



## פרשת כי תשא

"I'm Surprised at Myself. What's Driving Me To Do This?"

By Rebbetzin Shiffy Friedman

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*This shiur has been dedicated as a zechus for the refuah sheleimah of Alta Ettel bas Blima Gittel, besoch she'ar cholei Yisrael.*

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Welcome, dear sisters, to this week's shiur!

I feel blessed to be in a position where I get to hear from such incredible, growth-oriented women in klal Yisrael all the time. Whenever a Ner Leragli listener reaches out with a question or feedback, even if I don't share it in the next class, it's so moving for me to see how the love for Hashem and Yiddishkeit and the desire to connect is so real for so many.

One very special listener sent such a moving email. Here are some snippets: Regarding the Parshas Bo shiur, she wrote, "Sometimes I simply don't have the energy to focus inward and do the inner work. Just telling myself "There will be better days" was helpful for both calming me that day and appreciating the lightness of the next!

It was heartwarming to hear that davka the parts of myself and my life I wish were different are the areas with the greatest potential for me to absorb and reflect the light."

Regarding the Parshas Yisro-Mishpatim shiur she wrote, "Learning what הסתכל means in regards to the נפש was mind blowing because of its perfect logic!

I was overtaken with waves of love to Hashem and to the Torah for providing so

much goodness, love, warmth and healing!

I had previously understood that the Torah presents a challenge, but we were given the tools to withstand the tests. Now I know that it's not the Torah that's the challenge - the Torah is the ultimate answer! The challenge is for me to get in touch with my nefesh and clear the negative associations. To think that my deepest needs are all taken care of and available to tap into at all times..."

Our last shiur was dedicated as a zechus for the *ilui neshama* of a very special child, Avraham Meir ben yvlch"t Reb Yosef Nesanel Goloventzitz, and I had the *zechiya* of speaking with his mother. She wanted to let me know that so many women reached out to share with her what they did as a *zechus* for her son's *neshamah*, and that he's always on their mind. How comforting it was for her!

### Ner Leragli Update

Yes, dear Ner Leragli listeners, you haven't heard from me in a few weeks. It's been a hectic few weeks, baruch Hashem, where I've been busy with various obligations, as well as taking the time to just be. Having just completed another cycle of Project Kindle, baruch Hashem, LAHAV's Torah-sourced program for emotional wellbeing, I felt



that I needed this time to just repose—I'm sorry that it was on your *cheshbon*! It's been so heartwarming to hear from listeners and talmidos who just wanted to know, "When will the next shiur be available?" "Is something wrong on my end or there hasn't been a shiur this week?" "I've been relistening/rereading the past few shiurim too many times to count—I need more!" What a kiddush Hashem.

Another thing that happened since I last had the *zechiyah* of giving a shiur was that I wasn't feeling well for a good few days. I'm sharing this with you because I believe that the message I want to highlight will resonate with and give *chizuk* to many.

There's a certain *gilyon* from a particular *mashpia* that I enjoy learning from on Shabbos. My husband brings it home for me every erev Shabbos as my "oneg Shabbos." On Friday night when I wasn't feeling my best yet, sitting on the couch after a week of taking it easy, I was holding this complication of *divrei Torah* in my hand and it just struck me. A man is like the sun, a woman is like the moon. The sun is consistent, always producing, always emitting rays with the same power, the same strength, the same radiance. The moon, as we discussed, has her times. As opposed to the sun that's fixed, she's dynamic. There are times in the month when she's barely visible, an almost imperceptible sliver in the sky. She's ducking under, out of commission. Other times, she's bright and round, in all her glory. Of course there are exceptions and this means something else for everyone, and it's important to put it out there—how many women I know who share how emotionally or even physically fragile their

husbands are! It's a different world today...

But the general picture is that a man is like the sun—consistent and steady, while we women are simply not.

