

## *Does Our Profession Reflect Our Essence?*

### OLAMI RESOURCES HIGH HOLIDAY DISCUSSION SESSION

#### CONCEPT BASED ON RABBI YAACOV HABER AND THE OU PARDES PROJECT & THE MORASHA SYLLABUS SOURCE MATERIALS

##### Overview

The social scientist, Professor Peter Burke, defines “identity” as the qualities, beliefs, personality traits, appearance, and/or expressions that characterize a person ([Wikipedia](#), *The Cambridge Handbook of Social Theory*). When we think of who we are at our core, we have many composites – what we think, read, say, watch and do; our cultural heritage – family, nationality, religion and spiritual pursuits; our work; as well as our hobbies, recreational interests and so forth. We invest the preponderance of our time, at least 40 hours/week, 2,000 hours/year – approximately one-third of a lifetime – preparing for and working in our professions. The question is whether one’s profession – stock trader, lawyer, locksmith, journalist, physician, etc., characterizes one’s essence? Do our professions reflect our character and contribute to our mission in life? The Jewish High Holidays – Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur – the Jewish New Year and Day of Atonement are appropriate times to reflect on the role of our professions in our personal identity.

##### How Would You Respond?

##### Background Cases

###### Case A

*“It’s NOT TRUE that no one needs you anymore.”*

*These words came from an elderly woman sitting behind me on a late-night flight from Los Angeles to Washington, D.C. The plane was dark and quiet. A man I assumed to be her husband murmured almost inaudibly in response, something to the effect of “I wish I was dead.”*

*Again, the woman: “Oh, stop saying that.”*

*I didn’t mean to eavesdrop, but couldn’t help it. I listened with morbid fascination, forming an image of the man in my head as they talked. I imagined someone who had worked hard all his life in relative obscurity, someone with unfulfilled dreams—perhaps of the degree he never attained, the career he never pursued, the company he never started.*

*At the end of the flight, as the lights switched on, I finally got a look at the desolate man. I was shocked. I recognized him—he was, and still is, world-famous. Then in his mid-80s, he was beloved as a hero for his courage, patriotism, and accomplishments many decades ago.*

*As he walked up the aisle of the plane behind me, other passengers greeted him with veneration. Standing at the door of the cockpit, the pilot stopped him and said, “Sir, I have admired you since I was a little boy.” The older man—apparently wishing for death just a few minutes earlier—beamed with pride at the recognition of his past glories.*

Arthur C. Brooks, “Your Professional Decline Is Coming (Much) Sooner Than You Think,” *Atlantic Magazine*, July 2019. (Arthur Brooks is a columnist for *Atlantic Magazine* and teaches at Harvard’s Kennedy and Business Schools.)

## Case B.

*SEVENTY-FIVE. That's how long I want to live: 75 years. I am sure of my position. Doubtless, death is a loss. It deprives us of experiences and milestones, of time spent with our spouse and children. In short, it deprives us of all the things we value...*

*But here is a simple truth that many of us seem to resist: living too long is also a loss. It renders many of us, if not disabled, then faltering and declining, a state that may not be worse than death but is nonetheless deprived. It robs us of our creativity and ability to contribute to work, society, the world. It transforms how people experience us, relate to us, and, most important, remember us. We are no longer remembered as vibrant and engaged but as feeble, ineffectual, even pathetic...*

*At 75 and beyond, I will need a good reason to even visit the doctor and take any medical test or treatment, no matter how routine and painless. And that good reason is not "It will prolong your life." I will stop getting any regular preventive tests, screenings, or interventions. I will accept only palliative—not curative—treatments if I am suffering pain or other disability... What about simple stuff? Flu shots are out... no to antibiotics..."* Ezekiel J. Emanuel, MD, PhD "Why I Hope to Die at 75" *The Atlantic*, October 2014. (Dr. Emanuel is Vice Provost for Global Initiatives at the University of Pennsylvania and chair of UPENN's Department of Medical Ethics and Health Policy. He was appointed to President Biden's US Covid-19 taskforce in 2020.)

### Questions and sources for discussion:

Is there a difference in the perspectives of the airplane passenger and Dr. Emanuel?

Despite living in a democratic and open society, why do many people measure self-worth in terms of professional accomplishment?

