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**How to Deal with Elokim’s Strict Judgements**

**By Daniel Keren**

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**Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser**

One of the featured speakers at last month’s Martin Luther King Jr. legal holiday Hakhel Yarchei Kallah Event in the Flatbush shul of the Agudath Israel of Madison was Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser, internationally renowned Maggid Shiur and Rav of Khal Bais Yitzchok. He spoke on the topic of “Finding Meaning in Times of Din (Strict Judgement).”

There is a fascinating Gemara, Rabbi Goldwasser pointed out that teaches if one sees a generation in which so many difficulties have come upon Klal Yisroel (the Jewish nation,) this is a sign from shomayim (heaven) that the geulah (the long-awaited redemption) is coming soon.

We do know that all of the things that are happening to us are beyond our ability to properly understand, as Hashem told Moshe (Exodus 33:19-20) and as reiterated by the Rambam that G-d’s knowledge is beyond our knowledge. Moshe was able to perceive Hashem to an extent that most people cannot because he had no personal interests other than doing the will of Hashem.

Rabbi Goldwasser recalled that the Bach (Rabbi Yoel ben Shmuel Sirkis, 1561-1640) enjoyed many incredible chiddushim (unique insights into important Torah concepts.) But at first he was simply unable to remember them in order to write them down in seforim to share with other Torah scholars and students. This pained him greatly. Then he realized just how great was the pain that Hashem Himself was enduring because of His love and concern for His children, the Jewish people as they were being persecuted in galus, exile from their promised homeland in Eretz Yisroel.

At that moment the Bach forgot about his own frustration about not remembering his chidushim and instead began reciting heartfelt Tikun Chatzos (lamentation prayers that mourned the suffering of the Shechinah – the Divine Presence in exile.) After this change in the attitude of the Bach regarding the pain of Hashem, he found within himself a new spiritual inspiration and was able to recall his chidushim and thereby author many inspiring seforim that are still studied by Torah scholars to this very day.

When an individual who sees in his own life the aspects of Elokim’s din (judgement), one should not focus too much on his effort to try and understand why that difficulty has occurred to him. Otherwise in trying to comprehend why Elokim’s din has come upon him, he my make a pegam (a spiritual mistake) and completely act inappropriately and cause more misfortunes upon himself.

Rabbi Goldwasser recalled an individual who once came to him and broke down completely because the doctor had told him that there was no hope for a close relative who was seriously ill. Rabbi Goldwasser explained that the doctor has no power to make such dire declarations. He took the opportunity to explain and encourage that in such situations one should endeavor to utilize the powerful segulah of helping a poor kallah with money so she can get married without having to delay her scheduled wedding.

This person left Rabbi Goldwasser’s office and after a search he indeed found a couple that desperately needed money in order to get married. He took upon himself to pay for their entire chasanah. Later on, he called Rabbi Goldwasser and joyfully invited him to a seudah hodah, a festive meal to celebrate the “miraculous” refuah sheleima, healing of his close relative.

Rabbi Goldwasser also emphasized the importance of being mechazek (strengthening and supporting) those who devote their lives to Torah, either as rabbanim or as Torah teachers. We should all encourage the rebbeim and morahs who teach our children and try to make sure that they get paid good salaries. Similarly, we should also go out of our way to praise Torah scholars.

Like Yosef HaTzadik we should try to be careful with the mitzvah of eynayim, making a strong effort to guard our eyes from not looking at inappropriate things. Another thing, that can protect one from the terrible pains of chevlei Moshiach is to eat Shalosh Seudah, the third meal of Shabbos. This might mean leaving over the desert from you day meal in order to ensure that you have room left in your stomach for this important Third Meal of Shabbos.

Concluding, Rabbi Goldwasser said that if we no matter how simple we think we are, we can make an effort to sincerely daven for another person’s problems, we should know that we have an incredible koach, spiritual power to help that individual in his or her particular need. Not only can we pray for others, but we also have the ability to daven for his own yeshuah (salvation) if indeed we can focus enough to daven with the proper kavanah, concentration.