A woman who I'm currently counseling is on bedrest now, and we had a conversation about this topic the other day. She said to me, "Imagine I'd have to put on *tefillin* every morning and daven three *tefillos* a day with a *minyán*..."

Of course men in certain conditions have exceptions too, but the point she made was so powerful.

It occurred to me that our exemption as women from *mitzvos aseï shehazeman gerama* is not contingent on a life stage. The Torah doesn't tell us, "Only if a woman has this size family or that kind of hectic lifestyle, she's exempt..." No, because it's just part of being a woman—period—that we go through emotional phases, physical phases, and hormonal phases that put us in a different category. Some of the women I work with, incredible young women who are not yet married, and some who haven't yet been blessed with a family, may Hashem send their *yeshuah* very soon—the phases are all in full swing for them too.

Part of our *avodah* is to accept this very human, very feminine, part in ourselves—especially those of us who find it hard to just be. This is a conversation for a different time—this finding it hard to just be, which resonates with so many women, and one special listener actually reached out and asked me if I can address it, so we will *be"H* get back to this topic at a later time.

To wrap up our conversation on the inconsistencies of our lives, I want to let you know that for the time being Ner Leragli will not run on a weekly basis. I

will iy”H be traveling next week and then when I return it’ll be right before Purim. With the obligations to my family, the women I counsel, and other responsibilities, I want to share this update with you in advance. As soon as I am able to prepare and teach another *shiur*, we’ll be back here iy”H!

And now, we’re ready to look into Parshas Ki Sisa and draw our illuminating lessons from this week’s *parshah*.

### How can Parshas Ki Sisa be a guiding light for me this week?

What’s just one message that I can apply to my life so I can feel more of the *Ner Mitzvah veTorah ohr*?

In Parshas Ki Sisa, we read of the calamity of *cheit ha’eigel*, the sin of the Golden Calf. It’s one of those infamous chapters in klal Yisrael’s history that raises so many questions, one that requires a deeper analysis so that we can come away with more clarity. It’s one of those stories we’ve heard since we’re so young, but through our adult eyes, we can understand the nation and all that transpired in a new way. We can even come away with insights regarding our own mistakes and what drives us today when we engage in our own form of this *eigel*—as well as a deeper understanding of the *gadlus* of the Yiddishe woman. So let’s get into this...

Of course, it is with much trepidation that we attempt to understand this incomprehensible *parshah*. After all, we can’t forget for one moment that this is Dor Deiah that we speak of here, the generation of Yidden that were *zocheh* to stand at *ma’amad* Har Sinai, the Yidden who merited the open miracles of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, of *krias Yam Suf*, of the *mahn*, the *ananei haKavod*. We cannot begin to fathom their greatness and exaltedness.

Actually, our understanding of *cheit ha’eigel* today will give us a peek into their heightened spiritual level... but it’s important to start out with this disclaimer —that as much as we’ll try to scratch the surface, we won’t even fully understand the intricacies of *cheit ha’eigel*, nor the greatness of the Yidden in that generation.

As the Nesivos Shalom writes in his introduction to his discussion on *cheit ha’eigel* (Parshas Ki Sisa),

ענין חטא העגל הוא פרשה תמוהה ביותר שאין לקרב זאת אל השכל. ולאחר כל הפירושים שנאמרו בזה אין להבין איך לאחר גילוי הנשגב של מעמד הר סיני נפלו בחטא כ”כ חמור.

### The Miscalculation

With this important introduction, we’re ready to delve into this chapter. What were the events that led up to this calamity? Let’s do a quick brush-up. It all started with Moshe Rabeinu’s ascent to Har Sinai for forty days, with the intent of bringing the *luchos* to klal Yisrael.

Trouble starts to brew at the very start of פרק לב (א):

וירא העם כי בשש משה לרדת מן ההר, ויקהל העם על אהרן ויאמרו אליו קום עשה לנו אלהים אשר ילכו לפנינו כי זה משה האיש אשר העלנו מארץ מצרים—לא ידענו מה היה לו.

