooting was scheduled to take place on a barge off a remote stretch of coast an hour north of the city. The weather was terrible—water scenes are always difficult—and the director said he categorically needed me there for on-the-spot script revisions. The shoot wouldn’t end until an hour after candle lighting and I was informed that the only transportation back to the city was the single run of the crew bus. This was my first shoot and so far everything had been going magnificently. I didn’t want to upset that, so I simply avoided the issue until the last possible moment. At five o’clock Friday morning, as we were all loading onto the bus to head to the location, I said to the one Jewish producer as nonchalantly as I could, “Now how’s this going to work? I need to be back for Shabbat.” He looked at me as if I were joking. “It’s at four-thirty,” I said. “Maybe I should rent a car.”

H

He saw I wasn’t joking, and was quickly adamant that my renting a car to leave the set early was absolutely out of the question. As I stared at him in disbelief and braced for combat, he countered that if anyone was going to rent me a car, it would be the company. He calculated, in fact, that my situation would actually *help* him. He had

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business to take care of in the city, and could now come out later in the morning in the rental car, which I could then drive back before Shabbat. Needless to say, I was both surprised and overwhelmed by the support, and even more so at two o'clock that afternoon when, an hour before I expected to leave myself, the producer started agitating to get me off the barge and back to the city in time for candle lighting. I can't say he showed the same interest in Judaism as McCluskie did, but he was intrigued by the concept of someone other than his late grandfather keeping Shabbat. On several occasions afterward he avowed how "healthy" he thought Shabbat sounded, and how much he admired anyone who "had it in him" to keep it.

On a different project, so deferential was another producer that when I was repeatedly trying to get hold of her for several days in a row and began to think she was avoiding my calls, she explained "Well, I know you won't talk on the phone or do business after sundown. That's difficult for us to work around, but I want you to know I think that's really beautiful."

"Sundown *Friday*," I had to explain.

The three encounters were as instructive as they were surprising. Together, they turned out to be highlights in a series of events culminating in the humbling recognition that I had, in fact, been placed on that North Carolina film set specifically for McCluskie, and on that barge in Vancouver, and at every other milepost of my career, for others like him.



As Jews, like it or not, we are all born into a specific profession, one primary job that we share with equal and awesome responsibility: that of *kidush Hashem*, of sanctifying God's name. I am indebted to Rabbi Elazar Muskin of Los Angeles for pointing out, in the name of the father of Chief Rabbi Lau, the special universality of this *mitzvah*: it is the only place in the entire *Mishneh Torah* where the Rambam uses the language *kol beit Yisrael* "the entire house of Israel" for whom the *mitzvah* applies to. The unique language is taken to refer to the conduct of every Jewish man, woman and child, twenty-four/seven.

Within the Orthodox community, misperceptions about the entertainment industry abound. One is that the industry in general and television in particular have a specific agenda to promulgate val-

ues that are anti-Torah. When I was in film school in the mid-1980s, the trend of programming at one of the networks came to guest-lecture to us. His first words were that he didn't want us to be under any misapprehensions: "Commercial television," he said, "is about filling the blanks between commercials so that viewers will stay to watch those commercials." Like any other business, television has no agenda other than making money. It operates on the simple principle of supply and demand, and the networks and users have extremely sophisticated research departments that monitor, with frightening accuracy, what viewers want at every half-hour of every day. At the moment, that determination includes a great deal of violence, sex and broad humor. Next year, if by some miracle it is found to include dramatizations of the *Chidushei HaRitva*, believe me, that is what we will see.

Observant Jews who work in entertainment are often asked why we can't do better stories, more uplifting stories that espouse Torah values. The current reality is simply that the audience for them is limited. The problem is on the demand end, not the supply, and the implications of that are particularly sobering for Jews. We must ask if those of us who proudly and publicly (and easily) rid our homes of the supplier are not turning our backs on our more difficult responsibilities with the demander. If *Klal Yisrael* were effectively doing its job as *mekadshei Hashem*, as the true *or le'goyim* we are intended to be, then it is axiomatic that we

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could expect the sea change we would like in the demand for programming.

