

# Bewitched

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A number of years ago I wrote a dvar Torah for Parshat Mishpatim. Please [read it](#).

This is based on that same verse, “Do not allow a witch to live” (Exodus 22:17).

I appreciate that there are all different types of people. Different levels and types of intelligence, personalities and preferences. Even without my own personal experience of this, Chazal (our Sages, of blessed memory) long ago said about us Jews: Each one has his own mind, different from all the others (*Berakhot* 58a). So I know what I say satisfies some of the people all of the time, and some of the people some of the time, and some people none of the time.

It is very distressing that many people build their faith in Judaism or their practice of Judaism on the flimsy foundation of “magic,” on promises made to them that they will have financial success, marital bliss or health. I’m not talking about guarantees made by charlatans in rabbinic-clothing. I’m talking about blessings and assurances offered by sincere, well-meaning people (basing themselves on who-knows-what). Some go so far as to promise the whole pie, trumpeting that Mashiach is absolutely, definitely and certainly coming by [pick-a-date] or “will come this year, or

by the end of next year.” (One well-known rabbi made this claim on his web site—in 2005!)

My point is *not* to not have *emunah* (faith)—God forbid! The Torah herself tells us that if we properly observe God’s laws, we will be materially rewarded. And we believe whole-heartedly that *today’s* the day that Mashiach’s gonna come!

My point is *have emunah*, but **“Do not allow a witch”**—magical results, **“to live”**—to be vital to your Jewishness!

Because a Jewishness and Judaism built on hocus-pocus is bound to fall. To survive—and flourish—one’s Jewishness has to be founded on *daat*, a combination of *emunah* and an honest eye, that is greater than the sum of its parts.

May we be worthy to properly follow Rebbe Nachman’s advice and have everything good, in this world and the next. Amen.

(Based on *Likutey Moharan* I. Lesson #255)