

## Avoiding the Mud - A Jewish Folktale

(Adapted from YouTube Channel BimBam)

Many years ago, in the village of Premishlan, lived a pair of very good friends as different as could be. Reb Yisrael of Ruzhin, and Reb Meir of Premishlan. While Reb Yisrael lived like a king, owning a pair of boots made of solid gold and studded with diamonds, Reb Meir didn't have enough money for new boots with less than four holes in them. Despite his poverty, he spent his days working tirelessly to help the needy. He was known to say, "God loves the poor and helps the rich." Reb Yisrael was not ashamed of his wealth, he once said, "It is only with God's blessing that I was made rich. And who am I to argue with God?"

One day these two, the embodiments of grand luxury and of the bare minimum, happened upon each other on the road.

"My friend!" Said Reb Yisrael.

"Such a pleasure to run into you here!" Replied Reb Meir.

"Yes, indeed! Tell me something, I have four strong horses leading my coach. That way if it gets stuck in the mud, as it just did, they will be able to pull it free. But it looks to me as though your horse can barely carry you and your cart. Even on a dry road, I'm sure soon you will come to a patch of mud, and then what will you do? Why do you take such a risk?"

"My friend, I think the risk is yours. Because my horse could never free the wagon from a patch of mud, I'm very careful to avoid the mud. You are sure you can get free, and so you don't pay attention to where you're heading."