

הלכות עבודת פוכבים • פרק ראשון

Learned like the daf, the literal words in bold, flowing with the elucidation

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this opening chapter, the Rambam, zatzal, takes us back to the very beginning of history to show us how the terrible error of avodah zarah first crept into the world. We learn how, in the days of Enosh, mankind made a tragic mistake by thinking that because Hashem placed the stars and spheres on high to run the world, it must be His will to honor and serve them as His ministers.

We then see how this initial error degenerated over generations. The Rambam describes how false prophets and deceivers arose, claiming they had received visions to build physical images and perform strange rituals, which eventually led the masses to completely forget Hashem and worship only these empty creations.

All introductions, summaries, and contextual notes are the editor's commentary and are not part of the original text.

הלכה א

Halacha 1: The Original Error of the Idol Worshipers in the Days of Enosh

בימי אנוש טעו בני האדם טעות גדולה

In the days of Enosh, the children of man erred with a great mistake,

ונבצרה עצת חכמי אותו הדור

and the counsel of the wise men of that generation became foolish,

ואנוש עצמו מן הטועים היה.

and Enosh himself was also among those who erred.

וזו הייתה טעותם.

And this was their mistake:

אמרו הואיל והאלהים ברא פוכבים אלו וגלגלים להנהיג את העולם

they said, "Since God created these stars and spheres to guide the world,

ונתנם במרום וחקלק להם כבוד

and placed them on high, and apportioned to them honor,

והם שמשמים המשמשים לפניו

and they are servants who minister before Him,

ראויין הם לשבחם ולפארום ולחלק להם כבוד.

they are fitting to praise them, and to glorify them, and to apportion to them honor.

וְזֶהוּ רְצוֹן הָאֵל בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְגַדֵּל וּלְכַבֵּד מִי שֶׁגִּדְּלוֹ וְכִבְּדוֹ.

And this is the will of God, blessed is He, to magnify and to honor whoever He magnified and honored,

כְּמוֹ שֶׁהַמֶּלֶךְ רוֹצֵה לְכַבֵּד הָעוֹמְדִים לְפָנָיו וְזֶהוּ כְבוֹדוֹ שֶׁל מֶלֶךְ.

just as the king wants to honor those who stand before him, and this is the honor of a king."

כִּיּוֹן שֶׁעָלָה דְבַר זֶה עַל לִבָּם

Once this thing arose upon their heart,

הִתְחִילוּ לִבְנוֹת לְכוֹכְבִּים הַיְכָלוֹת וּלְהִקְרִיב לָהֶן קָרְבָּנוֹת

they began to build temples for the stars, and to offer sacrifices to them,

וּלְשַׁבְּחָם וּלְפָאֲרָם בְּדִבְרִים וּלְהַשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לְמוֹלָם

and to praise them and to glorify them with words, and to prostrate themselves towards them,

כְּדִי לְהַשִּׁיג רְצוֹן הַבּוֹרֵא בְּדַעְתָּם הָרָעָה.

in order to obtain the favor of the Creator, in their evil opinion.

וְזֶה הָיָה עֵקֶר עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכְבִּים.

And this was the essence of the worship of stars.

וְכָךְ הָיוּ אוֹמְרִים עוֹבְדֵיהֶּ הַיּוֹדְעִים עֲקָרָהּ.

And thus its worshipers who knew its essence would say;

לֹא שֶׁהֵן אוֹמְרִים שֶׁאֵין שֵׁם אֱלֹהִים אֶלָּא כּוֹכַב זֶה.

not that they say that there is no God there except this star.

הוּא שֶׁיִּרְמְיָהוּ אוֹמֵר מִי לֹא יִרְאַה מֶלֶךְ הַגּוֹיִם כִּי לֶךָ יֵאָתָה

This is what Yirmeyahu says: "Who will not fear You, King of the nations? For to You it is fitting,

כִּי בְּכָל חֲכָמֵי הַגּוֹיִם וּבְכָל מַלְכוּתָם מֵאִין כְּמוֹךָ

for among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdom there is none like You.

וּבְאַחַת יִבְעֲרוּ וַיִּכְסְלוּ מוֹסֵר הַבָּלִים עֵץ הוּא.

And in one thing they are foolish and senseless; the instruction of vanities, it is wood."

