



Have No Fear

We live in a climate of gripping fear and encroaching terror. Mirroring the underlying global tension that exists in the world today is a sense of dread and fear that leaves us feeling unsettled and anxious. Whether pushing a cart down a supermarket aisle, driving to work, sharing a good laugh with a friend, or munching on pizza at the local pizzeria, worried thoughts are continually swimming around in the back of our minds, giving us no peace; how will I pay the tuition this month? Is my marriage really falling apart? Why is the business so slow this week? Why is my friend back in the hospital getting treatments again? Where can I get help for my child who is falling so behind in school? What will be tomorrow or the next day, or in a month

or next year? How do we cope when anxiety and fear eats away at us from within? The answer is that there is nothing more invincible in this world than faith. When a person's faith in G-d is strong he **has no fear**, as it's written, "I will trust and not be afraid" (*Yeshayahu, Chap. 12, V. 2*). If you have crystal clear faith in the Almighty, and your trust in Him is complete and unyielding, than nothing, but nothing can frighten you. But truthfully, how many of us are holding by this level? In our highly neurotic society, anxiety disorders are prevalent, the psychiatrists' couches are filled, and new drugs promising relief, keep flooding the market. The daily battle with depression and anxiety has taken its collective toll on our nerves and has transformed us into angry and irritable people. And yet, we remain stubbornly blind to the missing ingredient in our lives, lying at the heart of all our fears, which is faith in G-d. When you have faith in G-d, then there is **nothing to fear** except G-d. Life is not random, and nothing is arbitrary. Every occurrence, event and happenstance, whether large or small is controlled solely by G-d, as the Sages say (*Chulin 7b*), "A person does not stub his finger, if it was

not decreed from Above”. Imagine that! G-d’s control over the circumstances of your life is so far reaching, that you can’t scratch your pinky without it being decreed by Heaven! So why all the apprehension and fear? Why not try looking at the situation from a different angle? For instance, let’s say you decided to open a fruit store on the avenue. You take all your savings and invest it in this one enterprise hoping that it will succeed and yield profitable returns. Suddenly, another store fruit store opens across the street and you become alarmed and panic that your business will be ruined. You spend sleepless nights worrying that all your savings will go down the drain. Now, what would happen if you would replace the fear-based thinking with faith-affirming thoughts? Think about it! If everything is in G-d’s hands anyway, and He determines every outcome then why be afraid? The next time something frightens you, don’t panic; just remind yourself Who’s behind it all. You will be surprised to find how calm and reassured you will feel knowing that no one can harm you without G-d’s consent, as it is written, “By your name they will call you, and to your place will they seat you; a person cannot touch

that which is reserved for his friend, and likewise, one kingdom does not overlap the other by even a hairsbreadth” (*Yoma, 38a*). Whatever is decided by Heaven that’s what will be, and no one change it otherwise. Work on it! Make a conscious effort to replace fear with faith – and when you do, you won’t be afraid anymore. “But, G-d is invisible; how can I have faith when I can’t see Him?” you wonder. To live with a clear and pure faith – to be consciously aware of G-d’s presence and active involvement in your life at every moment – requires the mentoring of a *tzaddik*, as Rabbi Nachman stated, “It is impossible to arrive at faith, without a close connection to a *tzaddik*, because only he can inculcate faith (in a person) (*Likutai Moharan, Vol. 1, Chap 7*). Furthermore, Rabbi Nachman said that, “A person must request exceedingly from the Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He that he be worthy of drawing close to the ‘*True Tzaddik*’ (*Ibid. Vol. 2, Chap. 78*). But, unfortunately today, despite the underlying yearning of the masses of the Jewish People for that missing something in their lives, the trend of modern thinking does not lean in the direction of faith – nor belief in the ‘*True Tzaddik*’. Oh! and how our generation