*Reprinted from the February 21, 2025 edition of the Jewish Connection.*

**Thoughts that Count**

*And these are the judgments that you shall set before them* (Ex. 21:1)

As Rashi explains, the Torah juxtaposes "civil" laws with the laws of the altar, to teach that the Jewish Court must be located next to the Temple. To Jews, societal laws are holy. In the same way that the sacrificial offerings in the Temple were a Divine service, so too are the Torah's laws of interpersonal behavior a way for the Jew to serve G-d in his daily life. *(Avnei Ezel)*

*On the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest* (Ex. 23:12)

A Jew's rest on Shabbat should be so forceful and intense that it exerts an influence on his surroundings, including his animals. Indeed, the Talmud relates the story of Rabbi Yochanan ben Torta's cow, which refused to work on Shabbat after it was sold to a non-Jew. *(The Admor of Gur)*

*Reprinted from Parshat Mishpatim 5762/2002 edition of L’Chaim*

**Rav Avigdor Miller on the Frum Man Who Doesn’t Help His Wife**

**In the Kitchen or with the Children**

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And the answer is, it depends on the circumstances. Sometimes a man works very hard for parnassah and he has to take a lot of ill treatment from his boss or from competitors or from customers. Sometimes a man comes home so broken that the house is like a hospital for him. And therefore, he deserves a lot of consideration.

However, if it's a man who has a comparatively easy life and he comes home in good condition, there's no reason why he shouldn't help out a little bit. There should certainly be some token assistance, especially if the wife wants it.

Now, some women don't want the husband to putter around in the kitchen. They tell him to keep out of it. He's a lucky man. But even then, he should make some motions as if he's trying to help out until she tells him to go out. But there's no question at all everybody should feel it's his duty to help carry the burden of the house. June 1983

*Reprinted from a recent email of Toras Avigdor, - (based on a Thursday night tape November 1991)*

**Connecting Oneself to G-d via**

**The Seemingly “Logical” Mitzvot**

**From the Teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

**Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, Zt”l**



Last week we read about the Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. This week, in the portion of Mishpatim, we begin learning the specific commandments the Torah contains.

There are three categories of mitzvot in the Torah: Chukim (statutes) are commandments that are above our understanding. Eidot (testimonies) are mitzvot that we would not have arrived at without the Torah. However, once G-d commanded us to obey them, we are able to understand their rationale. Mishpatim (judgments) are simple commandments that are compelled by human logic, laws that society would keep even if the Torah had not commanded their observance.

Most of the Torah portion of Mishpatim deals with these seemingly self-evident laws. Which leads to the following question:

After the extraordinary spectacle at Mount Sinai, why does the Torah stress the rational category of mitzvot, as opposed to the others? Furthermore, why was a supernatural revelation necessary for rules and regulations we would have figured out on our own?

The answer is that the Torah is teaching us how to relate to the whole concept of rational mitzvot. The natural inclination is to base these mitzvot on our intellectual understanding. It hardly seems even necessary to believe in G-d to arrive at the conclusion that it is wrong to harm others, or that we must compensate someone we have injured. These principles are patently obvious.

However, by enumerating the "logical" judgments first, the Torah emphasizes that even these mitzvot must be observed out of faith in G-d. We obey the Torah's rational laws not because they are logical, but because G-d has commanded us to obey them. Indeed, the only basis and source of all mitzvot, regardless of whether or not we understand them, is our Divinely-given Torah.

This is important for several reasons:

A truly ethical life cannot be based on the human intellect, as it is simply too flexible and open to manipulation by the will. If a person really wants to do something, not only will he develop a philosophy by which such action is justified, but he will even turn it into a "mitzva"! The human mind can also devise logical "proofs" for contradictory theorems. It is thus too unreliable a foundation for a moral existence.

Moreover, just as G-d is Infinite and without end, so too is His holy Torah. Even the simplest and most logical mitzvot are endlessly deep. If a Jew observes a mitzva only because he understands it, he misses out on all its inner significance.

By basing our observance on faith, we ensure that our moral system will be stable and unwavering. We also connect ourselves to G-d through even the most "logical" of mitzvot.

*Reprinted from Parshat Mishpatim 5762/2002 edition of L’Chaim, a publication of the Lubavitcher Youth Organization. Adapted from Volumes 16 and 3 of Likutei Sichot*

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*You shall serve the L-rd your G-d, and He shall bless your bread and your water* (Ex. 23:25)

Why is "You shall serve the L-rd your G-d" in the plural, whereas "your bread" and "your water" are in the singular? Commented the Kotzker Rebbe: When it comes to the service of G-d, i.e., prayer, even if every individual Jew were to pray by himself, the words join together to form a communal prayer. By contrast, when it comes to eating, many people can dine at the same table, but each is ultimately eating and drinking individually.