And the people saw that Moshe had delayed in descending the mountain, and the people gathered around Aharon and said to him, “Rise up, make for us gods that will go before us, for this man Moshe who brought us up from the land of Mitzrayim—we do not know what became of him!”

The whole catastrophe of *cheit ha’eigel* was precipitated by a tragic error:



כי בושש משה.

In actuality, we know, Moshe was not delayed at all. But this was the Yidden's first mistake: according to their calculation, the 16th of Tamuz was the fortieth day of Moshe's departure, when in actuality it was the thirty ninth, because they included the day of his ascent into the count.

### What Drove Them?

So what was the powerful emotion that drove them toward what happened next, and this is an emotion all of us can very much relate to, each in our own way? This is where we want to bring all of what we learned into our own lives so that we walk away from our class together with an insight that can truly impact our day-to-day life?

It was the emotion of *fear*. Very simply understood, klal Yisrael was gripped by fear.

As we discussed in our previous Ner Leragli shiurim, Hakadosh Baruch Hu fashioned our *nefesh* in a way that she should only be in her good place, that she should only thrive, when she's plugged in to Torah and mitzvos, when she's connected to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. He created us in a way that only through our relationship with Him and His Torah all our emotional needs are filled. Perhaps the most powerful emotional need that being in a relationship with Hashem fills for us is, "You are taken care of. You're in good hands. Someone's looking out for you." We all know how strong this need is for us, and if we can't see it in ourselves, we can see it in young children who are more intuitively connected to their needs. This desperation that kids have for security, "Will someone be home when I get home from school? Who will watch me when you're away?" That's just a

*mashal* compared to how strongly we need to feel Hashem in our life at all times. It's what gives us comfort, wholeness, *menuchas hanefesh*. So what happened here to klal Yisrael? Here was a nation that had just received the "medication" for their nefesh that they had been desperate for for years. In Mitzrayim, we learned, they couldn't even heed Moshe Rabeinu's words because they were so emotionally depleted. Why? Tells us the Ohr Hachaim, because they hadn't yet received the Torah, "which broadens the heart of a person." It was the medication they'd been desperate for! Now, in Parshas Ki Sisa, they had just been given a Torah through which to connect to Hakadosh Baruch Hu and live a most fulfilling, meaningful life. At this *ma'amad Har Sinai* they experienced such intense kirvas Elokim that they couldn't live without it. It was through Moshe Rabeinu that they connected most deeply to Hashem (as explained by the Ramban). And suddenly, this intermediary, through whom they experienced closeness to Hashem, which filled their need of "You're taken care of, you're in good hands," seemed to have abandoned them.

It was this fear that the Satan took advantage of. Once our fear has been activated, it's hard for us to think rationally, to make sensible decisions. When we're in a state of fear, that's when his power of illusion has the most potential to overtake us. And so, tells us Rashi, he seized this chance by creating an illusion of darkness and turmoil, showing a confused and frightened klal Yisrael an image of a lifeless Moshe being carried in Shamayim, as the Baal Haturim writes:

כי זה האיש... מה היה לו בגימטריא

“שהראה להם השטן מטתו של משה רבינו.”

It is that moment of fear that holds such power! In that moment when we lose our footing, in that moment when the clarity isn't stark before our eyes—and we all have such moments—that we are most prone to fall.

אין אדם עובר עבירה אלא אם כן נכנסה בו רוח שטות

(סוטה ב:ב)

### Stalling for Time

Driven by this fear of abandonment, egged on by the yetzer hara, the Yidden turned to Aharon HaKohein. Aharon knew that the Yidden were grievously mistaken, but he calculated that if he defied them they would kill him, and if they did, that would make their *aveirah* even worse. (That was the fate that met Chur ben Miriam, whom Moshe had assigned to share the leadership with Aharon in his absence: He had resisted to klal Yisrael's plan for a surrogate of Moshe and they had killed him...)