The response, however, to television, the Internet and most other things secular has been a growing insularity, an us-and-them mentality that reflects a tacit insecurity that what we have (i.e., the life of Torah) might not be as attractive to our children as what *they* have.

Beyond an obvious failure at education, this breeds, at its worst, a homogenization that stifles the very tools Hashem has given us to sanctify Him. With Jacob's blessings of the tribes in *parashat Vayechi* the Torah goes out of its way to delineate the diversity of the Jewish People. Each tribe has a unique character and set of skills that defines it. Later, in *parashat Naso* it is precisely by capitalizing on these different traits that the princes of each tribe arrive at offerings of *exactly equal content and value* to celebrate the sanctification of the *Mishkan*. The message is clearly that it is the very expression of these differences that makes us equally valid and integral parts of a united whole.

No one serious about Judaism can downplay the importance of a constant and rigorous learning schedule, but it is absurd to think that we are all suited to be Torah scholars any more than we are all suited to be carpenters or brain surgeons or fishermen. The lesson from *Naso* is, in fact, the opposite: that the truest and most effective means of completing our mission of *kiddush Hashem* is through identifying and using the specific talents and characteristics that Hashem has given us.

Some of us *are* Torah scholars; others *are* brain surgeons and fishermen, and it is much more likely that the great *kiddush Hashem* of the fisherman will be done on the ocean rather than in the operating room or *beit midush*. That is, after all, what the fisherman is there for.

So too is it with art. If not biologically, then at least spiritually, the Jewish artist is the descendent of Betzalel, whose talent was explicitly given to him for the ultimate artistic *kiddush Hashem*—the design of the



Mishkan. Today, the Jewish artist is not necessarily the creator of Jewish-themed art, but simply a Jew who creates art

and is therefore most likely to find his or her greatest responsibilities and opportunities for *kiddush Hashem* somewhere in that world. My encounters with McCluskie and the others in entertainment showed, if anything, as desperate a need there as anywhere else for exposure to the beauty of Torah life. Ironically, it would, I believe, be the waste of a powerful opportunity to avoid supplying that.

This is in no way to suggest that the spiritual perils of the entertainment business are no greater than in any other profession. They are. Clichés about Hollywood are clichés because they're true. Temptations abound, and constant consultation with a halachic authority is absolutely necessary for survival. Religious Hollywood hopefuls in search of what Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein calls "fame, fortune and *frumkeit* all wrapped up in one" will be disappointed. History shows the overwhelming likelihood of finding the latter in search of the former two. I can by no stretch of the imagination hold myself out as a model of Torah observance, and don't know what's become of McCluskie since I last saw him, but I do know three things—1) his first real encounter with Judaism was a positive one 2) somewhere down the line what he and I shared will be put to greater use that I will probably never know about, and 3) I am forever grateful to have had the opportunity to shake his hand. **JA**

* Not his real name, but in the spirit.



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Finding

The Spiritual Challenges of the Workplace

By Yitzchok A. Breitowitz

So much of our lives and our energies are wrapped up in our professional and vocational identities. And yet, even the most observant among us often lives a somewhat schizophrenic, fragmented existence. While we meticulously observe the highest standards of Shabbat and *kashrut*, we conduct our professional lives blithely unaware of, or perhaps even indifferent to, the tremendous and indeed frightening spiritual challenges we face. Our motto seems to be “Man/Woman of the world from 9 to 5; Torah Jew on

Rabbi Breitowitz is the rabbi of the Woodside Synagogue in Silver Spring, Maryland and an associate professor of law at the University of Maryland. This article is an abridgement of a speech given at a young professionals' group.

evenings and weekends.” Our greatest leaders, however, were well aware of these pitfalls. The story is told that Rabbi Yisrael Salanter did not want to make a living teaching Torah and decided to try to earn money in the stock market. Eventually, he left that line of work because he felt that the *nisyono* (trials) of the marketplace were simply too great.¹ If this was true for such a *gaon*, what can we possibly say? Nevertheless, since this is the reality that most of us face, it is imperative that we at least be sensitive to the grave dangers of the working world as well as the magnificent opportunities this world presents.

