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by Rabbi Yaakov Finestone

YOU CAN'T TOUCH IT!

PARSHAS EMOR

On Jan. 12, 2019, a fire destroyed Yossi's Fish Market on 13th Avenue and 54th Street in Boro Park. Shea Langsam, the owner of Fish to Dish, offered Yossi's Fish Market a temporary location inside his own, competing store which was just a few blocks away.

"While we are a community that is known for its chesed (kindness), the act of offering a direct competitor into your own storefront truly goes above and beyond," said Assembly Member Simcha Eichenstein. "Fish to Dish is setting a new bar for what it means to be a neighbor and business owner in our community." (Yeshiva World News, February 4, 2019)

The **Ben Ish Chai**, in his Commentary Ben Yehoyada (Tractate Yoma, 38A), cites an interesting story:

A jar filled with precious stones was hidden in the ground. Every summer, groups of people would pitch their tents in the ground, near the jar of precious stones.

Even though they hammered stakes, metal poles, into the ground to pitch their tents, they did not come across the jar of precious stones. This routine went on for many years. However, no one found the jar of precious stones. Once, a different person came to the area. He hammered his stake in the ground and immediately found the jar of precious gems.

This story teaches us that no person can take what Hashem designated to go to another person.

*"He shall put the incense on the fire before Hashem and the cloud of incense will cover the Ark-cover...."
(Vayikra 16:13)*

The **Talmud** (Yoma 38A) discusses the family of Avtinas, experts in preparing the ketores, the incense that was burned in the Bais HaMikdash. They were the only ones who knew the secret of how to properly prepare the ketores so that its smoke went straight up,

like a stick. When asked by the sages, they refused to teach the secret to others. The sages dismissed them and brought craftsmen from Alexandria, Egypt. The Alexandrian craftsmen knew how to blend the spices, but they could not cause the smoke to rise straight up like a stick, as the House of Avtinas could. **Rashi** explains that the Alexandrian craftsmen did not know which particular herb to use to enable the smoke to rise straight up. When the sages saw the failure of the Alexandrian craftsmen, they asked the people from the House of

Avtinas to return to their original position. The members of the House of Avtinas refused to return until the sages doubled their wages. The sages asked them why they refused to teach others the secret of their craft. They said, “The members of our father’s house knew that the Beis HaMikdash, is destined to be destroyed. They were concerned lest an unworthy man learn the skill of preparing incense and use that in idol worship.” Therefore, they attempted to prevent this skill from spreading beyond their family. The **Talmud**

comments, “And for this matter they are mentioned favorably.”

Ben Azzai learned from the fact that the sages had to rehire the family of Avtinas, and at double their previous salary, that **one should never be concerned lest others take away his livelihood.**

Accordingly, one should never feel the need to be dishonest since he can never acquire that which Hashem did not designate for him. Even if it appears that he “gained” some money, there are many ways that Hashem has, to take it away from him.

We have full faith that Hashem provides a livelihood for everyone.

Hashem designates a particular portion for each individual.

We will each receive exactly that which Hashem wants us to have, no more and no less.

No other person can touch that which is prepared for us by Hashem.

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