So here was Aharon HaKohein, at a loss. On the one hand, he didn't want to go along with the Yidden's plan to create a replacement for Moshe Rabeinu, but on the other hand he couldn't not. And so, he stalled for time. “Remove the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, sons, and daughters, and bring them to me,” he said to the nation.

Now what would your reaction be to a request like that? Indeed, this was part of Aharon's cheshbon, tells us Rashi.

אמר אהרן בלבו הנשים והילדים חסים על תכשיטיהן שמא יתעכב הדבר ובתוך כך יבא משה. והם לא המתינו ופרקו מעל עצמן...  
Aharon thought to himself, what's the kind of thing I can ask for that will take the most time? That will most delay this

process so we can buy a few hours until Moshe Rabeinu descends the mountain and squelches the panic, bringing an end to this nightmare? Which woman will willingly surrender her precious jewelry? Here, take my diamond earrings, sure, no problem, here's my necklace that I saved up for since our wedding ten years ago... Of course, in those days these golden trinkets were an even greater commodity. This wasn't in the days of lab diamonds and disposable income. These pieces were very precious to the women, and as we also know, their spiritual standing was also in a place where they didn't acquiesce to such suspicious requests that didn't sit well with their conscience—we'll get back to that soon. But with all their wives' resistance—again, driven by their fear and their desperation to feel closeness to Hashem—the men quickly moved along with their plan.

When they brought their collection of gold to Aharon, he took it from them and bound it up in a cloth, fashioning it into a molten calf. At this point, what the Yidden had done was still not considered an *aveirah*, but Aharon had a foreboding feeling of what would happen next, and so he sought to play for more time. This time, he built a *mizbeiach*. And he told the Yidden that the next day there would be a chag, a Yom Tov, “for Hashem.” He called it for *the next day* in the hopes that this would be the Yom Tov when klal Yisrael would celebrate Moshe's return with the *luchos*.

But alas, as the day wore on, the fear and desperation of klal Yisrael escalated, and according to most *mefarshim* this is where the actual *cheit* began: when they started dancing and singing, eating and



drinking, conducting themselves inappropriately around the *eigel*. It was then that they lost it...

And perhaps one of the saddest repercussions of this entire parshah was Moshe Rabeinu's response: the shattering of the *luchos*, which represented the bond between Hashem and klal Yisrael. It was their *kesubah!* In their fear, they ironically gave up what they were craving most.

### Abandoned

How often does this happen to us? We give up what we most crave at a time we most need it because we are driven by fear. Our fear has been activated and therefore what follows is far from rational. Again, when we speak of fear we're not only speaking of the elementary variety: I was scared of the loose dog so I ran into oncoming traffic. Rather, we're speaking of a deeper kind—fear of an uncomfortable feeling. In the Yidden's case, for example, it was hard for them to wait it out because waiting it out would mean facing the feeling of abandonment. Instead, they sought an instant way to soothe their uncomfortable emotion. They thought Moshe had abandoned them, that they had lost their person who connected them to the spiritual keshet that they were desperate for, and instead of facing their pain, they sought an instant distraction, an instant solution so as not to feel that discomfort.

Bringing this idea into our own lives, how can we relate? With just a little self-awareness, we sure can. How many times, when we reflect on something we've done, or we keep doing, we think, "I'm surprised at myself. What's driving

me to do this?" It's when a behavior doesn't jibe with who we are, with our values, our essence, the person we want to be.

Think about it: As wives, for example, we crave to feel connection to our husbands. But what might happen in a moment when we feel that the connection is lacking? This might seem very ironic, but it's a *metzius* that plays out all the time. Taking a very simple example, let's say a wife wants to have a conversation with her husband and he says he's too busy today. If this woman is driven by her fear to feel disconnected or abandoned, she is ironically very likely to respond in a way that actually creates *more* distance in the relationship. Whether she withdraws emotionally into her own world, or she thinks distancing thoughts in her mind, or she says unkind words, she is actually promoting that which she most wanted to avoid.