#### 1. Arthur C. Brooks, "A Profession Is Not a Personality," *Atlantic Magazine*, September 2021.

AS AN ECONOMIST, I've heard plenty of complex explanations for Karl Marx's famous opposition to capitalism... He believed that capitalism made people unhappy by treating them as part of a machine in which the person is expunged and only productivity remains... "[I]t is the loss of his self." Workers are objectified, in his view, made into miserable shells.

Whether or not you agree with Marx's assessment of what the capitalist system does to us, many of us indisputably do what he describes to *ourselves*. Too many people who work hard and strive for success self-objectify as excellent work machines and tools of performance...

The case against objectifying others is fairly straightforward. Less obvious but equally damaging is when the objectifier and the person being objectified are one and the same. Humans are capable of objectifying themselves in many ways—by assessing their self-worth in terms of their physical appearance, economic position, or political views, for example—but all of them boil down to one damaging core act: reducing one's own humanity to a single characteristic, and thus encouraging others to do so as well. In the case of work, that might look like judging one's self-worth—positively or negatively—based on job performance or professional standing.

Just as our entertainment culture encourages us to self-objectify physically, our work culture pushes us to self-objectify professionally. Americans tend to valorize being driven and ambitious, so letting work take over virtually every moment of your life is concerningly easy. I know many people who talk of almost nothing besides their work; who are saying, essentially, "I am my job." This may feel more humanizing and empowering than saying "I am my boss's tool," but that

reasoning has a fatal flaw: In theory, you can ditch your boss and get a new job. You can't ditch *you*...

And then, when the end inevitably comes—when professional decline sets in—we are left bereft and desiccated. As one CEO self-objectifier *par excellence* told me, “In the six months after retirement, I went from *Who's Who* to *Who's He?*”

**2. Arthur C. Brooks, *A Profession Is Not a Personality*, Atlantic Magazine, September 2021, continued.**

**Are you a self-objectifier in your job or career? Ask yourself a few questions, and answer them honestly:**

- Is your job the biggest part of your identity? Is it the way you introduce yourself, or even understand yourself?
- Do you find yourself sacrificing love relationships for work? Have you forgone romance, friendship, or starting a family because of your career?
- Do you have trouble imagining being happy if you were to lose your job or career? Does the idea of losing it feel a little like death to you?

**3. Arthur C. Brooks, “A Profession Is Not a Personality,” Atlantic Magazine, September 2021, continued.**

If you answered affirmatively to any or all of these, recognize that you will never be satisfied as long as you objectify yourself. Your career or job should be an extension of you, not vice versa. Two practices can help as you reassess your priorities:

**1. Get some space.**

... Space provides perspective... To begin with, it should be the main goal of your vacation—to get a break from work and spend time with people you love. As obvious as this may sound, that means *taking your vacation*, and not working during it at all.

Related to this is the ancient idea of Sabbath-keeping, or taking regular time away from work each week. In religious traditions, rest isn't just nice to have; it is central to understanding G-d and ourselves. “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day,” the Book of Exodus reads. “Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.” If G-d rests from work, maybe you should too.

Such a practice doesn't have to be religious, and can be done in a lot of ways besides simply avoiding all work on Saturday or Sunday. For example, you can take a small Sabbath each evening by proscribing work and dedicating all your activity to relationships and leisure.

**2. Make friends who don't see you as a professional object.**

Many professional self-objectifiers seek out others who admire them solely for their work accomplishments. This is quite natural—it makes me feel good when a person I meet for the first time recognizes me as a columnist for *The Atlantic* rather than as some random guy—but can easily become a barrier to the formation of healthy friendships, which we all need. By self-objectifying in your friendships, you can make it easier for your friends to objectify you. This is why having friends outside your professional circles is so important. The way to do this goes hand in hand with recommendation No. 1: Don't just spend time away from work; spend it with people who have no connection to your work...

We learn to love the image of our successful selves, not ourselves as we truly are in life.

Don't make this mistake. You are not your job, and I am not mine. Take your eyes off the distorted reflection, and have the courage to experience your full life and true self.

