

Hashem will remove from you every illness and all the bad maladies of Egypt that you knew – He will not put them upon you. (7:15)

Lo yesimam bach; “He will not put them upon you.” If Hashem will not put the illness on us; if we will not be affected by maladies, what reason is there for *V’heisir Hashem mimcha kol choli*, “Hashem will remove from you every illness”? If no illness is affecting them, what exactly will He remove? *Horav Yehoshua, zl*, m’Kutna explains, citing the *Yerushalmi* (*Shabbos* 75B): “*Kol choli*, every illness, this applies to worry and anxiety. When a person worries that he might be ill with a specific illness, the worry alone will fester and germinate in his mind until he believes that he is sick. Once his worries dissipate, the non-existent illness will “disappear” as well. Other commentators explain the *Yerushalmi* as teaching us that anxiety, depression and their related resultant illnesses and weaknesses are the most difficult maladies to cure.

Worry, especially when it becomes obsessive (such as in hypochondria), can drain a person’s emotional and physical energy even more than an actual illness. When people begin to fear the experience of fear itself, it is called anticipatory anxiety. Obviously, this takes on various scenarios in different people. The only things they have in common is fear. Some catastrophize, always jumping to the worst-case scenario. Some will view every neutral symptom as proof of disease. I think one of the more common, but less devastating, diseases is the inability to live without knowing. The uncertainty, the lack of control, drives him up a wall.

This paper does not have the answers, but one thing is for certain: One who has strong *bitachon*, trust in Hashem, can live with, and even overcome, the demands of fear. An added caveat is the notion that children learn by observing their parents. When a parent consistently exhibits anxiety concerning future events, after a while, their child will pick up on it and internalize it into their own behaviors. Furthermore, such parents tend to be overprotective, not allowing a child breathing room, limiting a child’s potential to confront challenges independently and gain self-confidence.

While this barely scratches the surface, it does give us an idea of the severity of the disease called anxiety and its expressions in various forms. Furthermore, while other diseases and illnesses, for the most part, affect only the victim, this illness has a far-reaching effect on generations.