

# A Chassidic Story (#21)

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Since Yitzchak Avinu, champion of *yirat Shemayim* (Divine awe), is the hero of Parshat Toldot here's a story and a half about the Rebbe Reb Zushia and *yirah*.

*For a certain stretch in his life, the Rebbe Reb Zushia constantly prayed that he be granted genuine yirah, from the innermost point of heart and mind, yirah as powerful as that of an angel. Well, God answered his prayer.*

*The Rebbe Reb Zushia was taken over by a yirah that let him neither sit nor stand, even for a moment. He would try to escape his fear by hiding under a bed or in a corner. But it became unbearable. He couldn't live this way! So he prayed to God again, this time beseeching Him to take away the awful dread so that he could be human again. And again God granted the Rebbe's prayer.*

*The Rebbe Reb Zushia would later say that because a human being is made of coarse clay, he cannot attain such an extreme level of yirah. He said that if not for God's miraculous mercy, from the instant the dread he asked for was granted he was but a moment away from leaving this world.*

Based on *Botzina Kadisha* #22

*A Yid once came to the Rebbe Reb Zushia and requested that the Rebbe teach him how to serve God from yirah. The Rebbe lowered his arm. Instantly, the Yid was overcome prostrate to the ground. His yirah was so great he could not pick himself up until the Rebbe raised his hand—and the Yid.*

May the merit of the tzaddikim protect us and all Yisrael.  
Amen.

Based on *Botzina Kadisha* #23

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