is suffering because of a lack of faith. Rabbi Nachman said, (*Ibid. Vol.1, Chap. 60*) that it takes a *tzaddik* to arouse a person from his slumber, because a person sleeps and he is not even aware he is sleeping. Although consciously awake, his mind is in a deep slumber, so he cannot perceive G-d, which is what destroys him completely. The absence of awareness of G-d is what causes him to be anxious and filled with utmost dread – to the point that he can become afraid of his own shadow. The mere association with a *tzaddik*, however, can arouse you from your spiritual slumber and re-ignite the spark of faith from within until it shines clear and bright. Struck by a sudden awareness that you are standing in the presence of G-d, you will begin to reach out to Him with your mouth. This is called the action part of faith – pouring out your heart out to G-d in prayer – which serves to strengthen and reinforce your bond with Him. My friend, the formula is simple – when you have faith, you will **have no fear** – but, this is something that you have to work on very hard, as Rabbi Nachman commented regarding the obstacles to achieving complete faith in G-d, “The sin of a person, instills [within] him denial

of G-d” (*Sefer Hamidos, Cit. Faith, Par. 22*). The very act of transgressing G-d’s will, implies denial of His supervision and control, which can then make life seem at once, both arbitrary and frightening. But if you believe in G-d, then you trust that your fate is completely in His hands, as the Sages stated (*Menachos 39b*), “Whoever places their trust in the Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He, will have a refuge in this world and the World-To-Come”. Meaning that when you rely only on G-d, you are afforded protection in this world and the next. Don’t take this matter lightly! Without faith a person could never survive life’s inevitable ups and downs; the doctor delivers the dreaded diagnosis – who are you going to turn to? You can’t get along with your spouse, so your marriage is toppling – who is going to save it? Your children are sliding into deviancy – who is going to guide you? Relatives, friends, neighbors, and even strangers meddle in your life and only criticize and complain about you – where can you hide? Feeling so broken and crushed and with no one to turn to, you become withdrawn and depressed. Now, imagine how your life can be if you would greet its ordeals and challenges with a rock-solid faith in

G-d. The minute you feel the slightest pinch in life, you have to Whom to turn – to pour out your heart’s troubles. If you know G-d’s address, you’ll never be lost in life. And it doesn’t stop there; faith safeguards you even in the next world. If a person fortified himself with faith in this world and made himself consciously aware of G-d down here, then when his time comes to leave behind the physical world to enter the purely spiritual one, he will find the surroundings familiar; he will not suffer the confusion, disorientation, and apprehension typical of those who failed to meaningfully connect to G-d. “But I have bills to pay and I’m too tired and worn out to work on faith; besides, my life is filled with too much stress already, worrying about how to afford buying a nice house, nice clothing, and satisfying my physical urges – to start worrying now, about my relationship with G-d. And, after all the sins that I’ve done, who says G-d wants me anyway?” Enough with the excuses! It’s never too late, nor are you ever too far gone to start working on faith. Recall what Rabbi Nachman said: “By having faith, the Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He will forgive you for all your sins” (*Sefer Hamidos, Cit.*

Emunah, Par. 33). Furthermore, remember what the Prophet said, “She will seek faith, then I will forgive her” (*Jeremiah, Chap. 5, V. 1*). Faith is the yardstick by which G-d measures our allegiance to Him and therefore it is paramount. Yet, you can never say enough nor finish speaking to others about the slippery concept of faith that continues to elude mankind, blinded by the illusive nature of this world. And, as long as G-d’s presence remains disguised, and the message of faith is muted by a disbelieving society, man will be plagued by mortal fear and terror. Thus, the rustling of the leaf and a fleeting shadow will continue to make him jump with fright, as anxiety insinuates its way into his psyche, as Rabbi Nachman warned, “Fear saps the strength of a person” (*Sefer Hamidos, Cit. Fear, Par. 8*). Fear can literally make a person sick, because fear breeds more fear. Fear preys on the imagination inducing paranoid-thinking, where you may suddenly develop a fear of let’s say, being sued, or fear of having a skirmish with the law and being thrown into jail. Or, it may develop into a complex, taking the form of social inhibitions such as being shy around the neighbors and being easily intimidated by

others, or it may take the guise of a common fear such as that of dogs, and so on. But when your faith in G-d is firm, then you **have no fear!** On a deeper level, recognizing that at the core of our fears lies a well of guilt, Rabbi Nachman recommended that, a person should accustom himself to make a self-evaluation, before the Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He, by offering a daily accounting of his deeds (*Likutai Moharan, Vol. 1, Chap 15*). Elaborating even further, the Sages said, when there is justice [executed] down here, then there is no [need for] justice [to be served] from Above” (*Devarim Rabba, Chap 5, Par. 5*). Isn’t it time to start living guilt-free? Why not do some soul-searching each day and unload some of the guilt weighing you down. Feeling closer to G-d, you’ll feel better about yourself, and then life will seem more fun than intimidating.