כְּלוֹמַר הַכֹּל יוֹדְעִים שֶׁאֵתָה הוּא לְבַדְּךָ

Meaning to say, all know that You are He alone,

אָבֵל טָעוּתָם וְכַסִּילוּתָם שְׁמַדְמִים שֶׁזֶה הִהָבֵל רְצוֹנָה הוּא:

but their mistake and their foolishness is that they imagine that this vanity is Your will.

הִלְכָּה ב

Halacha 2 · The Spread of Idol Worship and the Forgetting of God's Name

וְאַחַר שֶׁאָרְכוּ הַיָּמִים

And after the days lengthened,

עָמְדוּ בְּכִנֵּי הָאָדָם נְבִיאֵי שָׁקֶר

there arose among the children of man prophets of falsehood,

וְאָמְרוּ שֶׁהָאֵל צִוָּה וְאָמַר לָהֶם

and they said that God commanded and said to them:

עֲבֹדוּ כּוֹכַב פְּלוֹנִי אוֹ כָּל הַכּוֹכָבִים

"Serve such and such a star, or all the stars,

וְהִקְרִיבוּ לוֹ וְנִסְכּוּ לוֹ כֶּה וְכָה

and sacrifice to it, and pour libations to it in such and such a way,

וְבָנוּ לוֹ הֵיכָל וַעֲשׂוּ צוּרְתּוֹ

and build for it a temple, and make its image

כְּדִי לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לוֹ כָּל הָעָם הַנָּשִׁים וְהַקְטָנִים וְשָׂאֵר עַמִּי הָאָרֶץ.

in order for all the people—the women, the children, and the rest of the common people of the land—to bow down to it."

וּמִוֹדִיעַ לָהֶם צוּרָה שֶׁבָּדָה מִלְּבּוֹ

And each false prophet would inform them of an image that he devised from his heart,

וְאָמַר זֶה הִיא צוּרַת הַכּוֹכַב פְּלוֹנִי שֶׁהוֹדִיעָהוּ בְּנִבְאוֹתָיו.

and say, "This is the image of such and such a star that they informed him of in his prophecy."

וְהִתְחִילוּ עַל דֶּרֶךְ זֶה לַעֲשׂוֹת צוּרוֹת בְּהֵיכָלוֹת

And they began in this way to make images in the temples,

וּתַחַת הָאֵילָנוֹת וּבְרָאשֵׁי הַהָרִים וְעַל הַגְּבָעוֹת

and under the trees, and on the tops of the mountains, and on the hills,

וּמִתְקַבְּצִין וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים לָהֶם

and they would gather and bow down to them,

וְאוֹמְרִים לְכָל הָעָם שֶׁזֶּה הַצּוּרָה מִיִּטְיָבָה וּמִרָעָה

and say to all the people that this image benefits and harms,

וְרֹאוּי לְעִבְדָּהּ וּלְיִרְאָהּ מִמֶּנָּה.

and it is proper to serve it and to fear it.

וּכְהִנִּיָּהֶם אוֹמְרִים לָהֶם

And their priests would say to them,

שֶׁבְּעִבְדוּתָהּ זֶה תִּרְבּוּ וְתִצְלִיחוּ

"Through this service you will multiply and you will succeed,

וַעֲשׂוּ כֹה וְכֹה וְאַל תַּעֲשׂוּ כֹה וְכֹה.

and do such and such, and do not do such and such."

וְהַתְּחִילוּ כּוֹזְבִים אֲחֵרִים לַעֲמֹד וּלְדַמֵּר

And other deceivers began to arise and to say

שֶׁהַכּוֹכֵב עָצָמוֹ אוֹ הַגִּלְגָּל אוֹ הַמַּלְאָךְ דִּבֶּר עִמָּהֶם

that the star itself, or the sphere, or the angel spoke with them,

וְאָמַר לָהֶם עֲבֹדוּנִי בְּכֹה וְכֹה

and said to them, "Serve me in such and such a way,"

וְהוֹדִיעַ לָהֶם דֶּרֶךְ עֲבֹדָתוֹ

and he informed them of the way of his service,

וַעֲשׂוּ כֹה וְאַל תַּעֲשׂוּ כֹה.

saying, "Do this, and do not do that."

