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## Bilvavi Part 1 - Section 5 Fear of Hashem

### 139

Yiras ha'onesh is the starting point of one's spiritual growth. It is referred to as "lower fear" in the sefarim hakedoshim (as opposed to awe of Hashem's greatness, which is called "higher fear"). Yiras ha'onesh is divided into two parts: 1) fear of punishment after death, such as Gehinnom. 2) fear of retribution here on earth, through various forms of suffering.

We shall begin by discussing the first kind, punishment after death. A person may find it difficult to attain this kind of yirah. Since one doesn't see Gehinnom with one's eyes, it is hard to fear it. It is human nature not to fear that which cannot be seen. If a person would be pure, and by means of his soul be able to perceive the punishments after death, he could attain fear of Gehinnom. But since very few people are on the level of perceiving what transpires in the spiritual world through their souls, and in any case, attaining yiras ha'onesh would be a prerequisite to reaching that level, this is obviously not the way to attain yiras ha'onesh.

What is then the primary way to attain yiras ha'onesh? One has to use the faculties of one's mind, using the power of imagery to picture the Gehinnom and thereby reach yirah. The problem, however, is that few people in these generations have a power of imagery strong enough to influence their hearts to fear the punishment. Since there are so few such people, it is most difficult to attain yiras ha'onesh. The body can't see it, the soul, which can perceive it, is hidden from consciousness, and our power of imagination is too weak.

Therefore, some of our teachers in recent generations decided to stop talking at length about yiras ha'onesh. Others, on the other hand, felt that we cannot abandon this foundation of our avodah. Therefore, they continued to work with it a great deal, in spite of the difficulties involved. Generally speaking, they spent their entire lives teaching the masses about it, and yet, were not very successful, due to its tremendous difficulty.

Both of these approaches are dangerous. If a person skips over yiras ha'onesh, and goes on to something higher, he is lacking the foundation. Chas veshalom, at times when he is uninspired and falls spiritually, when the fire of love of Hashem is not burning within him, there is nothing to stop him from sinning, because he has not acquired yiras ha'onesh. But the other approach is also dangerous. Since it is so difficult to attain yiras ha'onesh, a person is liable to spend his entire life working on it, and never move on to higher levels. He will leave this world with very little to show for his efforts.

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We will begin to explain the real point of yiras ha'onesh. As we mentioned earlier a number of times, a person must find Hashem in every aspect of life, and see how to come close to Him thereby. This applies to yiras ha'onesh, as well. You must first find Hashem in the yiras ha'onesh, and then figure out how to become closer to Him through it. Consider this: Who created Gehinnom? Hashem! It is the fruit of His handiwork. Furthermore, consider: Who metes out the punishment in Gehinnom? Does it function by itself? Certainly not! Only Hashem, the One unique Being, creates Gehinnom anew each moment. ("He creates light," is stated in the present tense, and likewise, all the creations are created each moment anew.) He is the One Who punishes in Gehinnom.

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Now let us consider: Why did Hashem create Gehinnom? Does He want to harm people? Certainly not! Rather, this is why it exists: It is clear that His will is that we should all become close to Him. When a person sins, he creates a barrier preventing him from being close and attached to Hashem, one of the ways to remove that barrier is through the punishments of Gehinnom.

Hence, Gehinnom is merely a means of becoming close to Hashem. If one only fears Gehinnom, without remembering and appreciating Who created it and Who punishes there, and for what reason, he has misunderstood the whole point of the punishment of Gehinnom. He fears the external aspect of Gehinnom, but does not reach the goal for which this fear was made.

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The existence of the punishment of Gehinnom, generates a fear of it. We must understand: What is the point of this fear? Does Hashem want to upset a person and frighten him? Certainly, that is not the case. Rather, the entire purpose of one's life is to be close to Hashem, yet by transgressing Hashem's will, a person creates a barrier between him and his Creator. Therefore, Hashem formed Gehinnom, so that a person will be afraid of that, and therefore, not become distant from Him due to his sins.

Hence, the fear of Gehinnom is not a goal unto itself at all, but its whole purpose is to prevent a person from becoming far from his Creator, and to ensure that he has the privilege of being close to Him. If a person merely fears Gehinnom without remembering the purpose of the fear, he is missing the point.

This is a very fundamental idea. One must remember that Gehinnom - both the punishment as well as the fear of it - exists only for the sake of making a person close and attached to his Creator, not for some independent reason.