2.

Our society is filled with a lot of sad people who are depressed and don’t even realize it. True, people are shopping, buying houses and cars, and going on vacations, but deep down they are not genuinely happy. Religion may have

answers, but in our rational-minded culture where we feel distant from G-d, religious concepts have been dismissed as outdated. Imagine, informing a person raised with Western values that with each sin committed he creates “evil husks” and “destructive forces”. Undoubtedly, he will shoot back that, “today there is no such thing as demons and spirits etc...” In fact, society at large would unanimously agree that, “we don’t believe in such things, and there never was nor will there ever be such a phenomenon”. Yet, examining the matter more closely, how can we account for the various strange and bizarre behavioral phenomenon that we observe today? Haven’t you ever witnessed someone just fly off the handle in an abrupt and sudden rage, for no apparent reason? And, what about the once vivacious and merry socialite who out of no where, suddenly becomes sullen and depressed, withdrawing completely from the company of others? Drawing from their wisdom of the ages, the Sages inform us that, “there is a demon that is called, ‘*Ketev Meriri*’ that is responsible for making a person’s life bitter (*Eicha Rabba, Chap. 1, Par. 29; Tanchuma Nosso, Chap. 23*). Believe it or not,

there are demonic forces and spirits, even today, that are derived from one's promiscuous behaviors, lustful thoughts and fantasies, or from eating non-kosher food – that induce depression unsuspectingly. How else can you explain how the once popular boy who had friends and an active social life, now, suddenly becomes withdrawn, feels uncomfortable being amongst people, and even hesitates to venture outside and stops relating to the world – without any explanation! This describes the condition, now what about the cure? Rabbi Nachman informs us that by performing the Divine commandments – the '*mitzvos*' – with joy, we can repair the emotional and psychological ravages of sinful behavior (*Likutai Moharan, Chap. 1, Par. 24*). The very act of fulfilling a '*mitzvah*' – a Divine command – with joy, completes the circuit connecting a person to G-d and illuminates him with the insight that there is more meaning to his existence than the mere satisfaction of earthly desires. Over time, as the joy intensifies, it only serves to reinforce the bond of intimacy, leading to an ever greater desire for pleasure derived from being close to G-d. Finding the relationship so profoundly

satisfying, you become free from the inexorable grip of unhealthy want and needs, as they become subordinate to the passionate yearning for G-d. The sheer joy of being enraptured by the ‘*mitzvos*’ has the power to literally lift you off your feet to transcend the limiting factors of the external world – sweeping out the “demons” so to speak, that lie at the heart of all neuroses. Thus, the fears and frustrations that were born out of the former cold-war conflict with the will of The Creator dissolve in the warmth generated by the joy found in fulfilling His commandments. Furthermore Rabbi Nachman added that, “When a person performs a ‘*mitzva*’ with joy, it indicates that his heart is whole with G-d” (*Sefer Hamidos, Chap. Joy, Par. 1*). It’s axiomatic; when you are happy, you fear not! To be sure, we live in an uptight society and being happy does not come easy, therefore you have to make an extra effort to achieve happiness, as Rabbi Nachman said, “When a person is always happy, the Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He Himself guards him from immorality and other indiscretions – so esteemed is joy in the eyes of G-d” (*Likutai Moharan, Vol. 1, Par. 169*). Moreover, Rabbi Nachman stressed that, “It’s a great ‘*mitzva*’ to

