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HOW TO DEAL WITH FEARS AND ANXIETIES



FROM THE SHIURIM OF

HARAV YISROEL BROG שליט"א

ROSH HAYESHIVA, YESHIVAS TIFERES AVIGDOR
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DIFFERENT TYPES OF FEARS

Today, we're going to discuss the subject of fears.¹ Nowadays, it's a very, very common problem. Now, there are two types of fears that people deal with. There are the everyday fears. I'm afraid to *shteig*. I'm afraid I'm not going to *shteig*. I'm afraid to give up something in my life while I gain the other thing that I'm giving it up for. People are afraid to give up bad friends. People are afraid they won't get jobs. They're afraid they'll lose jobs. People are afraid they won't get married. They're afraid, will they stay married? People are afraid, will they have children? Will they not have children? Will their children be healthy? Will their children live? Will they get into accidents? Fall down the steps? Fall over the railing? Run into the street? We live in a world like this. You don't understand to what degree many of these fears permeate the world.

HASHEM CALMS MOSHE RABEINU'S FEAR

In this week's *parshah*, Moshe Rabbeinu is sent on a mission by Hakadosh Baruch Hu to go into battle and face some fearsome enemies. Who's the enemy he's facing? Og Melech Habashan. He's a serious, scary dude. And he comes out, הוא וכל עמו למלחמה (Devarim 3:1). It says, ויאמר ה' אל משה, Hashem says to Moshe, אל תירא אותו, do not fear him, כי בידך נתתי אותו, because I have delivered him into your hand, ואת כל עמו ואת ארצו, and you're going to eat him for breakfast like you did to סיחון מלך האמרי אשר יושב בחשבון, The *passuk* proceeds to say, ויכו אותו ואת בניו עד בלתי, he went and he smote him and his children and *kol amo*, עד בלתי, השאיר לו שריד ויירשו את ארצו (v. 3).

Here we have what seems to be Moshe Rabeinu facing fear. And Hashem tells him, "Don't be afraid." Fear, you have to know, is something common. You meet many people today who have fear all the time - what's called anxiety attacks. It's very, very common. Even very successful people have them. I once had a doctor in my house. And I was talking to him and he said to me, "Excuse me. I'm going to have an anxiety attack now. Don't be afraid. Don't touch me." I said, "I'm not planning on doing that." And then, he lay down on my kitchen floor like a *meis* and began to do breathing techniques. He was there for approximately five minutes and then he got up and said, "Let's go *vaiter* now." I said, "What was that?!" He said, "That's how I deal with anxiety attacks."

THE ROOT OF REALISTIC FEARS - CHET

Now, there are people who are afraid of every kind of fear. The *gemara* in *Brachos* (60a) says as follows: ההוא תלמידא דהוה קא אזיל בתריה דרבי ישמעאל ברבי יוסי,

¹ This is Part 1 of the shiur. Part 2 was printed last year and is available for viewing or a download from the "Archive" section in our new website: www.sichosyisroel.com

there was a certain *talmid* who was walking behind Rabbi Yishmael beRabbi Yosi, בשוקא דציון, in the marketplace in Tzion. חזייה דקא מפחיד, the *rebbe* saw that the *talmid* was afraid. So, what do we say when we see somebody is afraid? "What are you afraid about?" We try to make him feel good. But Rabbi Yishmael ben Rabbi Yosi said otherwise. He told his *talmid*, "Let me tell you why you're afraid." אמר ליה, he turned to him and said, "הטאה את, you're a sinner. It says in the *passuk*, פחדו בציון חטאים, "sinners in Tzion are frightened" (Isaiah 33:14). אמר ליה, so the *talmid* was a *shtickel lamdan*. He says, "Rebbi, *shteit* in the *passuk*, אשרי אדם מפהד תמיד, "fortunate is the man who's constantly afraid" (Mishlei 28:14). So fear is a wonderful *zach*." But the *Rebbi gezugt*, אמר ליה, "You're not afraid of forgetting my *shiur*. You're not afraid of forgetting a *gemara*. If you're afraid you're not going to understand my *shiur* - Oh! That's a *gutte zach*. That's a good reason to be afraid. But we're walking in the street and you're just afraid of what's in the street - that's the wrong type of fear."