**From a Jewish perspective, what can we do to reassess our identity, and strive to live a more holistic life?**

**4. Rabbi Alexander Seinfeld, Morasha Syllabus, *Caring for the Jewish Soul – Dynamics of the Body and the Soul*.**

*"Today we're going to talk about the soul. But before we begin, I'd like to take an informal survey, so I can get a better idea of where you're coming from. Please raise your hand if you believe you have a soul ... [many will raise their hands]. Wow! That's amazing. Look around the room and see how many people are raising their hands. But you think I'm saying it's amazing because I'm a rabbi/educator, and it's my job to convince people they have souls. Actually, the opposite is true. Let me be the first card-carrying rabbi/educator to tell you that you do not have a soul. You think I'm joking, but I'm completely serious. Judaism states categorically that you do not have a soul. Rather, you are a soul, and you have a body. This is not mere semantics. It is this subtle confusion that is at the root of many of our misunderstandings in life, in relationships, as individuals, and as a society. And when I say confusion, I mean confusion. My asking you if you have a soul should be like my asking you if you have a person. You should be like, what are you talking about? I am a person. Our essence is soul. We are soul before we are born; we are soul after we die. And for the short time we are on this planet, we are soul fused with a body. Once we get this distinction clear, all the pieces of Judaism – and of our life – will fall into place."*

**What does Judaism teach about *why* each person is created?**

**5. Rabbi Mattisyahu Rosenblum, Morasha - Each of us is a *Chosen One*.**

The concept of a Chosen One is one of the recurrent motifs in all of literature. From Arthur to Luke Skywalker we read again and again of someone who seems to be nothing special who is revealed to be the Chosen One. This theme has not ceased to resonate. Is anyone not stirred when Arthur pulls the sword out of the anvil and, revealed to be the true king, goes on to lead Britain to a golden age? Does anyone not rejoice when Luke Skywalker turns out to be "the Last of the Jedi" and frees his galaxy from the evil empire? The biggest cultural phenomenon in the last decade has no doubt been the story of Harry Potter. Millions rejoiced when poor Harry, cruelly oppressed by his aunt and uncle, and his true nature kept from him, found out that he was connected to a higher dimension of reality, that he was a wizard. Millions followed intently as Harry slowly discovered that even within that "wizarding world" he was the Chosen One with the unique ability to defeat the murderous Lord Voldemort. And millions rejoiced when Harry fulfilled his destiny and defeated that evil.

Why do such stories have such a universal appeal? By the time this class is over the answer will be obvious. The power of these tales comes because each of us identifies with these figures. In the depths of our soul we recognize that, in G-d's profound plan, each and every one of us really is completely necessary. Not that we are striving for externally acclaimed stardom. Rather, each and every one of us is a Chosen One who has a unique mission that only we can fulfill in the full revelation of G-d's glory.

**6. Talmud Bavli (Babylonian Talmud), Sanhedrin 37a – Every individual is a world unto himself.**

<p>This is why man was created alone: to teach that destroying one life is tantamount to destroying an entire world, and sustaining one life is tantamount to sustaining an entire world. Therefore, every individual is obligated to say, "The world was created for my sake."</p>	<p>לפיכך נברא אדם יחיד, ללמדך שכל המאבד נפש אחת ... מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו איבד עולם מלא וכל המקיים נפש אחת ... מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו קיים עולם מלא .... לפיכך כל אחד ואחד חייב לומר, בשבילי נברא העולם.</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**7. Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, Alei Shur, Vol. I, p. 168 – The profound importance of each individual and his purpose in life.**