always be happy!” (*Likutai Moharan, Vol. 2, Par. 24*). In the cold world that we live in, this is not as simple as it sounds. Nonetheless, you must surf against the tide of popular thinking, and force joy and simply be happy for happiness sake, because it’s the one Divine commandment that surpasses all others. Joy is the clearest expression of a sincere desire on the part of a Jew, to reform, by undoing the damage incurred by the mistakes of the past and escaping its devastating consequences. Indeed, we all our aware that the sinner is relentlessly pursued by worries, as expressed in the verse, “I shall worry [because of] my sins” (*Tehillim, Chap. 38, V.19*). The guilt-laden sins of a person fill him with dread, which in turn make him fearful, as Rabbi Nachman said, “Through worry comes fear” (*Sefer Hamidos, Chap. Heading Fear, Par. 36*). Think about it – why are people today, so plagued by irrational fear and free-floating anxiety? The answer is that a person is responding to a sense of alienation from G-d, as Rabbi Nachman said (*Ibid. Par. 33*), “Whoever has fear, it indicates that the Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He has hid His face from him, and that [harsh] judgments have been leveled against

him". The person, on the other hand, that firmly believes that G-d is with him, by his side, to the extent that he perceives with all his natural senses, G-dliness in everything around him, does not know the meaning of fear. Because there is no greater joy in the world, then to sense intimations of the Divine from behind the guise of nature. Rabbi Nachman warned however, that, "Through worry and fear, the heart becomes clogged and incapable of experiencing G-d, which leads to anxiety that destroys his life" (*Sefer Hamidos, Chap. Fear, Par. 31*). Yet, with the statistics revealing an uncommonly high incident rate of neurotic disorders, and with more and more people seeking psychological and psychiatric services, we still fail to make the connection between our irrational fears and our estrangement from G-d. We may spend many a therapeutic hour on the couch not coming an inch closer to heart of our problem, unless we turn to the *tzaddik*. The *tzaddik* has the power to tenderize the most stubborn of hearts, and make it sensitive to the value of performing the *'mitzvos'* with utmost joy. He unlocks the hidden potential and brings out the best within us by helping us appreciate

the unique privilege we have of fulfilling G-d's will every day. After all, did not the Sages teach us that, "Even the illiterate from amongst you is filled with 'mitzvos' like [the seeds in] a pomegranate" (*Berachos, 57a*). And he has much work to do! How many of us today can benefit from this healing message? Did not the prophet Yeshayahu complain, that even in his time the performance of the commandments were "like rote learning of human commands" (*Yeshayahu, Chap 29, V. 13*)? Before doing a 'mitzvah' take a moment to recognize that you are actually performing the will of G-d. You may feel a sudden surge of joy or be tickled with happiness, as the Sages said (*Vayikra Rabba, Chap 34, Par. 9*), "The Torah taught us proper protocol – when a person performs a 'mitzva' he should do so with a glad heart". Yes, by wrapping yourself in 'tzizis', crowning yourself with 'tefillin', kissing the 'mezuzah' as you pass the doorway, or just entering the synagogue to pray, you are doing what G-d wants – can there be a greater joy than this? Is this not the ultimate purpose of our existence? As a Jew you have the privilege of giving charity to a fellow Jew, or performing an act of kindness for another Jew – what other

legacy will remain after you're gone, if not this? A Jew eats only kosher food – this is what will remain; a Jew covers his head, and retains his beard and sidecurls – this is what will remain; a Jewish woman conducts herself modestly by covering her head – this is what will remain after her; and a Jew keeps the Sabbath – this will stand before him! As the Sages said (*Sotah, 3b*), “Anyone who performs a commandment in this world, it will precede him and walk before him in the World-to-Come”. Now imagine, if we are all filled with ‘*mitzvos*’ like the seeds of a pomegranate, then where is there room for sadness and depression? Open your eyes and kick up your heels out of sheer joy that you are so wonderfully privileged. Banish fear from your heart, by just getting happy – just by virtue of the fact that, happiness in itself wipes away fear. Fear only signifies that you feel very far from G-d and are very much affected by external factors in life which are ruining you, as the Sages said (*Devarim Rabba, Chap 5*), “Whoever trusts in the Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He is worthy of being like Him, however, whoever trusts in idols, is condemned to become like them”. Simply put, if a person works on his trust in G-d, by

