

"And you will make a graven image, even the likeness of anything which Hashem your G-d has commanded you." (4:23)

Rashi explains this *posuk* so that the possibility of misinterpretation is circumvented. He defines the phrase "which Hashem commanded you" to mean "*which you were commanded not to do*". Despite *Rashi's* redefinition, it still seems puzzling why the *Torah* did not simply say "*which Hashem despises*". The *Rebbe of Kotzk Zt"l* interprets this *posuk's* implication homiletically. He explains the conformity in the meaning of "*pesel*" (graven image of stone, etc.) and "*temunah*" (form of likeness, picture). Both of these terms refer to a form which is externally and superficially real, but internally lacks substance and tangibility. A *pesel* is a stone shaped into an image. A *temunah* is a form which is transferred to canvas or paper. Despite the striking resemblance to the original, they are nothing more than a facsimile of a real person or object; each lacks corporeality and authenticity. This *posuk* warns us not to make imitations of Hashem's *mitzvos*, by masquerading in the guise of righteousness, deceiving others and even ourselves with actions completely devoid of authenticity and credibility. *Mitzvos* should be performed with consistency throughout, reflecting the proper intentions and attitudes inherent in one who serves Hashem.