Historically, the primary obstacles encountered by the Orthodox Jew in the workplace were issues related to Shabbat and Yom Tov observance and,

to a lesser degree, the availability of kosher food. While these problems have certainly not gone away, it is fair to state that at least in major metropolitan areas, the incidence of these problems has been significantly reduced.² Indeed, even wearing a *kip-pah* has become socially acceptable. Nevertheless, even today—or perhaps especially today—there are serious halachic issues with which one must continue to struggle. Some are specific to particular professions and cannot be addressed here,³ others are more generic in nature, applicable to virtually all endeavors.

The Gemara in *Bava Batra* (165a) tells us that a minority of people commit sins involving *arayot* (sexual impropriety); most people commit crimes involving *gezel* (theft); and

God 9 to 5

everybody commits sins involving *lashon hana* (gossip). At a minimum, in the workplace that exists today, one is confronted with all three sins.

Provocative speech, lascivious dress and immodesty are commonplace in many jobs; indeed, the proliferation of sexual harassment claims clearly indicates the dangers that men and women face in the modern workplace.

Without wanting to sound excessively alarmist, I must state that even Orthodox Jews have occasionally succumbed to serious temptations with tragic and devastating consequences to their lives and the lives of their families. Thus, even from a secular psychological perspective, the Torah's tremendous wisdom in erecting appropriate barriers and safeguards between the sexes is readily apparent.

In the corporate world, *gezelis* something which we must contend with all the time. Not limited to robbing a bank, *gezelis* taking an employer's time, using office supplies for personal use without permission, making personal phone calls—either long distance or local— or overcharging and inflating time sheets in order to increase the number of billable hours. *Geneivat da'at*, misrepresentation, where one sells things without necessarily revealing all the defects that may exist, is yet another form of *gezel*⁴

At times, people may justify such dissembling on the grounds that

the customer is a non-Jew. Yet, without even considering the intricacies of *taut akum* (mistakes made by a Gentile), the awesome sin of *chillul Hashem* (desecration of God's name) and the possible application of *dina demalchuta dina* (the law of the land is the law) we should heed the admonition of Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky, ז"ל, who cautioned that if one acquires the habit of being a liar and a cheat, this will inevitably spill over into other areas of his life.⁵

Needless to say, *lashon hana* is rampant in the business world, whether it is describing one's business competitors or gossiping around the water cooler. What can one say about competitors when trying to get a share of the business? When is disclosing negative information prohibited and when is it in fact required?

The *halachot* of *lashon hana* are intricate and complex and require considerable study and review as well as frequent consultation with a *posek* (halachic authority).⁶

Living by these rules is not easy. What if you're the young associate in a law firm whose boss demands that certain things be done: Do you lose your job? Do you lose your standing in the firm? What are you willing to give up? Money? Power? Influence? Advancement? Although not quite as

dramatic as Avraham Avinu's willingness to sacrifice Yitzchak, those of us in the working world face mini *akeidot* (sacrifices) every day. Similar to Avraham, we grow stronger from the challenge if we have the courage to meet it.⁷

Wholly apart from these serious halachic infractions mentioned above, the work environment can adversely affect one's values and attitudes. Some individuals relegate their work life to insignificance, where their attitude is "What I do from 9 to 5 is nothing. I live for Shabbat...for my *shiur*." While



at first glance, this may seem to be a praiseworthy attitude since one recognizes that life's primary purpose is *avodat Hashem*, eventually this kind of thinking can be very destructive. If one thinks that what he does eight to ten hours a day is worthless and not a way of connecting to God, that could easily destroy him from within. How can a person spend so many hours a day in worthless pursuits? Indeed, this kind of thinking can lead to depression, despondency and

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hopelessness. There is also the opposite problem—that one gets so invested in professionalism as the mark of his importance that he loses his sense of priorities in life. Thus, how we relate to our work involves a very delicate balance. We must place our work lives in proper perspective—our jobs are essentially vehicles to support ourselves and raise Jewish families; means to give *tzedakah* and strengthen Torah; opportunities for productivity and *tikkun olam* (improvement of society); and enablers of *kiddush Hashem* and *gemilut chesed*. Our jobs are useful, important and significant, but not ends in themselves.