וּפֶשֶׁט דְּבָר זֶה בְּכָל הָעוֹלָם

And this matter spread throughout the entire world,

לְעַבֵּד אֶת הַצּוּרוֹת בְּעֲבֹדוֹת מְשֻׁנוֹת זוֹ מִזֹּ

to serve the images with services that were different from one another,

וּלְהַקְרִיב לָהֶם וּלְהַשְׁתַּחֲוֹת.

and to sacrifice to them and to bow down.

וּכְיוֹן שְׂאֲרֵכּוֹ הַיָּמִים

And since the days lengthened,

נִשְׁתַּכַּח הַשֵּׁם הַנִּכְבָּד וְהַנּוֹרָא מִפִּי כָּל הַיָּקוּם וּמִדַּעְתָּם

the glorious and awesome Name was forgotten from the mouth of all living things and from their minds,

וְלֹא הִכִּירוּהוּ

and they did not recognize Him.

וְנִמְצְאוּ כָּל עַם הָאָרֶץ הַנָּשִׁים וְהַקְטָנִים

And it turned out that all the common people of the land, the women, and the children

אֵינָם יוֹדְעִים אֵלָּא הַצּוּרָה שֶׁל עֵץ וְשֶׁל אֶבֶן

knew nothing except the image of wood and of stone,

וְהֵהִיכֵל שֶׁל אֲבָנִים שֶׁנִּתְחַנְּכוּ מִקְטָנוּתָם

and the temple of stones, which they had been trained from their childhood

לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לָהּ וּלְעַבְדָּהּ וּלְהִשָּׁבַע בִּשְׁמָהּ.

to bow down to, and to serve, and to swear by its name.

וְהַחֲכָמִים שֶׁהָיוּ בָּהֶם כְּגוֹן כֹּהֲנֵיהֶם וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָהֶן

And the wise men that were among them, such as their priests and the like of them,

מִדְּמִין שֶׁאֵין שָׁם אֱלֹהִים אֵלָּא הַכּוֹכָבִים וְהַגְּלָגָלִים

imagined that there is no god there except the stars and the spheres,

שֶׁנַּעֲשׂוּ הַצּוּרוֹת הָאֵלֹּוּ בְּגִלְגָּלָם וּלְדַמּוּתָן.

for whose sake and in whose likeness these images were made.

אֲבָל צוּר הָעוֹלָמִים לֹא הָיָה שׁוֹם אָדָם שֶׁהֵיָה מִכִּירוֹ וְלֹא יוֹדְעוֹ

But the Rock of the worlds—there was no man who recognized Him or knew Him,

אֵלָּא יְחִידִים בְּעוֹלָם כְּגוֹן חֲנוּךְ וּמֵתוּשֶׁלַח נֹחַ שֵׁם וְעֶבֶר.

except for unique individuals in the world, such as Chanoch, Metushelach, Noach, Shem, and Ever.

וְעַל דֶּרֶךְ זֶה הָיָה הָעוֹלָם הוֹלֵךְ וּמִתְגַּלְגֵּל

And in this way, the world was going and rolling along,

עד שנוֹלַד עמודוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם וְהוּא אֲבִרָהָם אֲבִינוּ:

until the pillar of the world was born, and he is Avraham our Father.

הַלְכָה ג

Halacha 3 - Avraham's Discovery of the Creator and the Transmission of Monotbeism

כִּיּוֹן שֶׁנִּגְמַל אֵיתָן זֶה

Once this giant of a mind, this mighty one, was weaned from nursing,

הִתְחִיל לְשׁוֹטֵט בְּדַעְתּוֹ וְהוּא קָטָן

he began to explore in his mind, even though he was still small,

וְהִתְחִיל לְחַשֵּׁב בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה

and he began to think by day and by night.

וְהָיָה תִמְחָה הֵיאָה אֲפֹשֶׁר שִׁיחֶיהָ הַגִּלְגָּל הַזֶּה נוֹהֵג תָּמִיד

And he was wondering: How is it possible that this sphere should be revolving always,

וְלֹא יִהְיֶה לוֹ מְנַהִיג וּמִי יְסַבֵּב אוֹתוֹ.

and there should not be to it a controller, and who causes it to revolve?

