

**And Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law and he said, “Get up and leave this place, for Hashem is about to destroy the city. But he seemed like a jester in the eyes of his sons-in-law.”**

In the *Midrash*, *Chazal* recount the dialogue between Lot and his sons-in-law. When Lot implored them to leave because of the impending doom, they countered derisively, “The city is singing and dancing, music is playing, and you say the city is about to be destroyed? Nonsense!” **Horav A. Henach Leibovitz, Shlita**, observes that Lot’s sons-in-law would have heeded the warning to leave the city had they not seen the people in a state of joy and frivolity. They believed that Hashem could destroy the city; they did not believe that He would. Intellectually, they knew it might happen, but the present circumstances, albeit deceiving, did not lend themselves to such foreboding.

Why would the people's lack of awareness counter what was rationally evident? *Horav* Leibovitz explains that one cannot perceive doom and destruction amidst joy and dancing. It just does not penetrate. If things remain as before, if business continues as usual, human nature does not permit an individual to believe that the status quo is going to change.

Regrettably, the same inconsistency affects us. We see people suffering; we see sickness, bad luck, people who have fallen on hard times. We do not, however, believe it can happen to us. It is always the other one who will be hurt, never us. This is because things seem to be progressing well. We do not take into account that maybe, beneath the surface, they are not as smooth. We also tend to forget that circumstances can change instantaneously.

*Chazal* say that the fear of death should have a compelling effect upon us. It should imbue an individual with fear and inspire him to perform *teshuvah*. One never knows when his time is up. At least if he repents today, and tomorrow he is called back to the *Olam Ha’emes*, he will leave as a righteous person. Why then do so many people defy this reality? Frequently, people are, unfortunately, faced with an impending meeting with the Angel of Death. Yet, many ignore this fact and continue to do as they please. Where is their fear? How long can they deny the truth? The answer must be that people may have an intellectual awareness of their end, but as long as everyone around them is having a grand time, it becomes difficult to accept. Only after the message reaches home, do some wake up. Regrettably, others still continue to ignore the truth.