Now I don't think we're talking about a *talmid* who was neurotic, or a person who had a couple of loose screws. We're talking about a person who was in the street, and he had what to be afraid of. Maybe he saw a bunch of *goyim*, a *gantze* gang, roaming and looking like they're out for beer. They were looking for whom to pick on. A *shtickel* mob scene. They wanted to make a little '*laYehudim*'. So he got scared. But the *rebbe* said את הטאה, you are a sinner.

Now we have to study this. This is the *sugya*.

In the Torah Hakedoshah, who were the first ones that showed fear? If you want to understand a specific topic, you look at the first place in the Torah where you find it. Do you know the first place in the Torah where you find fear? By Adam and Chava. After they ate from the *eitz hada'as*, they were looking to hide. You don't hide when you're not afraid. What does Hashem call out to them? Hashem says, "*Ayekah*, where are you?" And what is Adam's response? "את קולך שמעתי בגן", I heard your voice in the garden, ואירא, and I became afraid" (Bereishis 3:10).

Now, what is Adam afraid of? Is this the first time that Adam is hearing Hashem's voice? No. He was never afraid until now. What caused this change, that all of a sudden, Adam was afraid? And the answer is our *neshamos* are a *chelek* of Hashem, בשמה שנתת בי טהורה היא אתה בראתה אתה יצרתה ואתה נפתחה בי, Hashem, You put this *neshamah* inside of me. And this *neshamah* is what doesn't give our innards rest.

If we don't keep the *mitzvos* of Hashem, if we sin, you have to know, our *neshamos* become nervous. It's like shooting paintballs on our *neshamah*, and a fear settles in our *neshamah*. The way we reflect on it is with *pachad*. *Pachad* is a result of your *neshamah* coming in contact with sin, and doing what it's not supposed to be doing.

THE FEELING OF FEAR AND THE SMELL OF SIN

Now, most of us have felt this feeling when we did something wrong. You're not living the right way. You're not doing the right thing. You feel unsettled. You look for diversions. You have to know, most people don't like to admit that they feel *pachad*, that they feel unsettled. Why? Because fear bothers them. Fear challenges them. It doesn't enable them to live responsibly.

I've understood this *yesod* for many, many years. I'll never forget there was a *bachur* in *yeshivah* that once came to me and he asked me, "Since I know you like psychology, I'd like you to tell me, what do you think of me?" And I told him, "The odor coming out of you is awful. Awful." So the guy instinctively bent his head to the right. Bent his head to the left. עשה שלום במרומיו הוא יעשה שלום עלינו. He said, "Nah, I can't smell anything. I took a shower this morning." I said, "The smell that's coming out of you is coming out from inside." He said, "What do you mean to say?" I said, "My friend, you must be into something so deeply wrong and so bad, because you're unsettled." I'll never forget this. He made a face, which told me right away that I hit the bull's eye. It was a defensive face. He waved with his hand. He went away. A long time went by, and we didn't talk. Maybe six or eight months. Then he came back to me and said, "What do you think now?" I said, "Now I can't be in the same room with you." He said, "What do you see? Today, I checked before I asked you. I made sure my clothes were changed. I was showered. I shaved. What are you talking about?" I told him this *yesod*. I said, "Let me tell you something. You have to realize that a person is connected to Hashem. You should not be so unsettled unless your connection is faltering."

READ THE SIGNS - ARE YOU HAPPY OR AFRAID?

Now, why would a person who's doing the right thing feel afraid? If you're doing the right thing, you know what you feel like? Euphoric. You feel happy. You feel pumped. You feel like a *mutzlach*. You're driving on the highway, knowing you're getting to your destination. You're accomplishing things. You feel great. That's natural. That's normal.

