

# CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

*by Rabbi Yitzchok Rubin*

It's one-thirty in the morning, and it's one of those nights. Usually you don't have a problem falling asleep. You simply say Krias Shema, open a sefer and soon your eyes close and you are in dreamland. But then there are those awkward nights, when your mind won't close down and all the day's worries seem to be marching through your head. The bank account that doesn't add up, the problem with your son's cheder, the insecurity at work on and on the march continues.

You get up and walk quietly so as not to disturb anyone. Your head feels as if it will explode from anxiety. "What good does it do to worry," you ask yourself, "especially in the middle of the night?" But it's no use, because your thoughts can't be turned off. They continue to jump about behind your eyes with no let up.

You wander into the main room and turn on the light. You look around, hoping to find a remedy that will free you from the anxiety. Your eye falls on an old and trusted friend, the well-worn sefer Tehillim that has been there for you throughout your life. You think for a moment, "What will Tehillim do for me now? Am I so naive as to think that my heart will stop its worry with just a few words of psalms?" "Well," you figure, "Why not?" You take the frayed sefer in hand and consider, "Whatever kapitel it opens to, that's what I'll say."

Sitting down with the sefer in hand, you open it, consciously not searching for any particular spot. Its pages turn, and you see the words of kapitel 46 leaping off the page. You sigh and reflect, and the healing begins.

The words in this psalm were authored by people who knew everything there is to know about anxiety. Korach's sons had been drawn into the worst situation. Their father was a renowned leader of the people, yet he was fermenting machlokes against none other than Moshe Rabbeinu. What did his devoted children think of all this? How should they cope with the strife and torment of indecision?

Their despair only grew on witnessing the gates of hell and seeing their father falling into the dreadful abyss. Yet from within that hellhole, they found Hashem's comforting forgiveness, and they spoke words of sheer prophecy aimed at the hearts of all future generations.

You see these words, and a thought enters your mind: "Sometimes the simplest concepts are the hardest to assimilate." At that moment of time, when Korach's sons witnessed the results of the ultimate in human folly, they spoke of simple truths. The hardest test for man is not the knowledge

of these truths but incorporating them into daily life.

*God is our refuge and strength, immediately available to help in times of trouble.* Hashem's support is all encompassing. He is a refuge, a place where our beleaguered souls can find solace and safety. When faced with what seems to be numerous problems cascading into our lives, we can seek our constant companion: our Creator. This truth is forever and gives one the ability not to become frightened or discouraged. When we accept that Hashem is our refuge, this in itself will give us the strength to get through the mire of what afflicts us.

The word for trouble, *betzaros*, is plural, because our most difficult moments are when trouble comes at us from all sides. Even in face of such bombardment, we should absorb the realization that Hashem is accessible. He is with us in our troubles, and there is no divide between us.

*Therefore, we will not be afraid when He transforms the earth, when mountains topple into the heart of the sea.* What seems to us forever is only a moment in time. We frail humans tend to look at our situation and imagine that "our mountain" will never move. When things shift and our landscape changes, we become totally disoriented. This is a huge test for us. We are meant to grow through it and realize while the old mountains we thought were so sturdy may very well be thrown into the sea, that same sea can be life-affirming if we but allow ourselves to swim.

*The waters roar and roar; mountains will roar at His majesty selah.* When you live with the understanding that your true goal in life is to come closer to Hashem and create a *kiddush Hashem*, then the waters may rage and the mountains shake, but your heart will remain still, for you are sure of your link to Him.

This all sounds so effortless and neat, yet in truth it is the hardest concept to integrate into one's actual life. It means that your ego and all it brings with it has to really be put to the side. Man's hardest trial is allowing Hashem to run His world.

*There is a river whose streams will bring happiness to God's city, sanctified dwelling place of the Most High.* We are told that this river is the one that flows from the Garden of Eden and will bring joy and nourishment to the city of Hashem.

As always, the words of Tehillim can be seen at many levels. Perhaps this passage can be understood to mean that the river is our own flowing life of experiences. A river can be deceptive; calm on its surface while turbulent beneath. The seemingly placid waters don't reveal their secrets, we do not know their depth, nor do we understand what life may be teeming within them. But this is what makes the river so rich in life giving potential. Every one of us has seen so much. We can use these events to nourish the city of Hashem that lies within our souls. Yes, every Yid has the potential to be an edifice of holiness, and it is what we do with the river of life that decides if such will be our destiny.

*God is within it. It will not falter. God will help it at dawn.* Open your eyes, my dear readers, and see

that daylight is approaching. There will be a tomorrow, and at its core will be Hashem, the One essence that cannot and will not be moved.

*Nations roar, kingdoms tottered. He gave forth with His voice, the earth melted.* What majesty! Here you have these sons of Korach, sitting at the lowest rung of human experience, and they call out; "Nations roar!" All that noise, all that pomp and circumstance you would have thought it meant something. But no! Hashem makes one utterance, and the whole thing melts to nothingness.

*Hashem of hosts is with us! The God of Yaakov is a fortress for us selah.* Yidden, your mind may be overwhelmed with worry, your heart heavy with fear, but have faith. Get past the moment, for Hashem is with us, and this is our greatest strength. Since Yaakov had his wondrous dream of angels climbing the ladder to heaven, we have known that those angels are created here, in this weather-beaten world, where man faces his fears head on and overcomes them.

So when you pace the length and the breadth of your room with worry creasing your brow, when the clock is telling you how very late it is yet sleep continues to elude you, read these words, holy Yid. Take them into your being, and you will find courage and comfort. We know it is not easy, but it's why we were born, and it's the one great selah that is forever.

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