

**The Workaholic Within Us**

**#1**

(a) You have a stable job with an average income, 40 hours a week.

You are offered a highly-paid job that will give you many more opportunities to afford a better house, nicer car, amazing vacations, in short - it'll improve all your living conditions drastically. The catch: it’s 60 hours a week, and you need to be available to reply to emails after work as well.

**Question: Do you take it?**

(b) A student at Exhibit J tells you that she enjoys going to the classes and feels that they give her much needed energy and they broaden her horizon. But every time after the class she feels guilty for not using these hours for studying for school.

**Question: What do you tell her?**

**#2**

**Pirkei Avos 4:12**

*Rabbi Meir says: (Continually) reduce work and occupy yourself in Torah…*

**Questions:**

**(a) What is the message of the Mishnah?**

**(b) Does this Mishnah give us a license to minimize the quality of work one produces and slack off? Wouldn't that be stealing from the employer or the customer?**

**Be’er Ha’Avos**

*There are several words for “work” in Hebrew besides “esek”, such as, ”melacha”, “sechora”, and ”derech eretz". In choosing the word “esek”, the Mishnah focuses on one aspect of work, namely, the great mental and emotional effort that work requires.*



**Chained to the Desk: A Guidebook for Workaholics**

**Bryan Robinson, Professor of counselling at North Carolina University**

*Workaholism is not defined by how long you work. It's the preoccupation with work. Workaholics can be lying on a beach and obsessing about work. It's the inability to turn it off.*

**Are You a Workaholic? When Does Your Healthy Drive to Succeed Become a Neurotic Need for Power?**

**Daily Mail (London), June 11, 2001**

*Workaholism...one of the fastest-growing diseases of modern life.*

**Modern Times, Ancient Hours: Working Lives in Twenty-First Century**

**Pietro Basso**

*One executive, wanting to test his middle managers’ devotion to work, sent them an email on Saturday at 2 AM and received a reply from every one of them!*

**Rashi**

*“Work” in our Mishnah includes ALL worldly involvements and pursuits.*

**Questions:**

**How can a person be involved in worldly endeavors without letting work and all the other distractions of this world (phone, TV, music, etc) become the center of his life?**

**#3**

**Torah, Shmos 20:9-10**

*Remember the Shabbos day….Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Shabbos to the Lord your G-d. On it you shall not do any work…*

**Rashi**

**and do all your work:** *When the Shabbos arrives, it shall seem to you as if all your work is done, that you shall not think about work.*

**Questions:**

**(a) Is this possible in real life? Can you just turn it off?**

**(b) What are the possible benefits in this commandment?**

**#4**

If someone asks you who are you and what you do, you'll probably respond, "I am a doctor," "I sell insurance policies for a living", or “I am a student” or whatever.

But if you met the prophet Jonah you'd get a very surprising answer -

**Jonah (1:8-9)**

The sailors find Jonah hiding in the bottom of the ship, and they ask him suspiciously, “Who are you and what is your work?” To which he responds, “I am a Jew and I fear the G-d of Israel.”

**Questions:**

**(a) Did Jonah actually answer their question or did he just ignore it and say whatever he wanted to?**

**(b) How can such an answer help us focus on the important things in life instead of getting sucked into the craziness of the world?**

**#5 BONUS Questions:**

**(a) What's a midlife crisis?**

**(b) How do you avoid it?**

**#6 Question: What's your takeaway from today's discussion?**