Any time you see a guy who looks afraid, who looks sad, who looks down, you know what you know? He's a *choteh* (sinner) because it says: פְּקֻדוֹ בְּצִיּוֹן חַטָּאִים, "sinners in Tzion are frightened" (ibid). It doesn't work otherwise! It's not natural to be down.

You have to know that's how a person is. If you're unhappy, if you're afraid, it's a sign of sin. When people are afraid, they exhibit all kinds of behaviors to try to feel settled. They do all kinds of things to hide their sins, just like Adam Harishon did. People hide either in their houses, or in their computers. Others hide in pizza shops, or in bowling alleys. Some hide in bed. They can't get out of bed. That's what it is, they're afraid. They can't get out of bed. It's all because of their fears.

You have to know, in our generation where *ruchniyus*, spirituality, is something we're far away from, every second guy you meet is *b'pachad*. All you have to do is scratch the surface a little bit and you will see it. People are afraid not only that something's going to happen to his kids, they're also afraid something's going to happen to their car. He's going to have an accident. He's afraid the plane's going to fall down. He's afraid that his business is going to go bankrupt. He's afraid he's going to get sick. There are so many sicknesses around. He's afraid of heart attacks from his stress, afraid of this, and afraid of that.

FEAR OF MAKING PERMANENT CHANGES

Today, *pachad* is one of the biggest stumbling blocks that prevents us from moving forward and *shteiging*. People are *pashut* petrified to obligate

themselves for more than five minutes of Torah learning a day. I am being serious.

I'll never forget going over to somebody on Rosh Hashanah, a fine fellow. I said to him, "Are you making a *kabbalah* for this year?" He said, "I don't know what to do. I don't know what to be *mekabel*." I said, "I'll think of something." He told me, "Don't make it too hard to me. Something small." I said, "*Kabalos* are always small." So I came back to him and I told him, "Be *mekabel* that next year, for five minutes every day you're going to learn Torah. Five minutes." He said, "I'll think about it." Twenty minutes later, I went up to him. I said, "*Nu?*" He told me, "I can't do it." I said, "Five minutes?!" "I can't do it." Fear of committing held him back.

People can't commit themselves to change. You go to a *frier* guy and say, "Don't you want to be *frum* and live happily?" You know what he says? "I'm afraid." You go to *yeshivah bachurim*. "Don't you want to *shteig*?" You hear the same answer. "I'm afraid." What are you afraid of?

There was one *yeshivah bachur* that I once worked with very strongly. He was involved with a lot of things. He was a *bachur* who grew up in a home that exposed him to a lot of garbage, and there were many things that gave him a sense of happiness, or what I call a diversion from his fear. It diverted him from facing his fears. Then I got him to rid himself of these things, and he gave up one thing and another and another. He was ready to commit. The guy had tremendous *kishronos*, tremendous potential, and all these things were holding him back.

One day, after he began relinquishing those habits, he approached me. He was a very intellectual fellow, a very smart fellow, he said, "You know, I was really giving this a lot of thought. I have to tell you that I'm petrified." I said, "What are you petrified about?" "I'll tell you what I'm petrified about." He said, "What you're asking me to do is to walk out onto the bridge, and leave my life on this side of the bridge, and to cross and to now take up occupancy on the other side of the bridge. The problem is I'm used to living on this side of the bridge, and as I take a step out and I look back, as long as I can see that side where I came from, I don't have a problem because I know I can go back there. But as I start getting a little far out on the bridge and I'm starting to lose sight of everything I lived with and all my habits and all my natures and all my friends - the things that made me happy, I feel you're convincing me to give it up and I don't see the other side, I become frightened." I told the guy, "My friend, that is such a beautiful depiction. That is phenomenal. I love that. *Mamash*." The guy was a thinker deluxe. He wanted to change. He desperately wanted to change. I said to him, "Listen, I'm not blowing up the bridge." That's what I answered. I said, "The bridge is fading. I will blow the bridge up eventually, but only after you get comfortable and settled on the other side. But until then, I promise you I won't put any mines at the foot of the bridge. You'll see you have nothing to fear."

