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## Bilvavi Part 5 - 051 Asking Hashem for Yiras Shamayim

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There are altogether five levels in how much *Yirah* (fear of Heaven) a person is able to reach:

1. *Yiras Haonesh* - fear of being punished, either on this world or in Gehinnom.
2. *Yiras Hakavod* - fear of not getting honored properly in the next world.
3. *Yiras Hashleimus* - fear of not reaching perfection, due to one's sins.

These three levels of *Yirah* are written about in *Mesillas Yesharim*, chapters 2-4. The next two levels of *Yirah* are described in *Mesillas Yesharim*, chapter 25:

4. *Yiras Haromemus*
5. *Yiras Cheit*.

We will mainly explain *yiras haonesh* - fear of being punished, either on this world or in Gehinnom.

The main method used to acquire *yiras haonesh* is through imagining the punishment of Gehinnom, and is written about in the works of Reb Yisrael Salanter zt"l, who founded the *Mussar* (self-discipline) movement, as well as by his students. However, there are three points which need to be emphasized here.

1. If a person is trying to work on he can fear Gehinnom, he should remember Who created Gehinnom, and who He is delivering the punishments (as well as keeping these souls alive every second): Hashem!

Be afraid of Hashem, not of the punishment. This point was emphasized by Reb Chatzkel Levenstein zt"l.

2. Besides for picturing Gehinnom, a person needs to daven to Hashem a lot that he should really acquire this fear. It is not enough just to work hard on it – one needs *tefillah* as well to reach it.

3. Always remember that it is Hashem's will that we should fear punishment, and that this is not by chance. (This is explained in *sefer Nefesh HaChaim*). Hashem wants us to have *yiras haonesh*, as well as *yiras haromemus* and *yiras cheit*.

When you are working hard to acquire *yiras haonesh*, remember that this is what Hashem wants – He wants us to work hard to acquire it. *Yiras haonesh* helps stabilize our Avodas Hashem. If we wouldn't have *yiras haonesh*, our Avodas Hashem will not last, and it will not build us.

A lot more can be said about this, and hopefully with the help of Hashem we will speak more about it.

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