חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

IZBICA · VAYERA, MEI HASHILOACH

Why hold back even when you feel ready

Mei HaShiloach

Two levels of fear are distinguished: the fear of E-lohim (Divine Name associated with judgment/constriction) arises from a person's own inner lack, restraining himself because he senses he is not yet complete in that matter. The fear of YHV'H (Divine Name associated with mercy/transcendence) is higher—it means refraining even when one's own refined understanding permits an act, because God has bound that person to a straightforward commandment for the sake of others who have not reached the same level, so he remains obligated out of responsibility to his fellow rather than personal deficiency. AI SUMMARY

"... and now I know that you are one who fears E-lohim ...." (Bereshit, 28:12) There is a difference between the fear of YHV'H and the fear of E-lohim. The fear of E-lohim is what causes a man to prevent himself from doing something, such as eating and the like. This is because he is not complete, and there is still something lacking in the man, so he constricts himself according to his understanding. This is called "the fear of E-lohim."

The fear of YHV'H means that even if the man deeply understands that it is permitted for him to act, for his soul has been refined from this deficiency, yet still, from God's point of view it is still forbidden. God commanded straightforward injunctions to each soul, and since there are others in the world who are not refined in this particular aspect, therefore God did not permit this particular action to the individual. As he is not equal with the rest he is still burdened with the prohibition for the sake of his fellow man. This is called fear of YHV'H.

Translation: Living waters, the Mei HaShiloach. Trans. and edited by Betsalel Philip Edwards, Jerusalem, J. Aronson 2001 [Revised digital edition, 2021]