But work can also mold one's character and personality traits in negative ways. The Gemara in *Bava Metzia* (83a) recounts how Rabba Bar Barchana hired workers to transport wine for him. Because the workers were negligent, they broke the wine barrels. When Rabba Bar Barchana wanted to recover money from them, the workers refused, claiming that they were poor and couldn't afford it. The Gemara states that Rabba Bar Barchana's *rebbe*, Rav, ruled that the workers were not obligated to pay for their negligence. Rabba Bar Barchana asked Rav, "Is that the *din* (law)?" Rav replied, "Yes, for you that's the *din*," and quoted the verse, "*Lema'an teileich bederech tovim*. In order that you



should follow the ways of the good" (Proverbs 2:20). The Gemara relates that the workers proceeded to demand compensation for the day. Rabba Bar Barchana replied, "Not only did you not pay me for the wine, but you want me to pay you?" "Yes, we have to eat too; we have families," they responded. Again, Rav sided with the workers and quoted the end of the verse, "*Orchot tzaddikim tishmor*, You should keep the ways of the righteous." Of course, halachically, one is not obligated to pay negligent workers. However, Rav was teaching his disciple that if one truly aspires to be righteous, one must learn to not be overly assertive and protective of his rights; in effect, he was teaching him how to be a *mevateir* (one who forgoes and forgoes). Indeed, one of the most pernicious effects of the workplace is the spirit of litigiousness and aggressiveness many of us acquire. Over 200 years ago, Alexis de Tocqueville, the famous commentator on American life, wrote that Americans are a

peculiarly litigious group. In fact, the United States has many more lawyers per every thousand people than any other country in the world (and nearly 20 times more lawyers per capita than Japan, where people have a tradition of compromise). *Chazal* teach us that Jews are *rachmanim* (merciful), *bayshanim* (having a certain sense of humility) and *gomlei chasadim* (being involved in acts of loving kindness).⁸ Unfortunately, in the modern workplace, the traditional reticence, modesty and compassion are often the first things to go.

Yet another pernicious problem is simply the lack of time and energy needed to think. All human beings need time to reflect, and *bnei* and *bnot Torah* in particular need time to be able to answer questions such as where are their lives going and why. Yet we are on treadmills all the time. We are part of the rat race and we begin to feel like beleaguered rats. After all, take the typical lawyer in a major Wall Street law firm who might work 60-65 hours a week. Why isn't such a heavy work schedule slavery? A slavery that asserts its mastery not just over our time but over our hearts, our souls, our concentration and our *kochot hanefesh* (energies). If, as Thomas Paine remarked,

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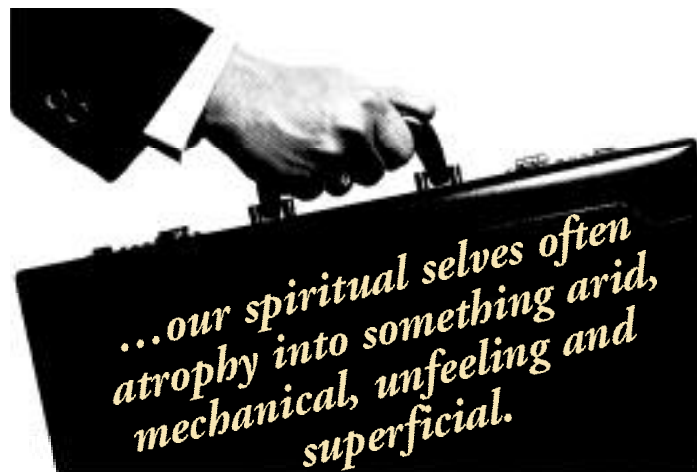
“The price of [political] liberty is eternal vigilance,” this is even truer for spiritual liberty and freedom. It is so easy to lose sight of life’s ultimate purpose when we are so preoccupied with our daily routine. Indeed, according to a recent survey, the amount of time that husbands and wives spend talking to each other about matters other than housekeeping is less than 20 minutes per week. Look at what the work culture has done to us. In contrast to the prototypical *ba'al habayit* of the Rambam who earns enough for his daily bread in three hours and can utilize the remaining nine hours of daylight for Torah study,⁹ our work seems to have taken over our entire lives. In short, we are slaves; we are slaves both to our work and to the negative emotions that work engenders within us including envy, possessiveness, materialism, arrogance and the like.