When a person strives to acquire yiras ha'onesh, he should first be aware of whom he fears - Gehinnom itself, or Hashem Who punishes there? (Of course, one should fear the punishment, but he must remember Who punishes. This is a deep concept, which Harav Yechezkel Levinstein zt"l used to speak of.) One must remember the purpose of this fear.

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When a person strives to acquire yiras ha'onesh in this way, his entire avodah takes on a new form. Otherwise, one might, chas veshalom, strive for years to attain fear of Gehinnom, and yet forget about Hashem during all those years. He will focus on fear, on Gehinnom, and forget about Hashem. But when a person progresses in the way we have recommended, the yiras ha'onesh itself becomes a

means to draw him close to his Creator, not, chas veshalom, the opposite.

The bottom line is that a person must always check to see if through yiras ha'onesh he remembers Hashem more, and feels that he is getting closer to Him, or he becomes more self-absorbed and consumed with worry about getting hurt and punished. In the latter case, he is really magnifying his ego while forgetting Hashem more and more.

## **144**

There is something else you should know. Yiras ha'onesh is not only a last resort that is needed for small-minded and foolish people. It's true that the sefarim hakedoshim have written that yiras ha'onesh is meant for such people. What they intended to say is that such people can only attain yiras ha'onesh and nothing more. However, it is clear that even the greatest people need yiras ha'onesh.

When a person is uninspired and feels intellectually unmotivated, he needs a strong measure of yiras ha'onesh. At such a time, the ideas that usually motivate him are not operating, and the only thing that can protect him is the yiras ha'onesh in his heart. Therefore, a person must know that when he starts working on yiras ha'onesh, he is thereby fulfilling Hashem's will.

This becomes another element that binds a person to Hashem. The reason for his effort in acquiring yiras ha'onesh is that such is the will of Hashem. (Certainly, there are times when he may be doing so because he is afraid of being punished. He is concerned that he does not have sufficient fear of the punishment and he might sin, chas veshalom, and be punished. If so, he is afraid for his own sake, not because that is Hashem's will. Nonetheless, he is working on this for both reasons - because he fears the punishments of Gehinnom, and because Hashem's will is that he should toil to acquire yiras ha'onesh.)

We see now that even through yiras ha'onesh, which is a person's concern that he might get punished and harmed, one can connect to Hashem. To do this he should remember, 1) Who created and still creates Gehinnom. 2) Who decrees the punishment in Gehinnom. 3) The purpose of that punishment is to bring a person closer to Hashem. 4) The purpose of the fear of Gehinnom is to prevent a person from sinning and becoming distant from Hashem. 5) The reason for working to acquire yiras ha'onesh (at least partially) is because such is Hashem's will.

We have now five ways in which yiras ha'onesh can bring a person closer to Hashem. With these in mind, even when he is working to attain yiras ha'onesh, he will not be self-absorbed, but will remember his Creator properly and even merit coming closer to Him.

## **145**

When a person bears in mind these five points, he is ready to start working to attain yiras ha'onesh. Obviously, he must first study the works that discuss yiras ha'onesh and provide descriptions, such as the chapters about Gehinnom and the suffering in the grave in the sefer, Reishis Chachmah (Sha'ar HaYir'ah). There are other books that describe what happens there, such as Minchas Yehudah - HaRuchos Mesapros, by the kabbalist HaRav Yehudah Fetaya zt"l. Each person, according to his mental abilities, should envision in his mind what he has read.

The most important thing is that during the period when one is working to acquire yiras ha'onesh, he should pour out his prayer to Hashem in his own words. For example, he might say, "Master of the World, You created the world and commanded me to fear Your punishments. Why did You do that? So I will not become distant from You, and will merit coming close to You. You gave me a brain, and

the ability to imagine, but with my abilities, it is difficult for me to attain yiras ha'onesh. Therefore, Master of the World, I will do my part in trying to do whatever I can in order to fear You, but I know that I cannot succeed on my own. Therefore, Master of the World, have pity and compassion on me, and plant fear of You in my heart, so that I will always fear You and will not come to sin, and I will have the privilege to always be close to You."