*Reprinted from Parshat Mishpatim 5762/2002 edition of L’Chaim*

**Rabbi Berel Wein on**

**Parshat Yitro 5785**

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A viable legal system is of necessity composed of two parts. One is the law itself, the rules that govern society and are enforced by the proper designated legal authorities. The other part of the legal system is the moral, transcendental value system that governs human and societal behavior generally. If the legalities and rules are the body - the corpus of the legal system, then the value system and moral imperatives that accompany those rules are the soul and spirit of that legal system.

In a general sense, we can say that the Written Law represents the body of the legal system while the accompanying Oral Law represents the soul and spirit of Jewish jurisprudence and Jewish societal life and its mores and behavior. The Written Law is interpreted and tempered by the Oral Law that accompanies it, and both of these systems are Divine in origin.

And, it is perfectly understandable how, for instance, “an eye for an eye” in Jewish law means the monetary value of the injury must be paid to the victim of that injury but not that the perpetrator’s eye should also be put out as punishment for his behavior. In the Talmud we have many examples of the overriding moral influence of the Oral Law when applied to the seemingly strict literal words of the Written Law. The rabbis of the Talmud taught us that there is even a third layer to Jewish law that governs those that wish to be considered righteous in the eyes of man and G-d and that is the concept of going beyond what the law – even the Oral Law – requires of us.

So, when studying this week’s parsha of laws, rules and commandments we must always bear in mind the whole picture of Jewish jurisprudence in its many layers and not be blinded by adopting a purely literal stance on the subject matter being discussed by the Torah in the parsha. Throughout the ages, the process of halachic decision-making has been subject to this ability to see the forest and not just the trees, to deal with the actual people involved and not only with the books and precedents available concerning the issue at hand. Every issue is thus debated, argued over, buttressed and sometimes refuted by opposing or supporting sources. Independence of thought and creativity of solutions are the hallmarks of the history of rabbinic responsa on all halachic issues.

There are issues that are seemingly decided on the preponderance of soul and spirit over the pure letter of the law. There is the famous responsa of the great Rabbi Chaim Rabinowitz of Volozhin who allowed a woman, whose husband had disappeared, to remarry though the proof of her husband’s death was not literally conclusive. He stated there that he made “an arrangement with my G-d” that permitted her to remarry.

This is but one example of many similar instances strewn throughout rabbinic responsa of the necessary components of spirit and soul that combine with literal precedents that always exist in order to arrive at correct interpretations of the holy and Divine books of law that govern Jewish life.

*Reprinted from the current website of rabbiwein.com*

*And to bring you to the place that I have prepared* (Ex. 23:20)

This refers to the Land of Israel, which was "prepared" for the Jewish people at the beginning of creation, as the Torah states: "When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance...He set the borders of the peoples for the number of the Children of Israel." *(Rabbi Avraham ben HaRambam)*

*Reprinted from Parshat Mishpatim 5762/2002 edition of L’Chaim*

**Don’t Stop the Music**

**By Rabbi Yaakov Bender**



**Rabbi Shneur Kotler**

I remember the levayah of Rav Aharon Kotler, and how we accompanied the aron to the airport, from where it was to be flown to Eretz Yisrael for kevurah. In an unprecedented move, TWA Airlines had agreed not just to transport the aron to Eretz Yisrael in regular passage, removing several seats from the aircraft to allow for the space, but they had also consented to place a curtain around the aron and allow a group of talmidim to sit around it, continuing their shemirah until the kevurah.

It was a rare display of true kavod HaTorah for the America of those years, and the send-off from the airport was equally respectful, as befitting a levayah for a giant, a Rosh Yeshivah, a manhig, and a father to so many. Just after the levayah, his son and successor, Reb Shneur, was sitting in the airport and accepting nechamah from people, a line forming in front of him despite the din and commotion all around.

Somehow, Reb Shneur, the bereaved son, managed to pick up a heated discussion between some of the bachurim, though they were not in front of him. He called one of them over and asked what they were talking about. The talmid explained that there was a chasunah that night for one of their friends, but none of them felt it appropriate to go dance. They were simply too heartbroken.

Reb Shneur looked at him in surprise. “It is not even a shailah,” he said, “that just as you had a tafkid to mourn your rebbi, you now have a tafkid to be mesameiach a chassan and kallah. Why should the couple lose out on the simchah that is rightfully theirs because of what happened?”