Sometimes it's easier to notice this in others. We might see a child who really wants to make friends, but somehow we're observing that their behaviors are actually pushing their peers away from them. Their behavior defies logic and if it's addressed from a superficial perspective, with logic, it'll keep repeating itself. Rather, it's important for those who want to help this child to realize that what's driving this child to say or do certain distancing things is driven by a fear, such as fear of rejection or fear of exclusion.

This plays out all the time—that our fear propels us toward a behavior that promotes the opposite of what we really want—especially if we're not aware of it. Those of us who are *zocheh* to be mothers might find this to be so true as well in our own parenting. How does it

happen, we might wonder, that *davka* the kind of feeling I don't want to give my child is what I give her in my interactions with her, or in my lack of interactions with her? How does that make sense? How does it make sense that I'm so busy talking on the phone or checking my messages when I know that my child can so benefit from having this time with me? And the answer is that my behavior does not make sense because the reason why it's happening cannot be explained by logic. The reason why I'm engaging in behaviors that are creating a distance between me and my child is because, in some way, I am driven by fear. My fear has been activated. This might be fear of missing out, fear of feeling big feelings so I'd rather distract myself, fear of feeling guilt as a mother...

When my child opens up to me, for example, about something that happened at school, and I'm super quick to jump in with solutions (which is not what the child needs right now and creates a distance between us) because it's too hard for me to feel her unpleasant emotions—or my own that rise up as she's talking—what I'm doing is not intentional. It's my fear taking over.

If a Yid in the times of *cheit ha'eigel* would stop himself and ask, "One minute, what is it that I really want here? I want connection to Hashem. It was Moshe who bridged that connection for me and now that he's gone I feel so distant! But will this *eigel* really give me what I'm looking for?" How different the story would have played out!

How different our own stories would play out if we would have this thought process before speaking *lashon hara* or wearing certain clothes or putting up a cold front to another Yid.

But the reality is that when one is driven by fear, it's quite a process to get unstuck. The first, most important step in the process is to simply realize: Fear is driving me right now. This is not rational. This won't give me what I'm looking for, but the *yetzer hara* is having a party because I'm gripped by fear.

He can come and sell the *eigel hazahav* to a nation who has a fear of feeling abandoned and they will buy it off from him even if it makes absolutely no sense, it defies all logic. That's the reality that plays out when I am led by my fear to feel.

### **I Don't Feel Anything When I'm Davening**

The other day, I taught a class in a seminary on the topic of how the Torah fills our emotional needs because it came first—yes, inspired by our Yisro-Mishpatim class.

After the class, several students came over to me with their questions. What I found so interesting (but not surprising) was that three girls came over with a similar question. They wanted to understand, if tefillah is supposed to fill a need for me—the need for connection—how can it be that I actually feel the opposite when I daven?

Now that's a question so many of us can relate to. I understand that through tefillah I am meant to feel this deep *kesher* with the *Ribono shel Olam*, but if I'm honest with myself, on most days formal tefillah is real lip service for me. I'm saying the words, but they're completely not connected to my heart.

There are two approaches to answering this common question. One is more

cognitive—to understand that it is often derived from a misconception, and the other is the emotional piece. Let's start with the cognitive piece. Very often, the reason we feel disconnected in our formal *tefillah* is because we have a certain vision for how it's supposed to look. We envision ourselves being engaged fully from the first word to the last, being immersed in intense concentration. Now of course that is beautiful, but what is *tefillah* really? It's about connection. It's about me opening my heart to Hashem. Why did Hashem give us the gift of *tefillah*? Not because He's looking for perfection. He has the *malachim* for that. He gave us this gift because He wants *us* to feel connected through this *avodah shebelev*. He wants us to feel that we have whom to turn to at all times. It's a most powerful way to fill our deep need for connection, for relationship.