Each person should elaborate according to his ability to express himself from the depth of his heart. He should detail all of his innermost feelings, the reason he is striving to attain yiras ha'onesh, and the difficulties on the way, and he should beg for help from Hashem in this. This must all come from a clear recognition that without Hashem's help, even if one toils for over a thousand years, he could not attain true yiras ha'onesh. He must know, understand, and feel that all his avodah depends solely on Hashem's help. He should pray in this way regarding yiras ha'onesh in general as well as its application. For example, he might be walking in the street and afraid that he might not properly guard his eyes, chas veshalom. He should preface the situation with a prayer, asking Hashem to give him the proper sense of yirah on the road, so that he will guard his eyes. Likewise, any occasion that calls for yirah should be preceded by a brief prayer. This way he will pray to acquire yiras ha'onesh in general, and also in any particular situation where he feels he might falter.

## 146

Until this point, we have discussed the fear of Gehinnom. Now we will discuss the fear of suffering in this world, such as illness and pain. One should first look at the world around him and see all the ill people - may Hashem have compassion on them. One person might suffer from heart disease - may Hashem protect us from this - and another might have an illness in his legs, and so on. Then, he should ponder: why do these people have such illnesses? Is it for no reason? It cannot be, because [generally speaking,] there is no suffering without sin (Shabbos 55a). If a person sins with a particular organ, he will be punished and suffer in that organ. Therefore any limb in which we find suffering must be a result of some fault there [at some level]. Such reflection will instill yirah in the heart.

## 147

In addition, one should imagine applying yiras ha'onesh in a very realistic way. Here is an example: Stand near someone else's object, and when no one is around, say (first, to yourself, and later, to Hashem), "I seem to have the ability to steal this object, because no one is watching. Why wouldn't I do such a thing? Because I know that if I steal, I will be punished. If I steal with this hand, it will be punished, whether through a minor or a major injury, or through some disease."

He should consider such examples with his legs as well, thinking and then saying to himself, "I can go to a certain place, which I know is forbidden to visit, such as a place where people are dressed immodestly (and there is an alternate route). Why don't I go that way? Because I know that if I do, I will be punished in my legs, chas veshalom." The same applies to sins through seeing, hearing, and anything else.

One should picture such a situation again and again, in many different ways. Whenever one comes across an ill person, he should use the opportunity to attain yirah. (Understandably, this approach is only appropriate while he is focused on yirah. One must always see things from the perspective of the area he is working on.)

This is easier to attain than fear of Gehinnom, because the suffering in Gehinnom is not visible, but suffering in this world is clearly seen, and a person does fear it. However, the difficulty is that many people commit terrible sins, and yet, we don't see them being punished at all. Therefore, a person (either consciously or subconsciously) loses the awareness and feeling that sin causes suffering,

because he often sees just the opposite. The truth is that there are sins for which one is punished in this world, and there are sins for which one is punished in the upper world, according to profound Divine considerations. It is therefore difficult to attain real yirah in this manner. Nevertheless, a person should try to acquire yirah through contemplating both the suffering of Gehinnom and suffering in this world, each person according to his ability. Certainly, one must pray a lot for this, as we discussed at length above.

Now, we must emphasize something else. Just as a person has times when he feels that he is growing spiritually and times when he feels he is falling, so are there different methods for each of these times. The methods for times of growth are fear of Hashem's greatness, love of Hashem, and the like. The method for times of regression is yiras ha'onesh. This is how Hashem made the world. Therefore, each type of avodah is precious to Hashem if performed properly.

But clearly, a time of regression is not the time to start working to acquire yiras ha'onesh, because then, one is lax, and it is hard to acquire anything. However, that is the main time to employ yiras ha'onesh. (In a deeper sense, one must rectify his penimius - his inner self - the soul, which is accomplished through love of Hashem and the like, as well as his chitzonius - his external aspect - the body, which is accomplished through yirah. Therefore, a person must have true fear of Hashem, because otherwise, his feelings of fear will express themselves with regard to external things, not fear from Hashem and his punishments. One must understand that there is an inherent need to attain yiras ha'onesh, and it is not merely a last resort. But this must be achieved with a clear recognition that such is Hashem's will, and not just something to be done because one is worried about himself. In that way, he will attain joy together with fear, because he will rejoice that he is able to do Hashem's will. This is a deeper fulfillment of yirah - "rejoice with trembling" [Tehillim 2:11]. Chazal said, "Where is joy, there must be trembling" [Berachos 30b]. When a person toils and attains yirah for the sake of Heaven, then together with the yirah, he feels glad to be fulfilling the will of his Creator. If so, there is yirah together with joy. The joy comes about through the closeness to Hashem generated by yirah. This is a deep idea that requires careful thought.)