Interestingly, I think that this might have been the first psak that Reb Shneur gave after assuming his father’s position, and it reflects his leadership. He had the unique ability to balance what sometimes appeared to be contradictory demands, to know how to fuse genuine yiras Shamayim with genuine simchah, to protect and safeguard the olam hayeshivos while radiating ahavas Yisrael and respect for each Yid.

Not long after the Second World War, Rav Michoel Ber Weissmandel met with the Satmar Rebbe. Later, he told his talmidim, “I have never seen a Yid whose heart is as broken as that of the Satmar Rebbe… he just covers it over with his smile.” The Satmar Rebbe carried the pain of the klal and of the yachid. He lived, as the Chovos HaLevavos tells us about tzaddikim who are constantly doing teshuvah, with “aveilo b’libo, his mourning in his heart, v’tzahalaso al panav, his joy on his face.” That balance made him such a great leader.

During this last period of war in Eretz Yisrael, when we heard bad news day after day, I received a call from the parents of a bar mitzvah boy. They wondered if they should cancel the music they had planned for their son’s bar mitzvah as a way of commiserating with those suffering in Eretz Yisrael. I told them that they absolutely should not cancel the music. Why should the boy lose out on something his friends had, and feel badly about it? And why should they absolve themselves with a mere external act of empathy?

Rather, I suggested, they keep the music. But instead, they should give their hearts. They should undertake to daven more and reflect more on the reality of people living under the threat of constant danger, of children whose schools are closed, parents who cannot work, fathers and brothers called away from home. When they feel the pain and distress, they should say a perek of Tehillim, and then go dance at the bar mitzvah. Both are possible, and that is what it means to be a Yid.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Shemos 5785 edition of At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table. (Excerpted from the new ArtScroll book – “A Heart for Another.”)*

**What You Need to Know About Wearing a Kippah**

**By**[**Yehuda Shurpin**](https://www.chabad.org/search/keyword_cdo/kid/15169/jewish/Shurpin-Yehuda.htm)



**Illustrated by Sefira Lighthouse**

**Who Should Wear a Kippah?**

It’s proper for all Jewish males starting from the age of three to wear a *kippah*. Many families start even earlier.[5](javascript:doFootnote('5a6773950');)

Women generally don’t cover their heads until marriage, at which point they fully cover their hair as well. One explanation for this difference is that men, by nature, need more external reminders of G‑d’s presence.[6](javascript:doFootnote('6a6773950');)

**When Should You Wear a Kippah?**

In ancient times, a head covering was only required when mentioning G‑d’s name or, according to some opinions, inside a synagogue. Wearing it at all times was considered an act of piety.

Today, however, wearing a *kippah* is an obligation at all times. You shouldn’t walk or sit with an uncovered head, even indoors. And, of course, you always need to have a head covering when mentioning G‑d’s Name.

You don’t need to wear a head covering while showering, bathing or swimming, or while engaging in other activities not done with clothing on.

**What About Sleeping?**

Common custom is to wear a *kippah* even while sleeping.[7](javascript:doFootnote('7a6773950');) (Pro tip: Get a larger one for sleeping so it stays on through the night!)

What Size Should a Kippah Be?

Some halachic authorities are of the opinion that a *kippah* should cover the majority of your skull's circumference.[8](javascript:doFootnote('8a6773950');) Others hold that the exact size doesn’t matter as long as it’s visible from whichever direction people look at you.[9](javascript:doFootnote('9a6773950');) Many authorities agree that during prayer, extra effort should be made to ensure it covers most of the head.[10](javascript:doFootnote('10a6773950');)

**What Material Can the Head Covering Be Made From?**

While a traditional *kippah* is preferred, technically, any head covering suffices, even a very thin one.[11](javascript:doFootnote('11a6773950');) A baseball cap or straw hat, for example, would be a valid head covering.

**Can You Use Your Hand as a Head Covering?**

If your *kippah* falls off and you have nothing to cover your head with, you can cover your head with your hand and sit or walk without a *kippah*. However, your own hand does *not* count as a valid covering for saying a blessing or mentioning G‑d’s name.[12](javascript:doFootnote('12a6773950');)

If someone else places their hand on your head, that *does* count as a proper covering, even for blessings and prayers.[13](javascript:doFootnote('13a6773950');)

**Why Do Some People Wear a Hat AND a Kippah?**

Many have the custom of wearing an additional head covering, such as a hat, during prayers and other religious observances. This “double covering” is seen as an added level of respect. (For more on this, see [Why Wear Both a Kippah and a Hat?](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/3102418/jewish/Why-Wear-Both-a-Kippah-and-a-Hat.htm))

**What If I'm Entering an “Inappropriate Place”?**

If, for whatever reason, a person is going to a place not suited for a religious Jew—such as a non-kosher restaurant—he should still keep his head covered. After all, two wrongs don’t make a right.[14](javascript:doFootnote('14a6773950');)

Wearing a *kippah* is a daily reminder of our connection to G‑d, our Jewish identity, and our commitment to living a life of faith.