<p>Every person needs to know that he has importance. Not an imagined importance that he "considers himself as special"... rather a deeply profound importance that is even shocking.</p> <p>The Talmud states, "Each and every person must declare, 'The world was created for me' (Sanhedrin 37a). Rashi explains that this means I am considered as important as the entire world ...</p> <p>"Like the entire world" – This is the one-time life experience of a particular person – there was never a person like him and nor will there ever be a person like him throughout history. I, with my special character strengths, the child of my parents, born at a specific time period, and in a certain environment – certainly there is a unique challenge that is placed upon me. I have a special share in the Torah, and the entire world is waiting for me to actualize that which is incumbent upon me. For my role cannot be exchanged with anyone else in the world!</p>	<p>כל אדם חייב לדעת, שיש לו חשיבות. לא חשיבות מדומה שהוא "מחשיב עצמו בעצמו" ... אלא חשיבות בעלת משמעות עמוקה ואף מזעזעת.</p> <p>"כל אחד ואחד חייב לומר: בשבילי נברא העולם"- רש"י: "כלומר: חשוב אני כעולם מלא, לא אטרד את עצמי מן העולם בעבירה אחת". (סנהדרין לז, א)</p> <p>"כעולם מלא" – זוהי חווית חד-פעמיותו של האדם, שלא היה עוד כמותו ולא יהיה כמותו עד סוף כל הדורות. אני עם המיזוג המיוחד של כוחותי, בן לאותם אבות, נולד בתוך אותה תקופה ובאותה סביבה- בודאי עבודה מיוחדת מוטלת עלי, חלק מיוחד לי בתורה, וכל הבריאה מחכה לי שאתקן את המוטל עלי, כי את עבודתי לא אוכל להחליף עם שום אדם אחר בעולם!</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**8. Rabbi Sholom Noach Berezovsky, Netivot Shalom, Parashat Lech Lecha, pp. 62-63 – Every person's mission is unique.**

<p>No two people are alike, from the time the world was created until now. No person can fulfill that which his friend must fulfill. That is, each person has a destiny and purpose that it is his job to fulfill in his life. This includes the specific matter that he came into this world to accomplish. G-d sets up each individual's life with the specific challenges and conditions necessary to fulfill his purpose, to achieve his unique destiny and purpose.</p> <p>All the conditions of a person's life –both material and spiritual, good as well as bad – are granted to</p>	<p>אינו דומה אדם לאדם מיום בריאת אדם והלאה ואין אדם אחד יכול לתקן מה שעל חברו לתקן. והיינו שלכל אדם יש את ייעודו ותפקידו אותו עליו לתקן בחייו, ובכלל זה גם העניין המיוחד עבורו ירד לעולם לתקנו כידוע. והקב"ה מעמיד לכל אחד את כל הנסיבות והתנאים שיוכל לתקן את אשר מתפקידו לתקן, ולמלאות ייעודו ותפקידו בעולמו.</p> <p>כל תנאי החיים של האדם – בגשמיות וברוחניות, הטובים והרעים, כולם נתנו לו כפי השייך לתיקון</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

him in order to fulfill his unique purpose in the world. Under these specific circumstances, a person will be able to reach his destiny, and without them he would not. And since every person has his own specific purpose and destiny, each one has his unique life conditions, some easier and some more challenging.	עולמו, שרק ע"י תנאים אלו יוכל להגיע לייעודו, ובלעדיהם לא יוכל להגיע לייעודו, ובלעדיהם לא יוכל לתקן את אשר תפקידו לתקן. וכיון שלכל אחד יש תפקיד וייעוד מיוחד, לכך שונים תנאי החיים של כל אחד, וזה חייו קלים ולשני החיים קשים יותר...
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**9. Ibid. – “Lech lecha,” the command to overcome our challenges and fulfill our potential, is said to each of us.**

<p>G-d's directive to Abraham repeats itself to every Jew. We are all instructed to distance ourselves from our land, our birthplace, our father's house, in the sense that we must overcome the conditions that challenge us in achieving our goals as individuals</p> <p>You must leave “your country,” “your birthplace,” and “your home” – that is, all your life's circumstances, your disposition, and your nature. You see, the root of every kind of disposition or nature stems from these three arenas. Some stem from “your country,” for every culture has its own negative characteristics, such as murder or theft, etc. These dispositions are shared by the entire country. Some characteristics are passed along to us by “your birthplace,” meaning the negative traits we inherit from our family. And there are others that come to us from “your home,” for the way parents conduct themselves profoundly influence their children.</p> <p>To all this was said Lech lecha: Journey toward the fulfillment of your unique purpose. In order to do so, you must abandon all the negative traits of your land, birthplace, and home, all of which are unique to the root of each person's soul and purpose in life. Then you will come to “the land that I will show you,” to the perfection of your soul which is your task in your world.</p>	<p>וזה הוא דבר ה' אל אברהם, שנכלל בזה גם הוראה לכלל ישראל זרעו של אברהם, לך לך פי', להגיע אל תקון הנשמה השייך אליך ולתכלית המיועדת אליך.</p> <p>עליך לצאת מארצך ומולדתך ובית אביך, היינו מכל התנאים והתכונות והטבעיות שלך. דהנה השרשים של כל התכונות והטבעיות נובעים מג' ענינים אלו. יש תכונות ששרשם מארצך, לכל ארץ יש את התכונות הרעות השייכים אליה כגון רציחה וגזל וכדו' ששרשיהם מתפשטים אל כל בני הארץ. ויש השייכים ממולדתך, הם התכונות הרעות שיש בכל משפחה והמדות שמצד התורשה, ויש הנובע מבית אביך, שלפי ההתנהגות בקדושה של ההורים נמשך כמ"כ על בניהם.</p> <p>ועל זה נאמר לך לך, להגיע לתקון ולתכלית שלך, עליך לצאת מכל התכונות הרעות של ארצך ומולדתך ובית אביך, אשר כל אלו שייכים לאדם לפי שורש נשמתו ותפקידו, ואז תגיע אל הארץ אשר אראך, לתקון הגמור של נשמתך שהוא יעודך בעולמך.</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**10. Rabbi Shalom Brezovsky, Nesivos Shalom, Vol. I, Netivei Da'at, Chapter 6:2, p. 30 – The obligation to figure out one's unique mission.**