כִּי אֵי אֲפֹשֶׁר שִׁיְסַבֵּב אֶת עַצְמוֹ.

For it is impossible that it should cause itself to revolve.

וְלֹא הָיָה לוֹ מְלַמֵּד וְלֹא מוֹדִיעַ דָּבָר

And he did not have a teacher, nor anyone who informs him of anything,

אֶלָּא מְשֻׁקַּע בְּאוּר כַּשְׁדִּים בֵּין עוֹבְדֵי כּוֹכָבִים הַטֹּפְשִׁים

rather he was mired in Ur Kasdim among the foolish worshipers of stars,

וְאָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ וְכָל הָעָם עוֹבְדֵי כּוֹכָבִים וְהוּכָא עוֹבֵד עֲמָקָם

and his father and his mother and all the people were worshipers of stars, and he worshiped with them.

וְלִבּוֹ מְשׁוֹטֵט וּמַבִּין

But his heart was exploring and understanding,

עַד שֶׁהִשִּׁיג דֶּרֶךְ הָאֱמֶת וְהִבִּין קוֹ הַצֶּדֶק מִתְּבוּנָתוֹ הַנְּכוֹנָה.

until he grasped the path of truth, and understood the line of righteousness from his correct understanding.

וַיַּדַּע שִׁישׁ שֵׁם אֱלֹהֵי אֶחָד

And he knew that there is there one God,

וְהוּא מְנַהֵיג הַגְּלָגַל וְהוּא בְּרָא הַכּוֹל

and He controls the sphere, and He created everything,

וְאֵין בְּכָל הַנִּמְצָא אֱלֹהֵי חוּץ מִמֶּנּוּ.

and there is not among all the entities a god besides Him.

וַיַּדַּע שְׁכָל הָעוֹלָם טוֹעִים

And he knew that all the world were erring,

וַדָּבָר שֶׁגָּרַם לָהֶם לְטָעוֹת

and the thing that caused them to err

זֶה שֶׁעוֹבְדִים אֶת הַכּוֹכָבִים וְאֶת הַצּוּרוֹת

was this: that they worshiped the stars and the images,

עַד שֶׁאֲבַד הָאֱמֶת מִדַּעְתָּם.

until the truth was lost from their minds.

וּבֶן אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה הִכִּיר אַבְרָהָם אֶת בּוֹרְאוֹ.

And at forty years of age, Avraham recognized his Creator.

כִּיּוֹן שֶׁהִכִּיר וַיַּדַּע

Once he recognized and knew the truth,

הִתְחִיל לְהָשִׁיב תְּשׁוּבוֹת עַל בְּנֵי אוּר כַּסְדִּים וּלְעַרְךָ דִּין עִמָּהֶם

he began to return answers to the people of Ur Kasdim, and to arrange arguments with them,

וּלְאמֹר שֵׁאִין זֶה דֶּרֶךְ הָאֱמֶת שֶׁאַתֶּם הוֹלְכִים בָּהּ

and to say: This is not the path of truth that you are walking in!

וַשְׁבֵּר הַצִּלָּמִים

And he broke the idols,

וְהִתְחִיל לְהוֹדִיעַ לָעָם שֶׁאֵין רְאוּי לַעֲבֹד אֵלָּא לְאֱלֹהֵי הָעוֹלָם

and he began to make known to the people that it is not proper to serve anyone except the God of the world,

וּלֹא רְאוּי לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת וּלְהִקְרִיב וּלְנַסֵּךְ

and to Him it is proper to bow down, and to sacrifice, and to pour libations,

כִּדִּי שִׁכִּירוּהוּ כָּל הַבְּרֹאִים הַבָּאִים.

in order that all the coming creations should recognize Him.

וְרֹאיוֹ לְאַבֵּד וּלְשַׁבֵּר כָּל הַצּוּרוֹת

And it is proper to destroy and to break all the images,

כִּדִּי שֶׁלֹּא יִטְעוּ בָּהֶן כָּל הָעָם

in order that all the people should not err with them,

כִּמוֹ אֱלֹהֵי שָׁמָיִם מְדַמִּים שֶׁאֵין שָׁם אֱלֹהִים אֲלָא אֵלֵינוּ.

like these who imagine that there is no god there except these.