And so, if that is the true purpose of *tefillah*, what more beautiful *tefillah* can there be than me opening up to Hakadosh Baruch Hu about my numbness? Me telling Hashem, "I wish I can feel You when I daven, but all I feel is distance. It's so hard for me!" That is the most precious conversation to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. It's the words of a child who says, "I wish I can come home, I feel so far away..."

But here's the emotional piece that might make this kind of *tefillah* more challenging: Very often, because I'm feeling uncomfortable with this numbness, my fear (resistance to an uncomfortable feeling) is activated. I don't like this feeling and I want to move away from it.

And once I'm driven by fear, I might say, "Nah, this whole davening thing doesn't

work for me." It's all because I'm afraid of the uncomfortable feeling of disconnection, of emptiness. I'm resisting it.

But, if I realize that this is actually what davening is all about—Hashem isn't looking for that perfect *tefillah* that boosts my ego and makes me feel like I've entered the ranks of *tzidkus*. He wants me to feel connected to Him! He wants that through our relationship my *nefesh* should feel fulfilled. She should feel noticed, loved, seen. What a different kind of *tefillah* I can enjoy, and it is through such a *tefillah* that I can be *ezras Hashem* experience more and more connective moments in my davening.

### Our Special Position

Speaking of the special connection we can feel with Hakadosh Baruch Hu, even when we don't experience what we envisioned, let's understand just how far that goes, especially for us women. We know that the women were famously not involved in the *cheit*—they refused to surrender their jewelry toward this purpose. This couldn't be due to their tight-fistedness because just one *parshah* later, in *Vayakheil*, we meet these women again and this time they're generously donating all of their precious jewelry and mirrors as *nedavos* for the *Mishkan*. Rather, something else was at play here. The fear that was driving the men somehow didn't talk to them that much (*Rav Shamshon Rafael Hirsch on the parshah*). The men felt that without their intermediary to Hashem, they were lost. Who will connect us to Hashem? The women, however, weren't so fazed because we, as women, are accustomed to connecting directly to Hashem, to



experiencing a more personal relationship.

## The Antidote

To wrap up our conversation, let's understand what our antidote to the very relatable version of *cheit ha'eigel* is. Fear of a feeling, as we've mentioned, is resistance to the feeling. It's "I'm not giving up," "I'm pushing against this feeling."

Now what is this feeling really? It's a manifestation of Hashem's plan. He's the One who planted it in our heart. He orchestrated the events—all my life circumstances, going all the way back to my childhood— so that I should be here right now, feeling abandoned, or feeling alone, or feeling sad, or feeling misunderstood. When fear of the feeling grips my heart, which is perfectly human, that's where choice comes into the picture— *bechirah*. It's a big topic, but in a nutshell, what is the right choice? To be *machnia* to Hashem's plan. Surrender. *Sheviras haluchos* was the hint to that: it was about breaking the vessel, to let myself just be.

(שמות לב: יט)

וישלך מידין את הלוחות וישבר אתם תחת החר

Hashem is the One who decided that I should be feeling this right now and I don't want to engage in this fight.

So how did the Yidden atone for the resistance that they put up? Hashem instructed that the *eigel* be smelt and ground into a powder, which was then sprinkled into the water and everyone who was involved in the *cheit* was commanded to drink it.

(שמות לב: כ)

ויקח את העגל אשר עשו וישרף באש ויטחן עד אשר דק ויזר על פני המים וישק את בני ישראל

According to the severity of their sin, this water impacted every individual differently.

Understood in our context, this powder sent a powerful message regarding the importance of surrender. It was about recognizing, "*anochi afar v'eifer*," I'm but a being of dust.

