

On six days work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for Hashem. (35:2)

Shabbos occurs on the seventh day of the week. Why does the Torah assert that working during the six days of the week that precede *Shabbos* is appropriate? The Torah is addressing the prohibition of laboring on *Shabbos*. What do the six workdays have to do with *Shabbos*? The *Chafetz Chaim*, *zl*, asked this question when he addressed the *chillul*, desecration, of *Shabbos* manifest by a certain *gvir*, wealthy man, in one of the communities he visited when he was selling his *sefarim*. The *Chafetz Chaim* met privately with the man in the hope that he could present a passionate appeal on behalf of *Shabbos*. The man's reply was respectful – but firm: "I would like you to know that I earn 4,000 ruble on *Shabbos*. If I close my factory, I will lose this money. Why would I agree to lose money?" The *Chafetz Chaim* replied with this question on the Torah's text. His reply was: "The Torah is teaching us that in order to earn money during the six work days, one must sanctify the seventh day. If one profanes *Shabbos*, he will be unsuccessful during the preceding six days."

The man maintained his composure as he countered, "Does the *Rebbe* think that a *pasuk* in *Chumash* will close my factory? I am a multi-millionaire with many workers. A *pasuk* in *Chumash* will not put an end to my business."

The *Chafetz Chaim* was visibly shaken. "How can a Jew speak in such a manner? Do you think that you are in charge? Are you so guaranteed success that you can afford to be so obstinate?" The *Chafetz Chaim* realized that he was wasting his time. He left and moved on to the next village.

It was not long before the *Chafetz Chaim*, who was traveling throughout Poland, arrived at the *hachnosas orchim*, welcome home for wayfarers, (more like a small hostel for those who had nowhere to stay and no money to pay for a hotel) in a small village. This was a place in which poor people would find something to satiate their hunger. While there, a man (who, from his clothing, appeared to be the victim of abject poverty) approached him and asked, "Does the *Rebbe* not recognize me?" The *Chafetz Chaim* replied that he did not. "I am the one who claimed that a *pasuk* in *Chumash* would not shutter my factory. Sadly, everything the *Rebbe* said came true. I lost everything: my business, my wealth, my home – everything!"

"What happened?" The *Chafetz Chaim* asked.

"One of my business ventures was a flour mill. It was built on the banks of a large river. One day, a complaint was issued against the management of the mill. To ascertain the veracity of the complaint, the Russian government sent an inspector to determine whether everything was in fact running in accordance with the government tax laws. The inspector came down accompanied by his aide, and they went through the mill. The inspector was careless in inspecting the large mill, and he accidentally fell into the machinery while it was grinding the wheat kernels. As a result, the

inspector died a painful, horrible death. The aide who was with him could not accept the blame, as he was there to assist his superior. Instead, he fabricated a story that the Jews purposely and maliciously murdered the inspector. At first, no one believed the aide, but, after he produced two 'witnesses' who corroborated his story, I knew that I was in serious trouble. Fearing for my life, I ran to the safety of my home. When I arrived home, I was informed that it was unsafe for me to remain there. I was forced to flee the country. I grabbed my briefcase which should have contained my 'emergency' fund [Jews were always in danger, especially if they were successful. Thus, they set aside a "rainy day" escape fund).

I left with a horse and wagon, with Poland as my destination. There I would find a safe haven.

"I arrived in a small village and opened up my briefcase, so that I could purchase food and rent a room in the local inn. How shocked I was to discover that, instead of cash, my briefcase was filled with my accounts receivable notes, money owed to me by various vendors. I had taken the wrong briefcase. IOU's were worthless to me in my present predicament. I could not purchase a thing with all of my promissory notes. I ended up in the *hachnassas orchim* like a poor man – which I essentially had become. The Almighty has many ways to make that *pasuk* in *Chumash* [which he had earlier belittled] come to life and punish those who transgress its message."

Indeed, a wealthy man once (naively) asked the *Chafetz Chaim*, "How could Hashem take all my money and all my vast holdings away from me just like that – in one stroke?" The *Chafetz Chaim* *smiled* as he explained, "He need not take your material assets from you. He can simply take you away from them and leave you penniless, because you are unable to connect with your wealth." A person thinks (and we have all been witness to such occurrences) that he can laugh at the Torah, denigrate those who adhere to its dictates, because, after all, he is so eminently successful that he is untouchable. He is making money faster than he can spend it. He is on top of the world until Hashem dispatches an illness to "visit" him, and suddenly everything that he has is of little to no value.

In an alternative exposition, the *Chafetz Chaim* teaches us a method for observing *Shabbos* in a peaceful, calm, relaxed manner, without anxiety about our material concerns. We should acknowledge that "six days work may be done" – *tei'asah*, "it is done." It is done for us. Whatever success we enjoy is provided for us from Above. (Almost like the electric automobile, which, once programmed, does not require the driver to steer or brake.) Hashem is completely in control of the work week/six days of the week. Thus, *Shabbos* becomes the day of rest that it was destined to be. When we rely on Hashem, our work is done for us. When we view the days of the work week in their proper perspective, we celebrate *Shabbos* in the manner that Hashem intends.