maintaining a positive outlook and is buoyantly optimistic, because he feels so connected to G-d – then what is there to be afraid of in life? Who can possibly harm him? How lucky is this person! Moreover, every moment that his mind is turned to G-d he is fulfilling the positive command of clinging to G-d. On the other hand, when a person turns his back on G-d, it is equated with serving idols, as it is written, (*Devarim, Chap. 11, V. 16*), “And they will turn and serve other gods”, to which the Baal Shem Tov elaborates that, the minute a person just turns aside from G-d, it’s as if he has already worshipped idols! So, stop living your life in terror. Break out in joy and song and shake-off all your phobias and fears, as Rabbi Nachman said (*Sefer Hamidos, Chap. Fear, Par. 11*), “Whoever has anxiety should hum a happy tune”. Try it – it works like magic. **Have no fear**; the next time you feel nervous and anxious, just whisper a happy tune. As happiness wells up inside of you, so will your confidence level and your trust in G-d that life is not so bad after all.

3.

The wheel of fortune is constantly turning. No matter how tranquil our lives may seem and how secure we may feel, no one can be certain what the next year, the next month, the next week, and not even what the next moment will bring. Calamity and catastrophe can strike at any moment and unseat the most secure from amongst us, driving such terror in his heart that it leaves him no where to turn for relief. The only sure defense in life against the inevitable is to develop an internal support system. If a person trains himself to be strong and to always hold-on, then he will never get broken in life. With this kind of disciplined approach and internal support mechanism – a person becomes fearless. Otherwise, a person can be driven mad by sheer worry over the future; what's going to be in the next hour, week, and even next year? The choice is yours; either live a fragile existence always vulnerable and at risk of collapsing out of fear, or to hold yourself tight and strong, never letting anything break you. But truth to tell, how does one acquire the inner strength and resolve not to get broken in life – after all we really don't know what the future has in store for us? The

answer again is that a person must draw his inspiration from the “*True Tzaddik*”. The “*True Tzaddik*” provides us with a base of support, encouragement, and optimism in overcoming life’s challenges and ordeals, by penetrating the mystery of G-d’s absolute control. To literally overcome the harshest trials and tribulations in life it is vital that you associate yourself with a “*true tzaddik*”, that teaches us the source of fear, as the Sages said (*Bamidbar Rabba, Chap 11, Par. 3*), “All while a person refrains from sinning, he is feared and [his presence] intimidating, and the creatures are afraid of him, once he sins, [however], he becomes frightened and afraid, and scared of others”. The minute a person crosses the threshold of sin, fear enters his heart and he becomes intimidated by others, as it’s written in the *Zohar*, “There is a person that cries and knows not from what – from the sins committed unwittingly”. We all commit sins on a daily basis that were aren’t even aware of such as, evil gossip. It is human nature to speak negatively about others, without even realizing the seriousness of the offense. Furthermore, he is completely unaware that by his actions he is

denying G-d and concealing His presence, so to speak – because if you truly believe in G-d and remained consciously aware at all times of G-d's presence around you – you would never have the nerve to speak against someone else, as the Sages said, (*Erachin, 15b*), “A person does not speak about another person, without denying the Divine Presence”. If you honestly believed that G-d is by your side, you would never speak insultingly about your friend – and by doing so, you are chasing away, so to speak, the Divine Presence, as the Sages said (*Ibid*), “Whoever speaks slander, the Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He says: he and I can not dwell in the world”. Is it any wonder why we are still languishing in this long and protracted exile? The urge and tendency to speak bad about another person is so compelling that it defies logic and reason – after all, what did the other person do to deserve such treatment? Consequently, we are now a nation so thoroughly divided in heart and mind, plagued by prejudice and discrimination, where one type of Jew is pinned against the other, for no good reason. Lacking the strength that can only be found in unity, our fractured nation cowers before world opinion, frightfully insecure