Before anything else, a person is obligated to reflect upon and search out what is his unique mission for the sake of which he descended to this world ...	בראש כל האדם חייב להתבונן היטב ולחקור ולדעת מהי חובתו המיוחדת בעולמו, מהו הענין המיוחד שבשבילו ירד לעולם...
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

## How can each individual feel significant in such a populous, fast-paced world?

### 11. Avraham Aryeh Trugman, *The Mystical Power of Music*, p. 111 – Each individual has a part in the symphony of the universe.

It is taught throughout Jewish tradition that each person has a unique soul and a unique mission in the world. No one can complete another's task for him or her. We all have our special contribution to make, our own instrument to play in the cosmic symphony.

### 12. Rabbi Avraham Edelstein, *Check Your Privilege*, Ner Le'Elef Journal, [nleresources.com](http://nleresources.com) – *Tikun haprati* and *tikun haklal*.

G-d created an incomplete world and gave it over to man. Man has to become G-d's partner in completing the world. This is the real meaning of *tikun olam* – of correcting the world. Each person is given a small, unique part of this *tikun*/correction. Each person should leave this world knowing that, because of him or her, the world is a little better than when he or she was born. In order for the world to reach completion, everyone has to make his or her contribution. We all need each other in a very fundamental way, and that is a real, inherent equality, the only one we all really have.

The *tikun olam* is made up of two things. Everyone has a unique *tikun haprati* (literally, a private *tikun*) as well as a part of the *tikun haklali* (lit., the general *tikun*). The *tikun haprati* is made of the perfection of self, the development of character, sensitivity, kindness, wisdom, and other noble traits. It has to do with deepening our spirituality and getting close to G-d. The *tikun haklali* is made up of the perfection of the environment – broadly defined – that each person comes into contact with. The *tikun haprati* is all about the perfection of our internal environments.

What matters to G-d is that each one of us fulfills our potential by contributing to our part of the *tikun*. In that sense, we are unique individuals and yet part of the communal vision all in one. G-d gives each person the perfect set of tools – personal and environmental – for his or her *tikun* tasks, and these tasks include helping anyone else we can in any way. As we grow, He keeps on changing those challenges, so that at any stage we have exactly what we need to fulfill our potential needs, no more and no less. What matters to G-d is the amount of *tikun* we contribute, and that is a function of the difference between our starting and end points, not any objective level, not any comparative level and not any privilege or lack thereof.

### 13. Rabbi Aryeh Carmell, *Master Plan*, pp. x-xi – The concept of commandment introduces a new motive into our lives.

“Mitzvah” means “commandment.” In the Western world we are not familiar with the concept of doing something because it is a commandment. We behave in moral ways, if we do, because of the value system to which our upbringings and society happen to have conditioned us. When challenged we often find it very difficult to defend the system. This mode of behavior is unreliable because it is based on vague general concepts without formal rational basis. There could be no better illustration of the instability of this type of system than the Nazi experience. In a few years we saw a nation which prided itself on its high level of culture have its morality turned on its head, with disastrous results.