## 148

It is written, "For as a father chastises his son, so Hashem, your G-d, chastises you" (Devarim 8:5). We see that suffering and punishments should be viewed as part of a father-son relationship, a relationship of love. If one enters more deeply into the inner level of yirah, one finds Hashem inside the yirah, and discovers His love to him. In this way, one cleaves to Hashem through the yirah. Yirah, after all, is a positive mitzvah in the Torah, and the word mitzvah is related to the word tzavta (connection). If so, even through yirah, a person can merit becoming attached to his Creator.

Many people are unaware of this, thinking that yiras ha'onesh is nothing but apprehensiveness, and therefore, they loathe working on yirah, because they don't want to be apprehensive. However, this attitude stems from a lack of an inner awareness as to the nature of yirah, which really is, "Rejoice with trembling" (Tehillim 2:11)"-"Where there is joy, there must be trembling" (Berachos 30b). With this deeper kind of yirah, one attains love of Hashem and deveikus to Him, and there is no place for sadness.

If the yirah does not bring a person to love and deveikus, it must be because the person is engaged in superficial yirah, and he has not entered the inner depths of the world of yirah. Therefore, when a person begins to attain yirah, he should do so with an awareness and quest to thereby attain love, deveikus, and joy. This is the deeper meaning of the phrase used by Chazal (Yoma 23a), "those who rejoice with suffering." That means that the suffering itself leads to love, joy, and deveikus to Hashem.

Harav Shach zt"l once expressed a sentiment that a person is able to have deveikus to Hashem even while he is in Gehinnom. The depth of that comment is the idea explained above. There is no process of growth which allows for any separation from Hashem. Through every single matter, a person can become bound with Hashem. It is clear that even from yiras ha'onesh, a person can achieve closeness and deveikus. When a person has the privilege to appreciate this, he will approach the attainment of yirah with joy, just as he would approach the attainment of the love of Hashem, because essentially they are equal enabling a person to become close and attached to his Creator. "Closeness to Elokim is good for me." Even the name Elokim, which represents the attribute of justice, is good for me. Through both attributes, whichever way things go, one can attain closeness and deveikus to Hashem.

## 149

Until this point, we have dealt with yiras ha'onesh, whether in Gehinnom or in this world. But in fact, there are five levels of yirah: 1) Yirah from punishment and suffering, which was explained above. 2) Fear for one's honor, when a person is afraid of being embarrassed, as Chazal say, "Each person is burned by the other one's canopy [in Olam Haba]" (Bava Basra 75a). 3) Yirah of a lack of shleimus. Since one recognizes that perfection is deveikus to Hashem, he fears that he might lack this deveikus as a result of his sins. (These three aspects of yirah are mentioned in Mesillas Yesharim, in the chapter on watchfulness.) 4) Yirah and awe of Hashem's greatness. When performing a mitzvah, he fears that he might not be doing it properly and thus detract from the honor of the King. 5) Fear of sinning. He always fears that his deeds may be detracting from the honor of the King of the World. (These last two aspects are described in Mesillas Yesharim in the chapter on fear of sin.)

Until now, we have dealt with yiras ha'onesh. We will not deal with fear of losing one's honor in the World to Come, because most people do not naturally sense the honor granted in the higher world, since it is a perception of the soul. It would be necessary, therefore, to employ the faculty of imagery, as with yiras ha'onesh. Since this is difficult for most people, we have not elaborated on it. Some people, however, naturally pursue honor, and it will be easier for them. Others would need to invest a great deal of time in it. It seems that most people in our generation would be best advised to work with yiras ha'onesh and fear of lacking perfection, and not deal with fear of losing one's honor. Our time in this world is brief, and we have much work to do. It would require too much time for most people in our generation.

## 150

Therefore, we will now deal with yirah lest one lack shleimus - deveikus to Hashem - because of his sins. First, we want to remind you that the Ramchal writes, "True shleimus is deveikus to Hashem." Every sin hinders closeness and deveikus to Hashem. If so, the beginning of a person's avodah is to understand that shleimus is deveikus to Hashem. After that, he must understand that sinning is a contradiction to deveikus to Hashem and prevents it. Then, he must yearn greatly for this deveikus. When a person really wants it, he will fear lest that desire not be fulfilled. But as long as there is no strong will for closeness to Hashem, there cannot be the fear of lacking it.