and shamefully dependent. The only way to recover our national pride and dignity, and to never be afraid, is by learning to love each other. If we stand united, nothing can vanquish us – on the contrary – the nations of the world would fear us. But since this is not so, we suffer, as the Sages said (*Midrash Aggadah*), “Evil slander is as severe as javelins and swords that mortally wound”. A person who possesses arms must be careful; they are not toys to be fooled around with for they can be deadly. Don’t excuse your actions by saying, “I was merely taking a potshot or was playing around with the knife” – no, if you own a bow and arrow and you shoot recklessly – you can kill another person. A person’s tongue is likened to a weapon – it’s the javelin, it’s the bullet, it’s the sword – and when it spews forth slander, it can assassinate another person. This colossal sin is so rampant and widespread that it has become a systemic problem – and almost as if by metaphor, so has the rise in the incidences of that most dreaded disease: Cancer. Daily we are confronted with frightening reports of those who have succumbed to this prevalent disease. And what is the nature of this disease? It eats away at a

person from every point of entry, yet no one gives it a second thought as to why it occurs – which is evil gossip, as the Sages said (*Erachin, 15b*), “Whoever speaks slander his sins are elevated to the level of idol worship, immorality, and murder – [which are the three cardinal sins]”. Despite the fact that the Sages inform us that slander is a graver offense than the most serious sins, yet, we persist in committing this most despicable crime. Every day we instigate arguments between each other, and if that’s not enough, whole cities, towns and hamlets have become divided and polarized by the strife provoked by this kind of behavior. Adding insult to injury, the media provides an open forum to perpetuate the gossip and lies even further, by filling its pages and screens with slander and libelous reports. So contemptible is gossip that the Sages commented (*Ibid.*), “Whoever speaks slander says the Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He: ‘he and I can not dwell in the world’”. The scope and seriousness of this offense cannot be emphasized enough. Why is our society seized with so much fear and terror, if for no other reason except that we have alienated ourselves from G-d by speaking against our fellow man?

Furthermore, Rabbi Nachman said (*Sefer Hamidos, Chap Slander, Par. 15*), “Whoever libels his friend there is no pardon forever”. So many of us are troubled today, and we are all looking for answers. Yet, we haven’t put two and two together, because gossiping has become second nature to us. So, loneliness and isolation will continue to pursue our callous generation that cannot find relief for all that ails them including the ominous threat of cancer – because of their failure to make the connection between the treachery of their mouths and its devastating consequences. Admit it! We all need G-d’s help today. Get relief, by coming back to G-d. Why not start by making amends for all the hurtful remarks and statements you made against your fellow man – which drove you away from G-d in the first place?

4.

Pace and fear are opposite sides of the same coin. There is nothing more precious than when Jews dwell together in peace and harmony, as the Sages said (*Uktzin, Chap. 3*), “G-d could not find a more worthy vessel to contain blessing for Israel than peace”. And who are the champions

of peace? In every generation G-d sends us 'tzaddikim' and Torah scholars who foster harmony and peace amongst the Jewish People, as the Sages said (*Berachos, 64a*), "Torah scholars increase peace throughout the world". Granted we are a media-driven society, whose opinions are based on what's printed in the newspapers and what's seen on TV, yet have you ever thought of seeking guidance from a Torah scholar? Think about it for a moment! From where is your unique status as a Jew derived, if not from the Torah; and is it not the Torah that originally defined us as a Nation – so why look elsewhere? But, indeed our generation, like those that preceded it – and perhaps even more so, must contend with the sinister, dark forces that always seek to vanquish the light and obscure the presence of G-d. Today the movement for nationalism with its secular moralistic values, seeks to uproot the pinions of faith in G-d and His Torah, which are the bedrock of our people. Preying on our insecurities as an isolated entity, they drain us of all hope and confidence in our strength as a G-dly nation, driving us into submission by means of intimidation. We must fight back! We

must wake-up to who we are and where are strengths truly lie. Sadness must be replaced by joy. Fear must be supplanted by faith. Optimism must chase away hopelessness and despair – and then peace will reign. The time has come for the Jewish People to join hands in seeking peace by unifying and realizing that we mustn't be afraid. Peace is so vital that the Sages were prompted to declare, (*Tanchuma, Shoftim, 18*), “See how great is the power of peace, that even towards your enemies did G-d say make overtures of peace”. Can there be a greater enemy than one who attempts to deprive you of your religion and faith in G-d? Our generation bears witness to perhaps to one of the most tragic spiritual holocausts ever, where more than a million Jews have been persuaded to forsake the heritage of their forefathers by the enemies of G-d who have no shame in speaking openly against Him. Nevertheless, even to these adversaries of G-d who have mounted an assault against the Jewish soul, did our Sages urge, you must extend the olive branch of peace, because peace is synonymous with G-d's name (*Shabbos, 10b*). Furthermore, the Sages said, “Great is peace, because the name of the Holy-One-