Throughout history great thinkers – Plato, Spinoza, Kant, Marx – have produced splendid ethical systems suggesting that we could curb our egotism in various ways for the good of the community. Insofar as they were tried, they all failed abysmally. First, they lacked credible authority. Second, they failed to deal with the brute facts of the human being as he really is. They failed to provide a detailed program which would nurture the growth of the individual from a self-

contained being to a person prepared and motivated to give up his self-interest for an ideal beyond himself. Everyone agreed that the system was wonderful – for everyone else.

Both these shortcomings are overcome by the mitzvah system in Judaism.

The concept of mitzvah introduces a new motive into our lives: we act in a certain way not because we happen to feel it is right, but because we realize that this is how G-d wants us to act. This introduces a higher dimension into our lives. In fact it involves a revolutionary change in our attitude toward ourselves, the world and our fellow beings.

**14. Rabbi Osher Chaim Levene, Set in Stone, p.31, Targum – Each mitzvah we fulfill intrinsically connects us with God.**

Judaism is not as much a religion as it is a relationship. It is only through mitzvah observance that man can build a deep, enduring, and meaningful relationship with God ... That a mitzvah is the very process of forging the bond [with God] is contained within the very word מצוה, “commandment,” closely related to the word צוותה, meaning a connection or a binding.

**15. Maharal, Derech Chaim to Avot 1:2 – The mitzvot cultivate relationships in the three spheres of spiritual and ethical endeavor: the personal, the religious, and the interpersonal.**

Man’s capacity for goodness can be divided into three parts: His own intrinsic goodness; his goodness in his relationship with G-d; and his goodness in his relationships with his fellow human beings ...

ומה שהאדם הוא טוב... הבחינה האחת היא כשהוא טוב  
בעצמו... הבחינה השנית שיהיה טוב לשמים...  
השלישית שראוי שיהיה טוב אל זולתו מבני אדם אשר  
נמצאים איתו...

**16. Morasha Syllabus, Shabbat I: Plugging into the Goals of Life – Shabbat observance celebrates meaningful life.**

I might be a techie at Facebook, a photographer at National Geographic, a student at the London School of Economics; any Jewish person. I fly through the week from one project to the next, get prepped for the weekend parties to unwind – to get rewound the next week. Even if I’m so rich and chilled that I don’t have to work and my life is one big “I’m a good guy” – helping every elderly person across the street, donating millions to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, and disease – what’s it all for? Why are we in this world?

If I’m not anchored to the ultimate goals of life, I’m missing the boat. So how do I get clarity? That’s where Shabbat comes in. Shabbat is a pivotal day each week, allowing me to stop and gain a clear perspective on why we’re here.

When Shabbat descends on the world and we participate in its observance, festive meals, songs, prayers, and all types of delights, we are connecting to one of the strongest and most meaningful Jewish forces and experiences. Shabbat is the cornerstone of Jewish belief. When we observe Shabbat, we intrinsically testify that G-d created the universe and that He supervises and guides the history of mankind.



## How can a profession relate to one's purpose in life?

**17. Chovot HaLevavot, Gate of Trust, Ch. 3, p. 322, Leiberman Edition – The affinity one has toward a particular vocation is a Divine signal pointing him in that direction.**

Each person has a natural inclination toward a specific area of work more than another; for G-d has imprinted this affinity into each person's nature ... When one finds within himself a desire for a particular type of pursuit, and believes that he is well-suited for it, he should invest himself in that pursuit and use it as a means for earning a livelihood. And he should not give up that pursuit when at times he fails to support himself, rather he should trust in G-d that He will give him enough to live all the days of his life.	ולכל אדם יש חפץ במלאכה או סחורה מבלתי זולתה, כבר הטביע האל לה בטבעו אהבה וחיבה .... ומי שמוצא במידותיו וטבעו כוסף אל מלאכה מהמלאכות ויהיה גופו ראוי לה ... יחזר עליה וישים אותה סיבה להבאת מזונו. ויסבול מתקה ומרירותה. ואל יקוץ כשימנע ממנו הטרף בקצת העתים, אך יבטח באלהים שיספיק לו טרפו כל ימי חייו.
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**18. Rabbi Yaakov Weinberg, Careers, Hobbies & Sports for a Ben Torah, Aishaudio.com – Select a vocation that will allow you to maintain priorities in life.**