As ironic as it seems, it's only when I see myself in this way that I can do real *teshuvah*. Because I recognize that I'm a human being, that I make mistakes, I can also acknowledge when I've committed them, thus giving myself a chance to return to Hashem.

In fact, the Gemara (and other meforshim) explains that this is exactly the reason klal Yisrael committed an *aveirah* of such gravity: אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי

לא עשו ישראל את העגל אלא ליתן פתחון פה לבעלי תשובה

(עבודה זרה ד:ב)

As Rashi explains, "It was the decree of the King [for the *yetzer hara*] to control them in order to give an opening to *ba'alei teshuvah*. For if the sinner will say, 'I will not do *teshuvah* because I will not be accepted,' they say to him, 'Go out and learn from the act of the Calf, that they denied [Hashem] and they were accepted with *teshuvah*.'"

It's all about realizing and remembering that yes, I am very much a human being. And even when I've erred, Hashem wants to hear from me. He wants this connection.

Most of us understand surrender to mean, "I'm making peace with my external circumstance. This is how long Hashem wants me to wait for a child/my



zivug/parnassah, etc. This is how He wants my life to look right now.” That’s also part of surrender. But the ultimate surrender, an inner surrender, is being *machnia* to the *emotion* Hashem sent us. When we fight it, we’re being led by it. When we acknowledge it and turn to Hashem from this place, we open ourselves up to growth, clarity, and joy.

From this perspective, we understand a deeper angle as to why Hashem instructed Moshe Rabeinu to speak to klal Yisrael about Shabbos at the start of parshas Vayakheil, the very next parshah. ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה וביום השביעי יהיה לכם קדש שבת שבתון לה' (שמות לה: ב)

What is this gift of Shabbos?

It is a time of surrender. I have all these grand plans, but I’m putting everything on hold because this is what Hashem wants from me right now. I’m setting aside this day of the week to feel this connection to Him, davka when I’m not in doing mode, accomplishing mode, managing, producing, being highly efficient and productive. It’s when I’m just being that this connection happens most intensely, in a most real way, because in a very strong way, I’m surrendered right now.

### FIREWORK

#### Points to Ponder (in your journal):

Focusing on one particular behavior that I wish to improve, whether my meticulousness with a certain mitzvah or a behavior in my parenting or marriage, I can ask myself: A fear of which uncomfortable emotion might be driving me toward this behavior?

For example, if I’m too quick to dismiss a child’s pain, the fear/resistance that might

be driving me is fear of feeling my own smallness, of feeling helpless, of feeling powerless. Especially if the child is sharing something that happened to them and it’s the kind of situation that came up often for me in my own childhood, I may find that it’s hard for me to just be there with the child in their emotion, which is what they need from me most in that moment.

#### Put It Into Practice

Once per day, when I notice that I’m experiencing a heightened emotion, I can choose to let the feeling just be as opposed to resisting it—pushing it away, distracting myself from it, putting myself down for feeling it, etc.

#### SPARK (tefillah/mantra)

##### ברוך אתה ה'... שעשה לי כל צרכי

Thank You, Hashem, for providing me with all my needs, for filling all my needs for me through Torah and mitzvos. Hashem, please help me recognize that every emotion you send my way is an opportunity for me to connect to You and it is only when I do that—as opposed to being driven by fear of this emotion—that I can fill my needs in the way You intended and in the only way that really feels good and right for me.



#### SONG

ושמרו בני ישראל את השבת לעשות את השבת

Shabbos is such a gift! It’s a time of true surrender.

May we be *zocheh* to exercise self awareness in noticing when fear of a feeling comes up for us so that instead of being led by this fear—which doesn’t



bring us to good places—we can choose to accept Hashem’s plan, to surrender to the feeling He planted in our heart, and use it as an opportunity to connect more deeply to Him.

Enjoy your journey in the light!

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To hear this shiur, call the LAHAV hotline: (US) 646-693-1700 / (E"Y) 072-370-1938, ext. 2.

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