

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

PARSHAS ACHAREI-MOS

Living For Hashem, Living For Our Families

In this week's parsha, Acharei, we read "And you should guard My statutes and My laws, that the person will do them, 'vachai bahem,' 'and live by them,' I Am Hashem."

The Maggid of Mezrich explains, that the words, vachai bahem, can be translated, and put life into them. We have to bring life into the mitzvahs.

How does one bring life into the mitzvahs? What can we learn from this for our relationships?

Our approach to doing mitzvahs take on several different forms.

First you have the one who's mitzvahs and life have no connection. To him, there is a separation between holy and mundane. He prays with fervor in shul, but when he does business, eats, etc., holiness and refinement are not visible.

Then there is the one whose life and mitzvahs are connected, he does mitzvahs with all their bells and whistles. But he does them with the hope, that by doing them, he will get what he needs from Hashem. His drive to do mitzvahs, is the physical pay out. In this case it is his mitzvahs bringing life into his needs.

Then there is the one, who's every physical need and act is so that he can do mitzvahs. He eats, he exercises, he works, and rests, just to be able to carry out Hashem's will. This is bringing life into the mitzvahs. Your whole life is for Hashem.

This is the meaning of the saying of the Tzemach Tzedek, explaining the Maggid of Mezrich's words, to his daughter-in-law, "In order to bring life into the mitzvahs, you need to have strength and be joyous... better eat in order to daven, than to daven in order to eat."

Most of us fall into all these categories, at one time or another. The goal should be, to make Hashem the focus, to bring life into the mitzvahs. You will find that you will become more refined. You will eat differently, act differently, etc., your every step will become filled with purpose and meaning. Of course, this doesn't happen in a day, it is a life's journey. One step at a time, you have the power to reach higher, and the more you do it, the more meaningful your life will become, the closer you will feel to Hashem.

It is always difficult to balance between family and work, family and personal interests. When work and recreation

are an escape from the family, you will find resentment and anger towards your work and recreation. But when your wife and children know that they are most important to you, because you treat them that way. And your work and recreation is so that you can be a better father and husband, to provide for them and be healthy. Then they will have no resentment to your work and recreation. Just the opposite, they will take pride and joy in what a great and loving father and husband you are.

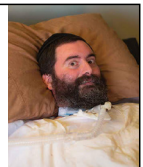
Again, don't expect to become super-dad or super-husband in a day, every step in the right direction, will bring you closer. This is true for mothers and wives as well.

The key is to make Hashem most important to your family and your family most important to you. If your family is suffering, because of your relationship with Hashem, then you are doing something wrong, and you should look for a way to correct the problem, even if it means changing yourself, and your religious expression.

I remember when I was in the hospital and the question came up about doing a tracheotomy. I was asked if I wanted to do it or perhaps not and pass on to the next world. It was my choice legally and halachically. I was tormented by the question, because, on one hand, I had suffered so much, on the other hand I love my family. It was heart wrenching, when I thought of my wife Dina and our children, how much they would suffer if I was gone. Then I thought, what would Hashem want me to do? I thought what would be best for my family? The answer seemed clear and I went through with it. It hasn't been easy, not for me, not for Dina and not for the family. But we are all happier because of it, it was the right decision.

May we all be blessed with meaning in our lives, closeness to Hashem, and closeness to our families.

Despite facing one of life's most difficult challenges, Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz continues to spread joy and faith to thousands around the globe. Diagnosed in 2012 with ALS, Rabbi Yitzi is now 95% paralyzed and no longer able to speak or breath on his own. Thanks to the miracle of technology, Rabbi Yitzi continues to spread his wisdom through his eyes, focusing on each and every letter of these Torah articles. Rabbi Yitzi, his wife Dina and their seven children are the Rebbe's Shluchim to Temecula, California.



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