A person has to understand that greatness in life is being able to commit yourself to life. Not for the moment. Greatness in life means you're able to say, "No, I'm not afraid. I'm going to look forward. I'm going to make it for the rest of my life."

When the Chazon Ish became *bar mitzvah*, he was *mekabel* upon himself to learn *Torah lishmah kol yamav!* Now, I don't know how he did it. If I would meet a kid today and he would tell me he's doing that, do you know what I would tell the kid? "You're fooling yourself. You must think you're dying tomorrow. You must not have any *musag* about life."

The greatest tragedy about fears is that people are afraid to commit themselves; they're afraid to throw themselves into the water and begin to swim away, or walk on the bridge away from what they've become accustomed to.

LIVING IN SYNC WITH HASHEM

(Participant question: Are you saying that these fears are unjustified?)

Totally. I will tell you what I see. Let me explain it to you. If a person would commit himself to live in harmony and in sync with Hashem he wouldn't have those fears.

I tell people the following: You don't have a choice. You're in Hashem's house. You're in Hashem's playground, whether you want to be there or don't want to be there. If you want to close your eyes and imagine He's not there, you could do that. But that doesn't change the reality. You have to know that if you're afraid to live in harmony and in sync with Hashem, that's your greatest fear. That fear is the source that can help you overcome your fears, and that's the thing that most people are afraid of. Now, you ask somebody, "Why are you afraid?" Does it mean if you get married, you'll never make a mistake in your life? Does it mean if you take a job, you'll never make a mistake? Does it mean if you commit to *shteig*, you'll never have a bad day in your life? No. But if you're afraid to commit, that fear becomes paralyzing. And the only reason why you didn't go forward in life to accomplish what you could have set out for yourself, is because of that fear. There's nothing to be afraid of.

Maybe a *frier* person doesn't know about Hashem, but a *frum* person knows about Hashem. He knows that's his only source of happiness. Living in sync with Hashem is the only source for all his happiness. It's the only source for him to overcome every single one of his fears. It's the only place. The only place you're going to find *menuchas hanefesh* is with Hashem. The best chance for you to avoid heart attacks is with Hashem. The best place you have to avoid going bust in your business is with Hashem. The best chance you have that the plane shouldn't fall down is if you have *bitachon* in Hashem. The best chance you have to avoid accidents is if you're in touch with Hashem. The best thing to watch your kids is Hashem. So you want to live in harmony with Hashem. That's what you want to do.

HASHEM IS YOUR SAFETY AND SOURCE OF HELP

You should know that closing your eyes when you are all by yourself and feeling that you're now alone in the world is the greatest source of fear that mankind has. Only if you open your eyes and you see Hashem, when you look toward Hashem, is the only chance you stand to make it in this world.

Dovid Hamelech says: גם כי אלך בגיא צלמות לא אירא רע כי אתה עמדי "though I walk in the valley of death, I shall not fear because You're with me" (Tehillim 23:4). Let's say you walk into a place where you need to be, like an airport or a

street. The Vilna Gaon gave us such a tremendous tool. Listen to what he says. You could be in the biggest garbage dump in the world, and the question is: What do you see? Do you see garbage? Or do you see Hashem? The Vilna Gaon tells us if you say *הנני הולך בגיא צלמות*, I am walking in the valley of death, and everybody around me are 'angels of death,' *malachei chabalah*, it's a *makom mesukan*. Then you say, *אנא ה' הישעני*, "Please Hashem, save me!" It's amazing how instantly you'll go from being in a massive airport with thousands upon thousands of people, to being in a cubicle, alone with Hashem. That's what happens. Dovid Hamelech sees death. There are *malachei chabalah* around him. You know what he says? *אתה עמדי*, "You are with me. I'm never alone."

