

The Godly Business Plan

By bringing God back into center-stage of our business dealings, we infuse our work with God-consciousness and God becomes the centerpiece of our personal workplaces.

By Rabbi Eliyahu Yaakov, August 24, 2011

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Bringing God into one's business affairs means that once you have made the amount of money you need for the day, you close up shop; you don't need to "get ahead" by gaining money now that you may need for later. Since you understand that it is God who is in control of your sustenance and financial success, there is nothing you are getting ahead of. Instead, the path of including God in one's finances dictates that one relies on God each day to provide him what he needs for that day. One who truly internalizes that God is in charge of the money he makes does not obsess over planning for a "rainy day" down the road when he may need a large sum of money for some reason or another.

The Rule of One applies: Those who fear One fear no one; and those who fear no One fear everyone.

If you internalize that the Infinite God is running the show, then all must be from Him and for the best. Of course, this does not mean that problems, "rainy days," or worse will not arise, God forbid. What it means is that we don't act on the possible "What if" scenario. There is no end to that line of reasoning; after all, what if, God forbid, there are two rainy days? Also, as mentioned, if God is in control, how much does one "get ahead" by attempting to add to his bank account?

Practically speaking, each person must consult with a true master in these matters to assess his personal situation, as there is no end to the nuances and case-to-case nature of this particular subject. For example, if a person's job is seasonal it seems that forgoing the extra wages he is capable of earning in the high season would be relying on a miracle. Also, many jobs nowadays (i.e., when you are not your own boss) require you to make as much money as the day allows for; if you leave after five hours of work because that's all the wages you need for that day, the company will replace you with someone willing to work the entire day. Additionally, what about a philanthropist who is being relied upon to fund charities and social causes with the excess money his business brings in?

Obviously, some will be disturbed by this outlook. But that is because most of us are not used to living such a God-centred life. Perhaps we can take some inspiration from the downfall of the Snake following the sin in the Garden of Eden. For his role in the fiasco, the Snake was cursed to eat from the dust of the earth. While at first glance this seems degrading, a second look raises the question as to whether this curse was really not a blessing in disguise. After all, if the human being would be able to eat from the dust of the earth it would solve world hunger!

The answer to this, and a reason why God giving dust to the Snake as food is the *ultimate* curse, is that by giving the Snake dust as food God is basically saying to

the Snake, "Snake, I want to have nothing to do with you. Here is your food. I'm giving you everything you'll ever need. Now, go on your way. I don't want to hear from you again."

Unlike the Snake who eats dust, the human being needs rain for his sustenance, leading him to turn to the Source of all sustenance on an ongoing basis. Similarly, by bringing God back into centre-stage of one's business dealings, he infuses his work with God-consciousness and God becomes the centrepiece of his personal workplace. In a sense, one elevates his workplace into a Tabernacle-like environment. Just as the Tabernacle was a God-centred structure built by physical work, one puts God at the centre of all that goes on in his monetary (i.e., physical) business dealings.

(This is a deeper purpose of Jewish civil courts. In any case involving a financial dispute, the litigants must make the full details of their business dealings known to the judges, who then render their decision of what is proper in accord with the Torah. That is, the fact that the litigants were not conducting their business on the basis of the God-given Torah resulted in the dispute that led them to the Jewish court for the purpose of the Rabbinic judges attaching their business dealings to God. It comes out that with a Jewish judicial system one's business dealings will result in revealing God in the world no matter what; one will either begin business dealings with God at their root or the Rabbinic judge will attach one's business dealings to God after the fact.)

Ultimately, with God's help, our spiritual living within our physical labour will lead us back to an era of God-clarity. The perception of distance from God that came about from the Snake's enticement in the Garden of Eden will culminate in the perception of God-closeness in the times of *Moshiach* (Messiah). In the merit of returning our focus onto the true Source of all that transpires in the world at large and in our lives in detail, we will ascend once again to the pre-sin and pre-curse level of God-clarity and God-perception. Then our labour and service will revert to being solely of the heart, and we will merit harvesting ready-made edible loaves of bread directly from the ground.