## 151

Here is an example: A person leaves his house and intends to go to the wedding ceremony of a friend, which was called for six o'clock. When he walks toward the bus stop, he sees the bus pulling away. The more he wanted to be at this wedding, the more upset will he be about missing it. The opposite is also true. The weaker his desire was to be at the wedding, the less concerned will he be about his not being there. The same applies here. The weaker one's desire to be close and attached to the Creator, -- if it is only an intellectual decision - the less will he fear sin. There is a fundamental

difference between knowledge in the mind and that of the heart. Anyone who studies the Ramchal knows that the purpose of life is closeness to Hashem, and that sin prevents one from reaching this goal. But this might be only intellectual knowledge, which cannot inspire fear. A person's avodah is to ensure that his heart desires to be close and attached to Hashem. The more this idea penetrates into the heart, the more one will fear sin, which hinders the goal of closeness and deveikus to Hashem.

Here is another example: There are many people who know that it is very important to know the entire Talmud, yet, they can waste so much time, because their knowledge is only in their minds. This is not their heart's absolute desire. Their hearts are filled with many other desires. A person must reach a state in which his whole heart will yearn nothing but closeness and connection to Hashem and he will think about this for the vast majority of the day (except while learning Torah, obviously). Then, he will try to remove any obstacle, and he will fear sin properly. Hence, there are three stages: 1) A person must know that the whole purpose of life is to be close to Hashem. 2) This knowledge must fill the heart and become his life's longing. 3) He must know that sin blocks him from this goal, and then, he will fear sin greatly.

## **152**

These points are not necessarily interdependent. It is possible for a person to have a very great desire to be close and attached to Hashem, and yet, not feel that sin contradicts this. The fact that sin prevents closeness to Hashem is not apparent and sensed by all; it is something we have learned. Therefore, this also requires effort, so that in addition to making one's primary yearning the attainment of closeness to Hashem, he will feel that sin prevents and contradicts his life's longing and goal. This itself is a test for man, because if he were to feel that by sinning he is losing the degree of closeness to Hashem he had attained, it would be easy to avoid sin. But Hashem's will is that a person must toil for that as well. It does not come naturally.

## **153**

Now we will move on to the avodah of acquiring these ideas. We already know the first point - that the purpose of life is closeness to Hashem and deveikus to Him. Now, we will try to describe how a person should strive to acquire this knowledge so that it is always felt in the heart and gradually comes to be the dominant force affecting his emotions.

The avodah of acquiring true desire is the root of everything. When there is a strong and true will, it is said that "nothing stands in the way of the will." When the will is weak, the entire structure lacks a foundation. Therefore, a person must strive to truly want to be close to Hashem, and not merely say so outwardly. (This applies to anything one is working on. He must really want to attain it. Now, we are dealing with the root of all wills, the most inclusive will, which is to be close and attached to Hashem.) This is not to say that one who has not toiled has no desire to be close to Hashem, but that it is not powerful enough. The whole structure depends on this point. If one does not truly want, but only would like to want, he lacks the foundation known as ratzon, and the entire structure is weak. Generally, the failure of most people lies in the fact that they don't have a strong will to continue and advance. (This is always the case whenever a person gets stuck at a certain level, and cannot go further, it is because up to that level, his will was strong, but beyond that, it is not so strong.) Therefore, the beginning of a person's avodah is to ignite the ratzon more and more.

## **154**

How can a person strengthen his ratzon? The Zohar says (3:168a), "If a body does not show light, it must be beaten." In other words, the ratzon is hidden because of the physicality of the body and the

control the body has over the soul. The body must be "beaten" and purified. But this avodah of fasting and self-affliction is not relevant to most of the people in our generation, as the sefarim hakedoshim wrote already 200 years ago. Therefore, we will not deal with this aspect much.

There is another method which was adopted by many tzaddikim during their periods of hisbodedus, solitude. They would cry out and scold themselves for their lack of true ratzon to become close to Hashem. They would scold themselves repeatedly until their hearts would open up somewhat. This is also not simple. First of all, one must know how to do this: to cry out from the inner depth of one's heart, not from the mind. One also needs inner fortitude, so that he can truly scold himself. One who is not so strong will either not scold himself honestly, or might become dejected and bitter. Certainly, one cannot grow through sadness and animal-like lowliness.