The greatest source to counter my fear is knowing that Hashem is with me and that knowledge enables me to overcome my fears. The *yeshuah* comes if you know that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is with you and Hakadosh Baruch Hu is the only One who could help you - He is the *Kol Yachol*. Hashem wants to help you. Everything He does is for the best. So what difference does it make what *matzav* you are in or what surrounds you?

Now, you think Moshe Rabeinu didn't know this? Moshe Rabeinu knew this just as well as Dovid Hamelech, if not better. Here, Hakadosh Baruch Hu tells Moshe Rabeinu *אל תירא אותי*, this big, huge giant. Og Melech Habashan. He *taka* was a giant. He was far from regular folk. He was a whole powerful monster. Imagine a monster. That was Og. And he came with all his people. These were *nefilim*. These were giants. These were age-old giants. They instilled fear into the world, whoever knew them. Next to the Yiddelach, the Yiddelach looked like grasshoppers. When the *meraglim* went to do some little *meraglus*, they heard these people say, "What are these funny little grasshoppers looking like humans walking around?" That's a pretty *shtark* description. You could say short men, you know what I mean. The giants didn't think the *meraglim* were men. They thought they were grasshoppers who looked like men, not men who were short like grasshoppers.

WHY WAS MOSHE AFRAID?

Moshe Rabeinu comes to Hashem and Hashem tells him, *אל תירא אותי*. That would seem to imply that Moshe was afraid. How could it be? Moshe was with Hashem. Moshe was the *עניו מכל אדם*. Moshe was with Hashem, *Ish haElokim*. What was he afraid of?

So we take a look at Rashi who says: *שהיה משה ירא להלחם*, Moshe was afraid to fight these people. You know why? Not because he was afraid of monsters. It was because *שמא תעמוד לו זכותו של אברהם*, maybe the *zechus* of Avraham Avinu was on Og's side. That's why by Sichon, Hashem didn't tell Moshe *אל תירא אותי*. Moshe took out Sichon. Sichon was also a giant. Sichon was also a monster. Hashem didn't tell Moshe then, *אל תירא אותי*. You know why? Because Moshe wasn't afraid of Sichon. The reason Moshe was afraid of Og was because of the *zechusim* that Og had with Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Moshe was afraid that maybe the *zechus* of Avraham Avinu would stand by Og and save him. It says *ויבא הפליט*, and told Avraham that Lot was captured (Bereishis 14:13). So Moshe thought maybe Og had a *zechus*, and from *zechusim* you have to be afraid because that means Hashem is on that person's side. Therefore, Hakadosh Baruch Hu told Moshe *אל תירא אותי*, don't be afraid. You know what Hashem was telling him? *Og's zechusim*, Og's account is empty. He had a big bank account, the *zechus*

of Avraham, but it's been closed. Account closed. You have nothing to fear. The next *passuk* says ויכו אותו ואת בניו ואת כל עמו boom!

This *parshah* is guidance for us to understand all about fear.

THE ROOT OF UNREALISTIC FEARS - DIMYON

Now, there is a second part of this subject that we will discuss tomorrow, and that part of the subject is neurotic fear, or imaginary fear. There are people who have children who have nightmares. They wake up from the nightmare, and they scream and cry. They can't calm down. They say, "Mommy, Totty, I had a bad dream." It happens. And there are adults who have terrible dreams. We're going to teach you tomorrow where that comes from, how to overcome it, and how to deal with it. But that type of *pachad* is not coming from *cheit*.

That happens with people who are *medamyen*, their imagination goes wild. The root cause is due to 'loose equipment' and too many 'potholes.' That's where it comes from. It comes from when you get *shukeled* in life. You experience things. People have been in wars, concentration camps, and have had very difficult lives. There's a *mehalech* on how to deal with it, and I'm going to give you the tools so you should know how to deal with it in your own life if you ever have such a thing, or with a child, or somebody else, to know how to deal with this fear.