When you select a vocation, make sure that it leaves you ample time for Torah study, for thinking about what life is really all about, for living a full Jewish life. Make sure you don't lose sight of life's purpose and make your vocation the sum total of your life, and make sure the career you take allows for this.	
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

**19. Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, Alei Shur, Vol. I, p. 269 – Any occupation, when utilized properly, can be invested with religious significance and sanctity.**

The Sages relate that (the Biblical figure) Hanoach was a shoemaker. "Over every stitch that he sewed in a pair of shoes, he would perform unifications of the heavenly realms." Rabbi Yisrael Salanter explained what form these unifications took: Hanoach invested careful thought and intent into each stitch – his intention was that each stitch go toward creating a comfortable and sturdy shoe so that the owner would be able to get the maximum benefit out of it ... When an individual infuses loving-kindness and love of other human beings into his work, this is the greatest form of "unifications"!	איתא בחז"ל: "חנוך תופר מנעלים היה, ועל כל תפירה היה מיחד יחודים" (מדרש תלפיות, ערך חנוך). רבי ישראל סלנטר זצ"ל מבאר מה היו הכוונות ביחודים אלה: על כל תפירה התכוון שתהיה נעל חזקה וטובה, ומי שינעל אותה יהנה ממנה.... כאשר אדם מכוון במעשי ידיו לחסד ולהאבת הבריות – אין לך יחוד גדול מזה!
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**20. Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, Alei Shur, Vol. II, p. 270 – Every pursuit has the potential for holiness.**

In G-d's world, there is nothing or no type of pursuit that is devoid of holiness. Wherever refined character traits, kindness, and love of fellow man can be found, the work being done is elevated to the level of Divine service!	בעולמו של הקב"ה אין שום דבר או עסק חילוני. במקום שיש מידות טובות, חסד ואהבה, מתקדשת כל המלאכה ומתרוממת לעבודת ה' ממש!
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**21. Ibid. – Any vocation is an opportunity to apply Torah values to real life situations.**

Each vocation brings its own store of challenges, whether it be the temptation to overcharge or underpay, the difficulty of always keeping one's word, making sure to avoid selling forbidden things, or avoiding unacceptable business tactics, etc. When a Jew encounters such a situation, he must know that this is his mission – to rise to the occasion and observe the <i>halachah</i> (law) ...	כל מקצוע ונסיונותיו. אם באונאה, או בהן צדק, אם ביחס אל הלקוחות או אל הפועלים, אם במניעה ממכירת דברים אסורים או במניעת שיטות מסחר פסולות. בבוא דבר מדברים אלה לידי של התלמיד חכם ידע, כי זהו עבודתו, לעמוד בנסיון זה ולשמור את ההלכה....
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**How can we maximize the High Holy Days to think about one's role in the world?**

**22. Rabbi Yissocher Frand, In Print, ArtScroll, p. 30 – Everyone is born with a unique combination of strengths and at a specific time in history so as to fulfill his unique role in the Divine plan.**

<p>Every Amidah of Yom Kippur ends with ... "My G-d, before I was formed I was unworthy, and now that I have been formed it is as if I had not been formed."</p> <p>Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook interpreted this sentence as follows:</p> <p>"Until I was born, it was not the time for me; my specific mission in life was for this period and no other. And now that I have come into this historic epoch, it is as if I was never born, for I have squandered the abilities that were given to me in order to fulfill this mission."</p> <p>Not only is each one of us brought into this world with a unique combination of strengths, but each of us is brought into the world at a particular time when those powers are needed for the fulfillment of some part of the Divine plan.</p> <p>Thus teshuvah requires both introspection concerning ourselves and intense reflection concerning the situation of the Jewish people in the period in which we live.</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**23. Rabbi Yitzchak Berkovits, The Jerusalem Kollel – How to leverage Yom Kippur.**

On Yom Kippur we need to ask self-defining questions. Who am I? Where am I going? Where could I go? What am I made of? What potential do I have? What unused talents are there within me? What has been misused? What character faults have to be corrected? What haven't I accomplished that which I am capable of? It's the day we are fully alive. It's the day we're fully in touch with our struggle to perfect ourselves.
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------