

Rabbi David Wolpe's

# *Off The Pulpit*

December 18, 2014

## **Work!**

In 1974, the late Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote a letter to Eric Hoffer, the great longshoreman-philosopher and author of *The True Believer*. Hoffer had worked hard all his life, on the docks of San Francisco, and as a migrant farm laborer when younger. Moynihan wrote to him:

"So much of what you have written has about it the quality of revelation. Nothing has meant more to me than the passage in your article in The New York Times Magazine of October 20 in which you write 'Marx never did a day's work in his life....' How can it be that in all these years of wondering what was wrong with that man, this one elemental fact never occurred to me. I shall never think of him in the same way again. And it is about time."

Our sages praise work. Rab said to Rav Kahana: "If necessary make your living by dressing hides in the

marketplace. Do not say 'I am a Priest, a great man, such work is beneath me (Pes 113a).'" Describing Shabbat the Torah says, six days shall you work and rest on the seventh. That statement is not only about rest, but about working. Children of a Creator God, we are expected to create. In every generation it bears repeating — work is a badge of honor.

Rabbi Wolpe's new book *David: The Divided Heart* is available now.