Now, I've received calls from many people over the years who have faced fears. It's amazing. *Anashim chashuvim*, people who are *bonei aliyah* and they're afraid when they sit down by a *seder*, will they be able to make it through the *seder*? A number of them have asked me over the years, "Am I crazy?" I said, "No. You're a *ben aliyah*." I said, "The truth of the matter is, everybody should be afraid, and they have good reason to be afraid." Most people can't make it through a *seder*. Most people can't make it through a *davening*. Some people can't make it from their house to the *yeshivah*, from the *yeshivah* to the house without being *nichshal* in *histaklus asuros*. But do you know what the problem is? Most people are 'dead.' They don't even care. They're so in la la land, they're not even facing any problems. They don't think it's a challenge. They don't think it's a big deal. You don't make it through a whole *seder*, so what? You can't make it through a day without being full of *chataim*? Big deal. You can't make it through a day without *lashon hara*? That's great. They simply don't care.

Now the *emes* is, if people would think about it, they could have very good reason to fear, because every day in our life is another block in our existence. That's what we're living for. You have to be *metafked*. You've got to do the job. In spite of being afraid, you still do what you should do.

DOING THE RIGHT THING DESPITE FEAR OF DISCOMFORT

I was speaking to somebody who had a challenge and didn't want to face it. They have a relative who isn't 100% well. This relative, an older *bachur*, alone in the world, needs a job for the summer. Some other relative told this person, "Listen, you live near the guy. Find him a job." The person says, "I can't find him a job. I don't have jobs. I need a job myself." The person called me up, "Am I responsible for this person?" I said, "Absolutely. Definitely. It's your relative, מבשרך אל תהלים. He needs a job. Does that sound like a *tzad hashaveh*? Does it ring a bell at all?" "I'm very uncomfortable with the person. The person makes me feel extremely uncomfortable. He's not well. He's not fully functional. That person belongs in a home. In his home, they need a lot of love. That's not my

responsibility.” I said, “You desperately need help from Hashem, my friend.” I said, “Hashem chose this.” This person is willing to do things, just not what they *have* to do. They feel afraid. You know what they’re afraid of? I’m going to be uncomfortable. It’s just about being uncomfortable. I let the person have it, nicely, but I said, “You know, I can’t believe that at this point in the game, in your life, when you’ve seen such amazing *yeshuah*, you’re willing to run away from this when it’s right in front of your face.” I said, “And you need that, you *mamash* need that help. How is it that you’re not doing anything?” “I can’t. My family is going up to the country tomorrow. I need the day to pack.” I said, “Excuses, give to your grandmother. I’m not your grandmother. Have a nice day.”

That took place in the day. Last night my phone was ringing and I didn’t answer it. This person was calling me back. This morning, I returned his phone call. The person says, “You’re angry with me right?” I said, “Not at all. Why should I be angry?” He said, “I know you are really angry with me.” I said, “No.” He said, “You didn’t answer my phone call last night.” I said, “I was at two different weddings and I saw you called smack in the middle of the dancing. I couldn’t talk to you then. I couldn’t even hear myself think. It wasn’t *shayach* to hear you either. By the time I got home, it was very late and I couldn’t call you back. Now I’m calling you back.” He said, “I found that person a job.” I said, “Really?!” “Yeah. After speaking to you, I got into my car and went around to numerous businesses. I tried it in my neighborhood. I tried it in another neighborhood. Finally, I went to one more neighborhood, and I said, ‘I’m going to try again.’ At the last place, the person said, ‘I do hire people like that. I’m willing to hire him. Except there’s one problem. It’s the summer now. Everybody goes to the country in New York. There’s no money in it for me here. I’ll hire the person, but you’ve got to help me out. You’ve got to help raise funds for the person to pay his salary. Then I’ll hire him.’”

DO HASHEM’S RATZON WITHOUT DELAY

I told the person, “You want to know why you found him a job? Because the whole time, you *were* supposed to find him a job. Because *you* needed a ‘job’. And now, you want to know why you have to raise money for him? Because you waited until the last minute. If you had worked on finding him a job three weeks ago when you heard about this, you would have found him a job and not had to raise money. But now you have to raise money.”

