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[Home](#) > Actualizing Our Faith - 006 Fear of Danger & Solution

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Fear of Dangerous Events

There are two general kinds of fear: Fear that comes from our soul, and fears which come from outside of our soul.

Fear in our soul, as we clarified in the last chapter, is when a person isn't acting like himself. He has no real confidence, and thus he has all kinds of fears. This was the topic we dealt with until now.

However, there are also fears which come from our outside, such as fear caused by committing a sin. When someone commits a sin, the *sefarim hakedoshim* explain that the sin itself creates certain fears that can come to haunt the person, depending on the kind of sin committed. This is a separate topic, and it can happen to even someone who has inner confidence, because this is a fear which comes from outside of us, not from an unhealthy soul.

Another kind of outside fear is when a person hears of dangerous events, like when a person hears of a tragedy.

This fear also does not stem from a lack of balance in the soul, as it is an outer kind of fear not based on the soul. Even a person with a balanced soul can have these kinds of fears.

Fear of dangerous events is really the same nature as the fear which a person has when he is afraid for being punished for his sins, such as when a person is afraid of the destroying angels that are created from his sins; the person is afraid of being punished.

So far, we have given solutions in overcoming fear in our soul, which is by having the true *Bitachon* in Hashem, and in the true self-confidence we can derive from our soul. But how do we deal with fears that come from the outside of us, such as fear of dangerous events?

We are not dealing with how to have *Emunah*; that is a separate discussion. *Emunah* is a deeper subject than what we are discussing. Right now we are discussing a more basic step, something which even the lowest part of our soul, our *nefesh habehaimis*, can struggle with and deal with.

All Fears Have To Do With Change

To know the solution to fears of danger, first, we need to know what the depth of fear is.

Really, all our fears have to do with change. People are afraid of changes to our situation. For

example, why are people afraid that there will be a war? It is because people are afraid of change. People fear a “different” situation than the current one, and that is the source of the fear.

People are also afraid of death, for this very reason. Even if Eliyahu HaNavi would come to a person and tell him he will go straight to Gan Eden after he dies, the person still would be afraid to die. Why? It is because we fear changes. The fact that we are undergoing a change in our situation is enough of a reason to fear, even if we know that we will be fine and good.

This is also the depth of our fear in Torah learning. The *Gemara* says that “There is no *Beis Midrash* that doesn’t have novel Torah ideas that day.” Since Torah is always becoming renewed, there are changes being made – and this causes us to fear that we won’t advance in learning Torah. Here we see that fear has to do with change (This, of course, is a holy kind of fearing change, but right now we are discussing most fears of change, which are unholy).

All fears of events – whether it is a fear of death, or a fear of losing one’s livelihood, etc. – are all essentially a *fear from change*; we fear a change to our situation. What is the solution to such fears?

A Change To Our Life Orientations

If a person is truly close to Hashem, he has no fears, because he is connected to Hashem, who is non-changing. Hashem always existed, continues to exist, and will always exist.

So, we need to change our initial perspective on things. It all depends on how we look at our situation on this world; let us explain.

Most people who have a wife, children and a home generally feel that they are all “his” acquisitions on this world. But this is really a superficial outlook, an outlook that comes from the body. We need to acquire an attitude that comes from our soul.

If a person lives life through the viewpoint of his body, he seeks stability and comfort in his physical life. Therefore, he feels like his house and his family are all “his” – and such a person, of course, will have fears in life. He’s afraid of losing “his” acquisitions in life. But if a person lives life through an inner perspective of his soul, he will only seek to stabilize his soul, not his life on this world. With a soul attitude, he will only seek stability in his soul, and he will not be concerned to make his life on this world more secure.

One who views everything he has on this world as only a “garment” of his, and not a part of his intrinsic essence, will actually feel more stable than the one who thinks that everything he has is “his.” When one realizes that everything that is his is not really his, but rather just a *garment*, he will have no fears.

This is very subtle point in one’s soul: *how to use this world*, having the right attitude towards life.

When a person makes use of this world – like when he has to buy something in a store – does he feel that it is “his”, or that he is just using it? Usually, we feel like what we buy belongs to us, and we look at everything we have in our life as “ours”, a part of who we are. When a person feels like everything that he has is “his”, he lives through his body, and he will have fears.

But when a person learns to only make use of this world because he has to take care of things, and not because he wants to own it forever, then he is living life with an attitude through his soul; he lives a life of a well-structured soul. Such a person will not fear anything that has to do with this physical world, because he won’t feel like it is his. A person only fears losing what is tangibly “his”.

On a deeper note, since all fears are rooted in a fear of change, a person only fears losing what he considers to be tangibly his on this world, because he fears change.

How a person should view his life on this world

Therefore, the solution to our fears is to become more connected to our soul.

If a person lives life through the prism of his soul - he is connected to his soul - then he knows that the rest of the world is not a part of who he is, and in turn, he will not be affected by the dangers and worries of this world. He knows that he is merely "using" this world and its conveniences, but he doesn't feel connected to it.

The sun sets every day. Why isn't anyone afraid that maybe it won't rise tomorrow? Don't we all fear changes? The answer to this is because no one feels any connection to the sun; we merely enjoy its rays. Therefore, no one is afraid of losing the sun, because nobody feels connected to it.

But since a person naturally feels a connection to what he has, he feels that what he has is all a part of who he is. Thus, a person is naturally afraid to lose what he has on this world. A person naturally feels that his wife, children, his house and that his source of livelihood are all "his."

Let's say a person is using a convenient electrical appliance, like a sophisticated piece of technology (such as the recorder that is recording this *shiur*). Does he feel like he is merely using it for what he has to? Usually not. Most people feel very connected to their items; they enjoy them and are scared that something will happen to their precious items. The problem that results from this is that people feel very connected to this world; they are more than just using it - they feel connected to it.

But when a person realizes that nothing on this world is really his, only then will he have no fears. He realizes that he is anyways not living on a world which is his.

Let's go further with this concept. If someone's child becomes sick, how does he deal with such a worry? If a person thinks that his children are his possessions, he will be very worried. But if a person knows that even his children aren't his, he will not feel worried, and he will be able to strengthen himself and not fall into despair (Of course, he can feel his child's pain, but it doesn't necessarily have to get him to be 'worried').

To work on this point, a person should therefore ask himself: "Where do I live? Do I live in my house - or in my soul?"

If a person thinks he really lives on this physical world of Planet Earth, he will be full of fears. This world is, indeed, a very scary and dangerous place - for a person who lives through his body. Such a person thinks that this world (and everything he has - his house, his livelihood, his family, etc.) is his, and naturally, he is terrified of losing of whatever he deems precious in his life. But one who lives in his soul has no fears, because he knows that nothing on this world is his anyway.

The *Gemara* says that are three things which "expand a person's mind" (his *daas*): A beautiful wife, a beautiful home, and beautiful utensils. This seems to imply that we can feel connected to our possessions. But that is not the intention of this statement. What the Sages meant here was that feeling relaxed and comfortable from these things can only be positive for a person who uses these tools to improve his mind, his *daas* - when he is connected to his *daas*. In other words, these things can only expand the *daas* of a person, and that is when he **lives** in his *daas*, but not if he thinks he **lives** in his physical house.

The only way to overcome fears is for a person to live through his soul, to realize that he does not

really live on this world – that nothing he has on this world is his.

What we are saying here is a solution that can help any person on any level survive this world's worries. It does **not** require one to have perfect *Emunah* or to go above his level. It is practical advice for how to live on this world and how to eliminate our fears, and even our *nefesh habehaimis* (animalistic layer of the soul) can identify with this solution and be able to implement it.

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