Blessed-Be-He is called ‘peace’” (*Vayikra Rabba, Chap 9, Par. 9*). Therefore, stop running to make peace with other nations, which is just an exercise in futility, and will never happen. Why live in denial and fool yourself? Just look at the pages of history over the course of the last two thousand years that are dripping with Jewish blood mercilessly shed by the children of Esav and Yishmael. One thousand years devoted by one, and a thousand years devoted by the other to the wholesale slaughter and violent atrocities perpetrated against our people in the most horrific and gruesome ways imaginable. And if that is not shocking enough, they have the audacity to pressure us in to signing peace treaties – as if by one stroke of the pen on a flimsy piece of paper, centuries of pain and trauma can be instantly erased and forgotten. This poor excuse for a goodwill gesture holds no water, especially since it’s a cover-up for their real intention, which is to drive us into the sea! Come to your senses already and stop fantasizing about fictitious peace accords. Expend your energies, instead on reconciling with your fellow Jew and fostering unity between the Jewish People. Stop looking for fault in your

Jewish brethren, and start casting each other in a favorable light, as Rabbi Nachman said, (*Likutai Moharan, Vol. 1, Chap 282*) “even a wicked person must be judged favorably”. This method of fostering goodwill between us has the power to inspire your fellow Jew to have a change of heart and to return to G-d – which is the true function of ‘peace’. In fact, in our troubled times, this must be the agenda underlying all our efforts at bringing about the redemption; pulling ourselves closer together in order to make a final and complete reconciliation to our Father in Heaven. So, make-up with your wife, be kinder and more patient with your children, demonstrate more tolerance towards your relatives, and forgive your neighbors and friends. This is the repair work that restores unity to the people and paves the way for the redemption. This is genuine peace! Be on the lookout, however, for the corruptive forces that in every generation, subtly invade peaceful societies, fanning the flames of controversy, to satisfy their greed. Employing the art of “divide and conquer”, these criminals have been responsible throughout ages for instigating fights, conflicts, and feuds between individuals,

towns and even nations to distract the masses, while they secretly steal and exploit them for all they are worth. Masters of deception, these smooth operators are the real enemies of the peace. They have destroyed families, ruined reputations and wasted whole towns and villages, all while hiding behind a smokescreen of strife and chaos that they contrived to elude detection. In time, the truth surfaces and their wickedness becomes exposed, but by that time the damage is done. Don't be duped. Resist the temptation to engage in a 'good fight' and don't let anyone convince you to take sides in an argument no matter how justified the cause. Your task is to repair the breaches in the bastion of peace wherever you find them, immediately. Show your fellow Jew that you love him by revealing G-d to him, and you will be one step closer to bringing the redemption, as the Sages said, (*Devarim Rabba, Chap 5, Par. 12*) "Great is peace that Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He will not announce to Israel that they are redeemed, only through peace". The sun is rising. You open your eyes to the dawn of a new day. Automatically you begin to feel the butterflies fluttering in your stomach, as waves

of fear begin crossing over the threshold of your mind. Stop right there! Now try using the techniques outlined above to conquer your fears. Remind yourself who's the captain of your ship, and regain a sense of control by working on your faith in G-d's control. Perform a *mitzvah* – any *mitzvah* – with all the joy you can muster and take pride in the privilege of being able to connect to G-d by doing His will. Then give yourself a 'pep talk' to hold-on strong and tight no matter how difficult the challenges will be that day – and promise yourself that you will not let anything break you. Finally, find a way to show good-will to your fellow Jew and spread the good feeling all around. He will feel good and so will you. Better yet, you will **have no fear** anymore.