I said, “You think you can raise the money?” “I’m afraid,” he said, “Don’t be afraid. You’ll raise the money. I guarantee you, you’ll be able to raise the money. In the country, you’ll raise the money. There are a lot of people in the country. But it’s going to be uncomfortable for you. That’s going to be the *tikun* because you waited around.”

Rabosai, you’ve got a ‘job’ in front of you. You’ve got to get in harmony with Hashem. I promise you, if you don’t get in harmony with Hashem, Hashem is going to force you. He is going to squeeze you so tight, you’re not going to have any choice but to get in sync and harmony with Hashem.

You’re going to face your fear, and the only avenue you’re going to have open to you is to become one with Hashem. Then, you’re going to see how connecting with Hashem is harmonious. Do it *now* when it’s easy. Do it *now* when you’re standing on your own two feet and you’re not laid out on your back. Do it *now* when you can do it out of free will and free choice, as opposed to having to do it

from a *matzav* of darkness of mind.

Free yourself. Free yourself from your fear. Get connected with Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Start to live in harmony with Hashem. And if you do that, Hashem will stop screaming at you: “*Ayekah!* Where are you hiding, and where are you running? Don’t run away from Me,” Hashem says. If you run away from Me, you’re never going to be successful because I’m always there. And all that’s going to happen is you will be overcome by your fears and your discomfort will overwhelm you.

LEARNING THROUGH PEOPLE-WATCHING

I see people go for years. Years! I’ve watched this phenomenon. My grandfather (R’ Avigdor Miller) told me this. Over thirty years ago, I was talking to him. He said, “Keep your eyes open. Start to watch individuals and track them for years. It’s amazing what you will see.” There were a couple of *chaveirim*. I asked them, “Where are you going? What are you running away from?” They said, “You make your choices. We make our choices.” I watched their lives. Boy, did they have *tzaros*. They lost big time. They got married. They were one of these cool guys. They married cool girls. They got divorced. They had no *shalom bayis*. I mean, Gehinnom on this earth! I said, “Why don’t you get with Hashem?” “No. I’m not doing that.” I watched them. I watched so many people. *Baruch Hashem*, I’m around a lot of *yeshivos*. *Yeshivos* always have lots of people. The ‘stock’ always gets replenished. It’s not like when you live in a bubble and you’re watching two people. You’re watching people in different *yeshivos*. I was in a few *yeshivos*. You get to meet a lot of people.

It’s amazing when you watch people over years and years, and you see, ultimately, if you don’t get with Hashem, Hashem puts a squeeze on there. Squeeze here. Squeeze there. *Parnasah*. Health. *Gezunt*. Worries. Get with the program, rabbosai. Get with Hashem and overcome your fears. That’s the place. Remember this. That’s what you’ve got to remember.

IN SUMMARY

We have all felt the often-uncomfortable sense of fear and recognize how fear can be a limiting factor. However, we should acknowledge that fear comes from somewhere and comes for a reason. We must learn to respond to fear in the right way. Distracting ourselves or hiding will not take away the fears or the reasons behind them. Realistic fears come from not connecting to the *ratzon* of Hashem in the way He wants us to. Recalibrating our direction to refocus on what Hashem wants of us can help us get out of the mire of our fears. Basically, if we are doing the *ratzon Hashem*, we are happy; if we are not doing the *ratzon Hashem*, we are not happy - we are afraid or unsettled. We should be prepared to do what is right, even if it is uncomfortable, as long as we are running towards Hashem and towards what He wants. If we don’t know what *ratzon Hashem* is, we should ask our Rebbi. This week, I will (*bli neder*) make a simple list of the things I fear and then consider where this links up to my *avodas Hashem*. I will discuss it with my Rebbi or a mentor who can guide me in my *avodas Hashem*.

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