



## RABBI GROSSMAN ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA



### An Emissary of Mitzvah at the Right Time Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei

My dear grandson, Rabbi Dov Henig, has recently been faced with a difficult moral trial and dilemma.

He was offered a deal by an Israel businessman – the man had just closed a business transaction and wished to donate 20 percent of the proceeds to the Chabad House Rabbi Dov runs in the Chinese city of Chengdu.

Rabbi Dov initially responded with enthusiasm, but when the man wanted him to sign a document with a lawyer he became suspicious.

It turns out that legally the deal was fine, but according to Jewish law it involved the taking of interest, which is prohibited.

Rabbis told him that since he was not a partner in the deal there was no real issue. He spoke to me prior to Purim and told me of the deal, adding that the rent for the Chabad house was due, and this deal would be of great help.

He was surprised to hear that I doubted the permissibility of the deal. I told him of a teaching of Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk, which I often shared with my students – "man is created with the sole purpose of overcoming nature."

While one may desire such assistance through the deal, extra carefulness and standing for one's principles never harmed anyone, I told him. He found it hard to agree with me, but finally he relented and said: "grandfather, I agree."

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Our weekly parsha opens with the verse: "Six days work may be done, but on the seventh day you shall have sanctity, a day of complete rest to the Lord."<sup>1</sup>

Why are we command to work on the six days, it would have been enough to command us to rest on the seventh?

Furthermore, what is the meaning of the words "**work may be done**," it should say "work for six days?"

Lastly, what is the meaning of "**complete rest**?"

The commentators explain that during the six days of action, man must understand that he is empowered by G-d, and therefore work "is done" for him, and in a sense, it is done on itself. Man is just a vessel or emissary to receive G-d's generous abundance.

When a person lives with this mindset, his actions during the week become Shabbos -like in the sense that on Shabbos one ceases to work and testifies that G-d is the Master of the Universe – so too is the case when one believes that G-d gives man the power to act. The weekdays become like Shabbos – the day of belief.

The Zohar teaches us that the Shabbos is the sources of blesses for the entire week. The Shabbos's belief causes man to be blessed with sustenance throughout the week.

The Talmud<sup>2</sup> relates the story of Rabbi Chiyya bar Abba, who was once a guest of a man in Laodicea, and a golden table was brought before him, which had to be carried by sixteen men; sixteen silver chains were fixed in it, and plates, goblets, pitchers and flasks were set on it, and upon it were all kinds of food, delicacies and spices.

When they set the table down they recited a verse from Psalms: "The earth is the Lord's, and the entirety of it," and when they removed the table after the meal they recited the verse "the heavens are the heavens of the Lord, But the earth He has given to the children of men."

Encountering such lavishness, Rabbi Chiyya asked: "My son, why have you merited this?"

"I was a butcher," he replied, "and of every fine animal I would say: this shall be for the Sabbath". Rabbi Chiyya replied by telling him: "Blessed are you that you have so merited, and praised be the Omnipresent who has permitted you to enjoy all this."

The Shabbos enabled the man to be blessed throughout the week.

When I person lives with such belief and the weekdays are like Shabbos to him, then his Shabbos is all the more so amplified, and becomes a "complete day of rest."

If "six days work may be done," and one knows that all comes from G-d, then "on the seventh day you shall have sanctity, a day of complete rest to the Lord."

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After the Purim festivities concluded at the Chabad house and all had enjoyed an exhilarating holiday, it was time to "return to earth," the rent was due.

What can be done? Rabbi Dov was troubled.

After locking up, late at night, Rabbi Dov heard a knock on the door. A participant at the festivities was standing there. He offered my grandson an envelope with cash and said: "I don't need the money now and you can borrow it for a year."

"How did you know I needed the money?" Rabbi Dov wondered. It turns out that the landlord had come on Purim day to remind him about the rent and had just missed him.

He broke nature, walked in the honest and straight path, and did not lose.

<sup>1</sup> Shmot 35:2.

<sup>2</sup> Tractate Shabbos 119a.