**Footnotes**

[1.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/6773950/jewish/What-You-Need-to-Know-About-Wearing-a-Kippah.htm" \l "footnoteRef1a6773950) Talmud, Shabbat 156b.

[2.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/6773950/jewish/What-You-Need-to-Know-About-Wearing-a-Kippah.htm" \l "footnoteRef2a6773950) *Shulchan Aruch Harav, Orach Chaim, Mahadura Basra* 2:6.

[3.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/6773950/jewish/What-You-Need-to-Know-About-Wearing-a-Kippah.htm" \l "footnoteRef3a6773950) Ibid.

[4.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/6773950/jewish/What-You-Need-to-Know-About-Wearing-a-Kippah.htm" \l "footnoteRef4a6773950) Ibid; See also Shulchan Menachem vol. 1 pg 14.

[5.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/6773950/jewish/What-You-Need-to-Know-About-Wearing-a-Kippah.htm" \l "footnoteRef5a6773950) Shulchan Menachem vol. 5 pg. 27; See also Sicha, Simchas Torah night 5736, Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 1 pg 88 that this is also regarding sleeping with a head covering.

[6.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/6773950/jewish/What-You-Need-to-Know-About-Wearing-a-Kippah.htm" \l "footnoteRef6a6773950) Lubavitcher Rebbe in a handwritten reply to Rabbi Groner (published in *Kfar Chabad*magazine, no. 1908, p. 38).

[7.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/6773950/jewish/What-You-Need-to-Know-About-Wearing-a-Kippah.htm" \l "footnoteRef7a6773950) See Mishnah Berurah 2:11 and Piskei Teshuvos 2:9 fn. 61 that nowadays it is possibly a halachic requirement. See also Sefer Hasichos 5691 pg. 177.

[8.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/6773950/jewish/What-You-Need-to-Know-About-Wearing-a-Kippah.htm" \l "footnoteRef8a6773950) See, for example, Shut *Ha’elef Lecha Shlomo,* 3; *Likutei Maharich, seder Levishas Begadim*.

[9.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/6773950/jewish/What-You-Need-to-Know-About-Wearing-a-Kippah.htm" \l "footnoteRef9a6773950) Shut*Igrot Moshe, Orach Chaim* 1:1.

[10.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/6773950/jewish/What-You-Need-to-Know-About-Wearing-a-Kippah.htm" \l "footnoteRef10a6773950) See Piskei Teshuvot 2:9 and fn. 61.

[11.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/6773950/jewish/What-You-Need-to-Know-About-Wearing-a-Kippah.htm" \l "footnoteRef11a6773950) *Shulchan Aruch Harav, Orach Chaim*, 91:4.

[12.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/6773950/jewish/What-You-Need-to-Know-About-Wearing-a-Kippah.htm" \l "footnoteRef12a6773950) *Shulchan Aruch Harav, Orach Chaim, Mahadura Basra* 2:6; *Mishnah Berurah* 2:11.

[13.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/6773950/jewish/What-You-Need-to-Know-About-Wearing-a-Kippah.htm" \l "footnoteRef13a6773950) *Shulchan Aruch Harav, Orach Chaim*, 91:3-4.

[14.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/6773950/jewish/What-You-Need-to-Know-About-Wearing-a-Kippah.htm" \l "footnoteRef14a6773950) *Igrot Moshe, Orach Chaim* 2:95,*Yoreh De’ah* 2:33.

Reprinted from the current website of Chabad.Org

**A Divine Spigot**

**By Rabbi Shlomo Landau**

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**The Chofetz Chaim**

Two wealthy timber merchants arranged a meeting with the Chofetz Chaim to seek his guidance on what they believed to be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. A vast forest, rich with timber, was available for purchase, and acquiring it had the potential to elevate their business to an entirely new level. Before moving forward with such a significant investment, they wanted to consult the sage to determine whether they should proceed.