כִּיּוֹן שֶׁגָּבַר עֲלֵיהֶם בְּרָאיוֹתָיו

Once he prevailed over them with his proofs,

בְּקִשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהַרְגּוֹ וְנִנְעָשָׂה לוֹ נֶס וַיֵּצֵא לְחָרָן.

the king sought to kill him, but a miracle was performed for him and he went out to Charan.

וַהֲתַחִיל לַעֲמֹד וּלְקַרֵּא בְּקוֹל גָּדוֹל לְכָל הָעוֹלָם

And he began to stand and to call with a loud voice to all the world,

וּלְהוֹדִיעֵם שֶׁיֵּשׁ שָׁם אֱלֹהִים אֶחָד לְכָל הָעוֹלָם וְלוֹ רֹאיוֹ לַעֲבֹד.

and to inform them that there is one God for all the world, and Him it is proper to serve.

וַהֲיָה מְהֵלָּה וְקוֹרֵא וּמִקְבִּץ הָעָם מֵעִיר לְעִיר וּמִמְּלָכָה לְמִמְּלָכָה

And he was traveling and calling, and gathering the people from city to city and from kingdom to kingdom,

עַד שֶׁהִגִּיעַ לְאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וְהוּא קוֹרֵא

until he arrived at the Land of Canaan, and he was calling out,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "וַיִּקְרָא שָׁם בְּשֵׁם ה' אֵל עוֹלָם".

as it is said: And he called there in the name of Hashem, God of the world.

וּכְיֵינוּ שֶׁהָיוּ הָעָם מִתְקַבְּצִין אֵלָיו וְשׁוֹאֲלִין לוֹ עַל דְּבָרָיו

And once the people were gathering to him and asking him about his words,

הָיָה מוֹדִיעַ לְכָל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד כַּפִּי דַעְתּוֹ

he would inform each and every one according to his understanding,

עַד שֶׁיִּחְזַרְהוּ לְדֶרֶךְ הָאֱמֶת

until he would return him to the path of truth,

עַד שֶׁנִּתְקַבְּצוּ אֵלָיו אֲלָפִים וָרַבּוֹת

until thousands and myriads gathered to him,

וְהֵם אֲנָשֵׁי בֵּית אַבְרָהָם

and they were the men of the house of Avraham.

וַשֵּׁתַל בְּלִבָּם הָעֵקֶר הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה וַחֲבֵר בּוֹ סְפָרִים

And he planted in their hearts this great principle, and he composed books concerning it,

וַהוֹדִיעֹו לְיִצְחָק בְּנוֹ.

and he taught it to Yitzchak his son.

וַיֵּשֶׁב יִצְחָק מְלַמֵּד וּמְזַהֵר.

And Yitzchak sat teaching and warning the people.

וַיִּצְחָק הוֹדִיעַ לְיַעֲקֹב וּמִנָּהוּ לְלַמֵּד

And Yitzchak taught it to Yaakov, and appointed him to teach,

וַיֵּשֶׁב מְלַמֵּד וּמַחֲזִיק כָּל הַנִּלְוִים אֵלָיו.

and he sat teaching and strengthening all those who joined him.

וַיַּעֲקֹב אָבִינוּ לְמַד בָּנָיו כָּלָם

And Yaakov our father taught all of his sons,

וַהֲבָדִיל לְוִי וּמִנָּהוּ רֹאשׁ

and he separated Levi and appointed him head,

וַהוֹשִׁיבוּ בִּישִׁיבָה לְלַמֵּד דֶּרֶךְ הַשֵּׁם וְלִשְׁמֹר מִצְוַת אַבְרָהָם.

and established him in the academy to teach the way of Hashem and to keep the commandment of Avraham.

וַצֻּוּ אֶת בָּנָיו שֶׁלֹּא יַפְסִיקוּ מִבְּנֵי לְוִי מִמָּנָה אַחֵר מִמָּנָה

And he commanded his sons that they should not interrupt from the sons of Levi a leader after a leader,

כִּדִּי שֶׁלֹּא תִשְ�כַּח הַלְמוּד.

in order that the teaching should not be forgotten.

