

And Avraham said, “Because I said, “There is but no fear of G-d in this place and they will slay me because of my wife.” (20:11)

We can derive a powerful lesson from Avraham *Avinu's* statement. *Yiraas Shomayim*, fear of Heaven, is the “be all” and “end all.” One who fears Hashem has hope that he will navigate through life's journey without encountering challenges that are insurmountable – not because they will not occur, but because he has the one tool that gives him the ability to surmount and triumph over whatever the “*satans*” of life throw at him. Avraham felt that a lack of *yiraas Shomayim* on the part of the *Plishtim* could even lead to bloodshed.

We see this on a regular basis. When a person has no *yiraas Shomayim*, he is liable to descend to the nadir of depravity. Nothing stops him in his free-fall to iniquity. A great scholar once fell prey to moral iniquity, whose consequences were devastating for him, as he fell from the summit of adoration to the abyss of disrepute. Regrettably, he was not the first or last distinguished leader to fail and eventually fall. At the time that this occurred, a number of his colleagues wondered what could cause such an exalted individual, a man whom everyone held in the highest esteem, to behave in such a manner. A few of them approached **Horav Moshe Mordechai, zl, m'Lelov**, to question him about how such a great man could have fallen so dreadfully low. Simply, from a cognitive perspective, was he not aware of the consequences of his moral turpitude? The Lelover explained, “There is a well-known rule that, once a person is undergoing a *nisayon*, trial /test/ challenge, his *seichel*, common sense, is taken from him. All that he has left to protect him from succumbing to the challenge is his *yiraas Shomayim*. Everything else is gone.” Indeed, as **Horav Gamliel Rabinowitz, Shlita**, notes, when Avimelech heard Avraham's rationale for referring to Sarah *Imeinu* as his sister, he did not argue with him. He did not debate the issue, because he knew only too well the repercussions resulting from a lack of *yiraas Shomayim*.