Seated before the Chofetz Chaim, they presented the details of the deal, explaining the financial potential and the strategic advantages of owning such a substantial resource. The Chofetz Chaim, however, simply shrugged and replied, “Listen, what do I know about business? My life is devoted to Torah and service to God. I am a Rosh Yeshiva, not a timber merchant. I do not own forests, nor do I deal in wood. But I would like to share a story with you.”

He then began.

“There was once a man who had come into a bit of money, and to celebrate, he decided to purchase a large barrel of wine. He visited the wine merchant, secured the barrel, loaded it onto his wagon, and transported it home. When he arrived, however, he found himself facing a challenge—this was no small cask, and moving it into his home was far more difficult than he had anticipated.

So, he went next door and knocked on his neighbor’s door.

‘Yankel,’ he said, ‘can you do me a favor? I just bought this enormous barrel of wine, but it’s too heavy for me to move by myself. Would you help me bring it inside?’

‘Of course!’ Yankel replied without hesitation. Together, the two men struggled under the weight of the barrel, carefully maneuvering it into the house. Once inside and settled, the owner of the wine turned to Yankel with appreciation.

‘You were a tremendous help,’ he said warmly. ‘I’d like to show my gratitude.’

He stepped over to a cabinet, retrieved two wine glasses, and turned the spigot on the barrel. As the deep red wine flowed into the glasses, he handed one to Yankel and said, ‘Let’s make a toast to celebrate and to show my appreciation for your kindness.’

They recited a blessing, clinked glasses, and took a sip. Yankel’s eyes lit up. ‘Ah! This is incredible! Some of the finest wine I’ve ever tasted.’

Then, after a moment of contemplation, Yankel said, ‘I have an idea. You know, I think I know how you could get even more wine out of this barrel.’

Intrigued, the man asked, ‘Really? How?’

‘It’s simple! Just install another spigot! If you add another tap, you’ll have even more wine flowing from the barrel.’

The owner chuckled and shook his head. ‘Yankel, my dear friend, adding another spigot doesn’t create more wine—it only makes what’s already in the barrel flow out faster. If you could tell me a way to actually *increase* the wine itself, now *that* would be something remarkable.’

The Chafetz Chaim looked at the timber merchants and said, ‘The same principle applies to livelihood and wealth. The Almighty has already decreed the exact amount of money you are destined to earn in your lifetime. That livelihood, that sustenance, is like the wine in the barrel—it is fixed and predetermined. Right now, that sustenance is flowing to you through a single spigot, which is your current timber business. You are considering purchasing another forest because you believe that adding another source will increase your wealth. But who says you need it? Who says the money won’t continue to flow just as it has, through the same single channel?

“I would advise you to consider investing in something far greater than another business venture. Think about investing in eternity. The time you would spend purchasing and managing this new forest could be dedicated to something far more enduring—studying Torah, deepening your spiritual growth. If you are concerned about your financial gain, rest assured that the Almighty is fully capable of channeling the same sustenance through one avenue just as easily as He could through two. Nothing will be lacking.”

The two merchants took this to heart. They chose not to purchase the new forest. Instead, they carved out time in their daily schedules to study Torah, ensuring that their spiritual growth was just as much a priority as their financial success.

And what became of the forest? It was ultimately purchased by a Polish landowner, a non-Jewish businessman, who invested heavily in the venture. He hired teams to cut down the timber, prepared for large-scale distribution, and anticipated a massive return on his investment. But nature had other plans. Torrential rains swept through the region, turning the roads into deep, impassable mud. The timber could not be transported, and before long, it began to rot where it lay. The man suffered catastrophic financial losses and, in his despair, tragically took his own life.

Meanwhile, the two Jewish merchants continued their business as they always had, drawing their livelihood from the same spigot that had sustained them all along. Yet, by choosing to invest their time in Torah, they had acquired an entirely new barrel—one not of timber, but of eternity.

The Chofetz Chaim’s advice rings true. “I am not here to provide practical business advice on whether you should expand or diversify your investments. That is not my role. But what I do want you to understand is that sustenance comes from G-d, and it flows exactly as He wills—whether through one channel, two, or three, it remains the same flow. Do not overextend yourselves in pursuit of wealth at the expense of what truly matters. Ensure that you are also investing in eternity. Make time to learn Torah every single day. Do not let the pursuit of livelihood consume your entire life.”

*Reprinted from the Parashat Beshalach 5785 edition of the TorahAnytimes Newsletter.*