A modern adaptation of a parable by the Dubner Maggid brings out this point forcefully. The story involves an obsessive-compulsive individual who always had to be fully prepared for whatever life threw his way. When he was making his first trip to Israel, he was told there would be a seven-hour stopover in France. He decided that he would prepare for the trip by learning French so that he would be able to order a Coke in the proper language. He studied hard for an entire year. By the time he got to the airport,

he had mastered the language. He was proud of himself and he impressed a lot of people. But seven hours later, when he got back on the plane, he realized with a sickening feeling that he never bothered to learn Hebrew. He was so preoccupied with the stopover that he never gave thought to the ultimate destination. This world is a *perozdor* an entry way and a hallway to the World to Come. There are certain skills necessary for navigating the hallway: we have to make a living, learn how to drive, etc. but if we put all of our energies into navigating this world, and never give thought to the ultimate currency we take with us to the *Olam Haemet* (the World of Truth), we are as misguided and short-

writes that a major component of how we are judged in the eyes of Hashem is what we truly regard as important¹⁰ in the innermost depths of our hearts, what is it that we really admire?

Very often because of the all-consuming energy we have to put into our work, we do *mitzvot* perfunctorily. Theoretically, every Shabbat must be a new Shabbat, every *tefillah*, a renewed conversation with the Creator, every holiday, a unique encounter with the Divine. But drained of our energies and buffeted by competing and inconsistent versions of the “good life,” our spiritual selves often atrophy into something arid, mechanical, unfeeling and superficial.



sighted as that gentleman. It would do us well to remember that nobody ever leaves this world wishing he had made one more big deal.

But the dangers go beyond the simple inability to think. There is a subtle, and not-so-subtle, reprogramming of thought that occurs as well. Rabbeinu Yonah

The problem of stagnation is, of course, a general problem in the life of the religious Jew. The prophets identified this as *mitzvat anashim melumadah*,¹¹ doing *mitzvot* habitually. And yet, while this problem is relevant to every Jew and not just the working popula-

tion, the lack of time, energy and *yishuv hada'at* (peace of mind) make the working person exceptionally prone to the notion of not growing in *avodat Hashem*. The Torah compares a person to a tree. Just as a tree grows when it is rooted in the ground and receives adequate sun, water and nutrients, a


person can grow spiritually if he receives adequate nourishment for his soul. If our religion doesn't provide us with adequate nourishment, we die within. And this deterioration can happen very slowly. A tree can be dead while all the leaves are still green and intact. Similarly, a person can spiritually die even while appearing vibrant and alive. And there is perhaps no greater tragedy than this.

How can we infuse our workdays with spirituality? We must keep a life-line to a *rebbe*, a *posek* a yeshivah, a *shul* and a *kehillah*. It is important not to be alone, to surround ourselves with friends who have spiritual aspirations and with people who consciously strive to work on themselves spiritually and grow in *avodat Hashem*. For men, it's important to *daven* with a *minyán* three times a day. For men and women, it is especially important to ensure that Shabbat and Yom Tov are seen not just as days of rest (though that has a place too) but as days of sanctity, love and joy, days dedicated to spending time with family, to engaging in fervent and meaningful prayer as well as challenging Torah study. For it is these days above all that can provide the fuel that will continue to warm the heart and inspire the soul throughout the workweek.

