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by Rabbi Yaakov Finestone

## THE BEST PROTECTIVE ARMOR THAT YOU CAN GET

### PARSHAS VAYERA

**Rav Yisroel Brog** quoted a true, fascinating story in the name of the **Chofetz Chaim** zt"l. Rabbi Eliyahu from Lita used to travel to different towns in Europe to strengthen their Torah and mitzvah observance. Once he stayed in an inn in a small village that belonged to a Jew. Rabbi Eliyahu spoke to the Jew about having *bitachon*, having trust in Hashem and realizing that Hashem is the source of all blessing, including one's livelihood. The owner of the inn responded that thank G-D, he could take care of himself and did not need Hashem's help. He felt that he was a smart and successful businessman and did not require heavenly assistance. He owned fields, a forest, a mill that the whole village used, and an inn with a bar that all the villagers frequented. He was very wealthy. He felt that he had everything planned perfectly and that his wealth was guaranteed. Speaking strongly, Rav Eliyahu told the innkeeper that he should take back his words before it was too late since Hashem was the only one who made one wealthy or poor. The innkeeper ignored the rebuke. After his travels, Rabbi Eliyahu returned to his hometown. He visited the poor house where the poor of the city were able to get a bed to sleep on and a meal to eat. He went to see if there was anything that they needed.

To his surprise, he met the innkeeper from the other village. He asked him what he was doing there. The innkeeper said that a platoon of Russian soldiers crossed the bridge near his mill. One of the slats on the bridge broke and the Russian officer fell through the hole, almost losing his life. The officer believed that the innkeeper had been negligent and had purposely wanted to prevent the Russian soldiers from crossing the bridge. The officer was planning to imprison the innkeeper and bring him to a military court, with a bad outcome likely. When the innkeeper found out about this, he ran away for his life. He was unable to return home and was now penniless. He started crying. Rabbi Eliyahu gently asked him if he still believed that a person can be rich or poor on his own, without Hashem. The innkeeper agreed that he had been wrong. One's income is totally from Hashem. Clearly, Hashem

*"Behold! I have two daughters who have never known a man, I will bring them out to you, and do with them as you please; only do nothing to these men, since after all, they came under the shelter of my roof." (Bereishis 19:8)*

wanted him to understand that and that is why these events had occurred to the innkeeper. Rav Eliyahu told the innkeeper to strengthen his belief in Hashem. Rav Eliyahu then invited the innkeeper to stay in his house while Rav Eliyahu contacted the Russian authorities. He was able to convince them that the bridge mishap had been a total

accident. The innkeeper was, then, able to return home, back to his wealth.

Two angels came to Sodom. One came to destroy the city because of the cruelty of the people. The other angel came to save Lot. Lot had shown hospitality and had invited the angels into his home. Almost immediately, the people of Sodom surrounded Lot's house. They demanded that Lot send the travelers out of his house so that the people of Sodom could molest them. Lot requested that they spare his guests since "after all, they came

under the shelter of my [Lot's] roof." (Bereishis 19:8) The **Chofetz Chaim** zt"l (Chofetz Chaim Al HaTorah) explains that focal point of Lot's defense on behalf of his guests was that they relied on him

to ensure that nothing would happen to them. Since Lot had invited them and they had put their trust in him, Lot felt responsible to do all that he could to save them.

**The Chofetz Chaim zt"l continues with comforting words. Lot felt responsible for his guests because they had put their trust in him. Therefore, he tried to save them.**

**"ומעתה קל וחמר בן בנו של קל וחמר, אם אנו נסמוך ונבטח בד' מעוזנו, בטח יגן עלינו לחלצינו מכל רע ולהטיב לנו."**

**Certainly, how much more so, if we rely on and put our trust and faith in Hashem, Hashem will DEFINITELY protect us from all harm and will shower goodness on us.**

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*Rabbi Yaakov Finestone is the director of JEP Queens. For almost 50 years JEP Queens has been in the forefront of kiruv. JEP has changed the lives of thousands of Jewish children enrolled in public schools and kiruv schools. Many are shomrei Torah and mitzvos today because of JEP.*

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