

A recent collaboration between Sichos in English and Kehos has produced a translation of *Sefer Hasichos 5705 in English*, availing a treasure of the Frierdiker Rebbe's sichos to the English-speaking public. We are pleased to print the following story culled from this sefer. Reprinted with permission.

Whenever my father was called up for *maftir* on Rosh HaShanah, he would hold the *machzor* on a slant and cover himself with his *tallis*, his tears flowing freely.

On the first day of Rosh HaShanah of the year 5666 (1905), which fell on *Shabbos*, after he read a certain phrase in the *haftarah* he paused. In that phrase - וּמִוֶּרֶה לֹא יַעֲלֶה עַל רֹאשׁוֹ - [the mother of the future Prophet Shmuel undertook that] “no razor shall come upon his head”¹. During that brief pause, I observed that his lips were murmuring unvoiced words.

In Adar of that year (in 1906), there was the Poalei Tziyon incident² against the Tomchei Temimim Yeshiva [in Lubavitch]. they didn't want me to continue as executive director of the Yeshiva because, for one thing, I didn't allow them to step inside. My uncle, the *Raza*, knew a person named Bruk who had heard about all that the Poalei Tziyon activists were planning, and my uncle informed my father.

My uncle was no man to be afraid. let me illustrate:

His house stood on the site that had earlier served as the *shul* of the Mittlerer Rebbe. It was so long that people used to quip that you could start *Hodu* at one end of the *shul*, and reach the other end just in time to finish with *Aleinu*. Once, in the middle of the night, a fire broke out in Lubavitch. Someone promptly woke up my uncle and told him that the fire wasn't far from his home.

His response: “So wake me up when the fire reaches that far wall over there!”

With that he turned over and went back to sleep - and he didn't pretend to sleep, he really slept.

Yet though he was fearless, when he updated my father on what the Poalei Tziyon were planning, he added: “they must be taken

seriously. They are great scoundrels³ and could be fearsome.”

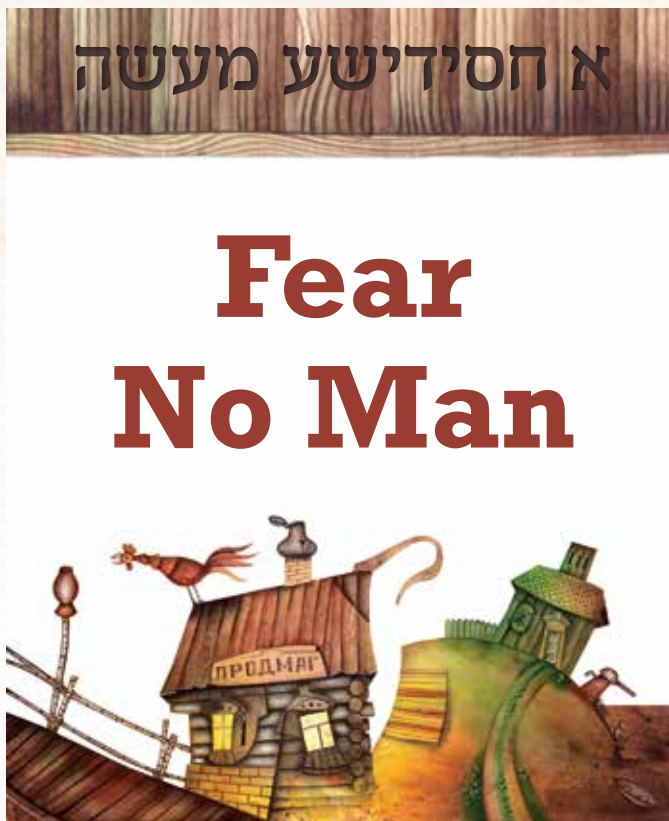
My father replied: “That I should have fear is out of the question. After all, on Rosh HaShanah I said explicitly וּמִוֶּרֶה לֹא יַעֲלֶה עַל רֹאשׁוֹ [When the first word in that phrase is spelled with an *alef* instead of a *hey*, then even though the pronunciation is unchanged, the phrase now means that “no fear shall come upon his head...”]

My father went on to say: “If it's only a question of money, *nu...*”⁴

[Before our forefathers left Egypt they were assured⁵ that] no dog would dare to sharpen its tongue against them. But if it does, we should toss it a coin.”

Now, my uncle was a Litvak,⁶ and a Litvak believes someone only after he has counted the coins and deposited them in his pocket. Nevertheless, he was struck by the simple power of my father's words.

After he went away, I asked my father what he had whispered in the midst of the *haftarah* on the first day of Rosh HaShanah. he replied: “The plain meaning⁷ of that word is ‘razor’, but I said it as spelled with an *alef*, so that it meant ‘fear’. That's why I repeated the *pasuk* in a whisper.” **D**



1. I Shmuel 1:11.
2. The “incident” was a violent attack on the students by this anti-religious Socialist Zionist movement.
3. In the Yid. original, *groisse shkotzim*.
4. Here this means, “No worries.”
5. Shmos 11:7.
6. Yiddish colloquialism for a Jew of Lithuanian origin or mentality.
7. See *Targum Yonasan*, *Rashi*, and other classical commentaries on the *Tanach* (I Shmuel 1:11); see also the last *mishnah* in Tractate *Nazir*.