Virtually every working environment needs the equivalent of a neon sign that says, "Proceed with caution," and yet amidst the risks, there are many positive opportunities for growth. In *Hilchot Daot* (3:3), the Rambam lays down a very fundamental idea based on the verse in Proverbs (3:6) "*Bechal derachecha daei hu*, Know God in all your ways." *Daehu* is derived from the verb *daat*, which refers to more than knowing; it implies an intimate sense of being connected. The Rambam explains that if one works with the intention to earn money to serve Hashem, give *tzedakah* and support one's family, then one's working hours are not just a vehicle for those noble goals but actually constitute *avodat Hashem*. I would suggest that the same way before one performs a *mitzvah*, one

says "*Hineni muchan umezumam* I am readying myself," perhaps every day one should start off with a silent or verbalized *tefillah* to Hashem, that "what I'm going to do for the next eight hours is with the intention of serving You." If you start off with that orientation, then your entire workday constitutes *avodat Hashem*.

Furthermore, the workplace can be the very arena in which one is *mekadesh Shem Shamayim* (sanctifies the name of Heaven). In my own community, we suffered a great tragedy several years ago with the sudden death of an attorney in his thirties. While this young man spent his time in law, he lived a life of genuine *kiddush Hashem* by virtue of his honesty and the gracious way in which he dealt with all of his colleagues including secretaries, janitors and other "run-of-the mill" people who were not important business associates or clients. He was the type of person that after meeting him you would say, as *Chazal* say, "*Kamah naim derachav*, How beautiful are his ways." If that's what a Jew is, a Jew is a good thing. That's the definition of *kiddush Hashem* "*Veahavata et Hashem Elokecha*"²—you make the name of God beloved by the way you live your life."

In truth, there are wonderful opportunities for *kiddush Hashem* that people in the workplace have that others in more cloistered environments do not necessarily have. Everyone of us—whether we are in the workforce or not—has our own *avodah*. The challenge is not to spend our lives looking at others saying, "why don't I have that," but to see the potential in the place where we are. The Chofetz Chaim used to explain that when Hashem told Moshe at the burning bush, "Take off your shoes because the place where you are standing is holy," He was speaking to all of us—that no matter where we live or what we do, there is the potential for holiness and sanctification. It is incumbent upon us to find it.¹³ 

Notes

1. See Rav Dov Katz, *Tenuat HaMusar*, vol. 1, p. 352.
2. One exception is medicine where Shabbat issues continue to be of major importance.
3. See, e.g. Michael J. Broyde, *The Pursuit of Justice and Jewish Law* (Hoboken: Ktav Publishing House, 1996), and the many books by Dr. Fred Rosner on medical ethics.
4. See generally *Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat* 28 and 231.
5. See also the powerful words of Rabbeinu Moshe of Coucy in *Sefer Mitzvot Gadol Mitzvot Aseh* 74, where he states that Jews who behave as thieves, cheats and liars towards non-Jews prolong the *galut* and cast aspersions, as it were, on the *Ribbono Shel Olam* who has chosen such evil-doers as His people.
6. The classic written work on these laws is *Sefer Chofetz Chaim* and the most popular English adaptation is Rabbi Zelig Pliskin's *Guard Your Tongue*. The Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation also operates a halachic hotline where people can call to consult with a *rav*. It should be noted that there may be other prohibitions besides *lashon hara* in attempting to lure away a competitor's customers. See *Choshen Mishpat* 56 and 237.
7. See commentary of the Ramban, Genesis 22:1.
8. See *Yevamot* 79a.
9. See Rambam, *Hilchot Talmud Torah* 1:12. I do not intend to suggest that the Rambam's picture of a *ba'al habayit* was ever historically accurate—indeed, Rambam's own schedule as court physician in Cairo shows that it was not—but it does represent an idealized picture of productive work being placed in a proper perspective.
10. Proverbs 27:21, Commentary of Rabbeinu Yonah.
11. Isaiah 29:13.
12. See *Yoma* 86a and Rambam, *Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah* 5:11.
13. See *Chofetz Chaim al HaTorah*, Shemot 3:5.