## **155**

For us, the most effective method is for a person to designate a place that is empty and quiet, and speak to Hashem in his own language. For example, he might say, "Master of the World, You know that I want to be close and attached to You. However, this ratzon is too weak. I know that my entire purpose here is to become close and attached to You, and this is dependent on my really wanting it. In my present state of not really wanting it very much, it is impossible for me to attain closeness to You. Please, Master of the World, help me and plant in my heart a true ratzon to be close to You."

In this fashion, each person should elaborate in his own words, according to the best of his ability, day after day. This method has two great advantages: 1) Speaking in this manner itself will inspire the ratzon. 2) Since he is praying for it, Hashem will hear his prayer, and help him so that he will really want to be close to Hashem. If a person stubbornly persists in this for a long time, and keeps asking to have the ratzon to be close to Hashem, Hashem will surely help him and he will develop a true ratzon.

## **156**

If a person cannot do even this, he must regularly listen to a tzaddik who speaks about this from the sincerity of his soul, and continue to do so until he can inspire himself. But a person must come to the point where he can inspire himself, because inspiration that comes from the outside has no permanence.

We now have three possibilities: 1) A person can inspire himself through self-affliction and fasting, and through scolding himself for not having enough desire to be close to Hashem. 2) He can beg Hashem a great deal each day to help him to truly have proper ratzon. 3) He can hear a tzaddik speak about it, until he becomes inspired.

Each person should choose the most appropriate method and awaken his soul to really want to be close to Hashem. As long as there is no true ratzon, there can be no permanence to the structure of avodas Hashem, because it is the entire foundation. If there is true ratzon to be close to Hashem, there is a foundation. If not, chas veshalom, the foundation is lacking, and the whole structure is in jeopardy. One must be very careful with this.

## **157**

We will provide an example: A true servant of Hashem hardly wastes a moment. He is totally involved in Torah, avodah, and acts of kindness. To an outsider, it seems impossible. How can one live with such pressure? The answer is that as long as there isn't true ratzon, it in fact is pressure, because it goes against a person's will. But when this is a person's ratzon, he is fulfilling his will, and

there is no feeling of pressure at all.

The beginning of a person's avodah is to have a true desire, so that the ratzon to be close to Hashem will be true and strong. In fact, when a person has the merit to enter the inner essence of ratzon, he finds delight in fulfilling the ratzon. But there are two stages. At first, he must truly desire so with a strong and true ratzon, but the ratzon at that point will not yet be fulfilled, because he has not yet had the privilege to delight in Hashem. After that, he will be able to fulfill the ratzon, which is the pleasure of "delighting in Hashem." One must first pass through the stage of unfulfilled desire. Then when he really desires it almost every moment, he will ultimately enter into the inner essence of ratzon, which is to delight in Hashem.

## **158**

Once a person has merited a strong ratzon to be close to Hashem, it is possible that true fear of sin will surface within him, because he will fear becoming separated from his Creator.

Earlier, we described the form of this avodah. At first, one must pray often for the privilege to feel this fear and avoid sin. In addition, he should involve his senses in the avodah, by standing next to another person's object and saying (first to himself and then to Hashem), "I could take this object, so why don't I? Because I would thereby become distant from my Creator, chas veshalom, and I wish to be close to Him." He should employ many practical examples in many different kinds of ways. He should also accustom himself to examine every deed and ponder and then say, "This deed will bring me close to Hashem, but that deed would, chas veshalom, distance me from Him."

The entire day should proceed in this way. One should always consider and check if the matter at hand will bring him close to Hashem or far from Him. Through thinking about this constantly, the concepts will gradually become fixed in his heart, and his whole life will become a search for ways to be close to Hashem. He will naturally tremble and be afraid of anything that distances him from his Creator. If a person continues to think in this way, he can reach the state where his heart will, for the most part, be gripped by the search for closeness to Hashem, and he will be most attentive to it.

## **159**

Another principle in attaining yirah is that one must be refined and quiet, and not speak loudly, because that demeanor conflicts with bashfulness and yirah. A person should accustom himself to be dignified and act calmly, without haste or noise, which contradict the attainment of yirah. This is a broad topic, but here is not the place to elaborate.

## **160**

Above the level of yirah of lacking perfection (level three) are yirah due to Hashem's greatness (fourth level) and yirah from sinning (fifth level). To be on these levels, one must sense that he is in the presence of Hashem, but to attain that level, one must first work on the quality of ahavah. This is also the order in Mesillas Yesharim - first comes saintliness and then higher yirah. Therefore, we will now move on to discuss ahavas Hashem.