וַהֲיָה הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה וּמִתְגַּבֵּר בְּבָנֵי יַעֲקֹב וּבְנִלְוִים עֲלֵיהֶם

And the matter was going and growing stronger among the children of Yaakov and among those who joined them,

וַנַּעֲשִׂית בְּעוֹלָם אֲמָה שֶׁהִיא יוֹדַעַת אֵת ה'.

and there became in the world a nation that knows Hashem.

עַד שֶׁאָרְכוּ הַיָּמִים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִצְרַיִם

Until the days grew long for Israel in Mitzrayim,

וַחֲזָרוּ לְלַמֵּד מַעֲשֵׂיהֶן וְלַעֲבֹד כּוֹכָבִים כְּמוֹתֶן

and they returned to learn from their deeds and to worship stars like them,

חוּץ מִשִּׁבְט לְוִי שֶׁעָמַד בְּמִצְוֹת אֲבוֹת.

except for the tribe of Levi, which stood by the commandment of the patriarchs.

וּמַעֲוָלָם לֹא עָבַד שִׁבְט לְוִי עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים.

And never did the tribe of Levi worship stars.

וּכְמַעֲט קֵט הָיָה הָעֵקֶר שֶׁשָּׂתַל אַבְרָהָם נִעְקָר

And almost, by a little, was the principle that Avraham planted uprooted,

וַחֲזָרִין בְּנֵי יַעֲקֹב לְטָעוֹת הָעוֹלָם וּתְעִיּוֹתָן.

and the children of Yaakov would return to the error of the world and their crookedness.

וּמֵאַהֲבַת ה' אוֹתָנוּ וּמִשְׁמְרוֹ אֵת הַשְּׁבוּעָה לְאַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ

And from the love of Hashem for us, and from His keeping the oath to Avraham our father,

עָשָׂה מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ רַבֵּן שֶׁל כָּל הַנְּבִיאִים וּשְׁלָחוֹ.

He brought forth Moshe our teacher, the master of all the prophets, and sent him.

כִּיּוֹן שֶׁנִּתְנַבֵּא מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ וּבָחַר ה' יִשְׂרָאֵל לְנַחֲלָה

Once Moshe our teacher prophesied, and Hashem chose Israel for an inheritance,

הִכְתִּירָן בְּמִצְוֹת וְהוֹדִיעָם דֶּרֶךְ עֲבוֹדָתוֹ

He crowned them with mitzvos, and made known to them the way of His service,

וּמָה יִהְיֶה מִשְׁפַּט עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים וְכָל הַטּוֹעִים אַחֲרֶיהָ:

and what shall be the law of star worship and of all those who err after it.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter traces the historical descent of humanity from the initial, mistaken honor given to the stars in the generation of Enosh, through the rise of false prophets who commanded the worship of physical images, until the true knowledge of Hashem was almost entirely forgotten. This darkness prevailed until our father, Avraham Avinu, used his own intellect to

recognize the Creator, began teaching the truth to the world, and established a nation dedicated to the service of the one true God, a legacy that Moshe Rabbeinu later sealed with the giving of the Torah.

למעשה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

The great tragedy of the generation of Enosh was not that they denied Hashem; they knew He was the Creator. Their mistake was looking at the "stars and spheres", the natural systems, the powerful forces, and the influential people of the world, and deciding that they needed to flatter and serve these middlemen to get what they wanted. They believed that honoring the king's ministers was the way to honor the King. Over time, this subtle shift in focus completely erased the memory of Hashem from their hearts, leaving them in total darkness.

We often make the very same mistake in our daily lives. When we worry about our parnassah, our health, or our standing, we are tempted to put all our energy into flattering the "middlemen." We might think we must bow to the demands of the market, appease influential people at the expense of our values, or rely entirely on natural means. We tell ourselves we still believe in Hashem, but our focus and trust have shifted to the creation rather than the Creator.

Like Avraham Avinu, who looked past the stars and realized there must be a single Guide directing the wheel, we have to look past the natural causes in our lives. True emunah means knowing that no boss, no doctor, and no financial system has any power of its own. They are merely tools in the hand of Hashem. When we direct our hearts solely to Him, we free ourselves from the anxiety of serving the world.

Today, when you find yourself worrying about a natural obstacle or trying to please someone for your own success, stop and remind yourself: "This person or situation is just a star in the sky. Only Hashem runs the world." Direct your request and your trust to Him alone.