

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

PARSHAS VAYELECH

With Togetherness

In this week's Parsha, Vayelech, we have the Mitzvah of Hakhel. "Assemble the nation, the men the women, the children... So that they hear and so that they learn and fear Hashem... and will be careful to do all the words of this Torah."

The Mitzvah of Hakhel happened during the Sukkos holiday following a Shemittah, Sabbatical, year. All the Jewish people would assemble. The king, standing on a podium built for the occasion, would read selections from the book of Devarim, including the Shema, for all to hear.

While most Mitzvahs are stated without reason, here, the Torah elaborates and lists the reasons. So that they hear, learn, fear Hashem, and keep the Torah.

What can we learn from the fact that the reasons are listed? What lesson can we take from here for family life?

The Mitzvah of Hakhel was done at the Temple and led by the king, both of which we don't have today. Do we see this Mitzvah as unobservable today?

While most Mitzvahs connected to the Temple are not done today, Hakhel is unique, that, at least parts of it can. This is because the reasons for this Mitzvah are part of the Mitzvah. True we have no king, true we have no Temple, but the reasons, "so that they listen, learn, fear and do," can still be implemented.

How is the Hakhel done today? Any time this year, gather your family or friends, or community. The goal is to strengthen their feeling toward Hashem and the Torah.

The prerequisite is that you are "assembled," meaning all of you are in a state of togetherness, with brotherly love. "Togetherness" sets the mood and opens the heart to hear words of meaning and chizuk (strengthening), "so that they hear..."

IF YOU SPEAK WITH LOVE AND AN OPEN HEART, PEOPLE WILL OPEN THEIR HEARTS TO WHAT YOUR SAYING.

When I started to lose my ability to speak, it made me aware of the power of speech. I had to decide what is truly worth saying. Now, unable to speak, I dream of what I would tell them if I could.

Words are powerful. When used correctly, they can lift up a spirit, when abused, they can destroy.

Our children and spouses ache for our recognition and love.

Especially during the holidays, when we spend so much time together. With so much to do, Mitzvahs, Davening, cooking, cleaning, etc., they could be ignored -or worse- mistreated in our

need to have things perfect.

You first need to see them as "most important." Don't be so religious that your family will suffer. Don't shove Yiddishkeit at them. Rather, bring them close with love and kindness.

They value your words and remember them. Your actions are equally, if not more important. Create a loving atmosphere, focus your attention on them. Listen to what they have to share with you. They want you to know them, and to be proud of them.

When you have set a loving atmosphere, then you can tell them about how Hashem has chosen us to be His. Their ears and their hearts will be open to hear and to learn, to fear Hashem, and to keep His Torah.

If I could talk, I would tell my kids how much I love them and how proud I am of them. How lucky we are to be Hashem's children and the Rebbe's soldiers.

I would tell them to be kind and to use their talents and gifts to serve Hashem and to lift others up.

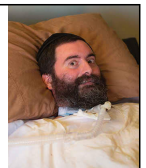
I would tell them to smile a lot and be positive. There is nothing better than helping or making another Jew happy, even if it means taking a loss.

I would tell my daughters how pretty they look in their Yom Tov outfits. I would tell my boys to tuck their shirts in.

What would I tell my wife? Now, that is none of your business.

Consider making a Hakhel get-together with your family and friends. Create an atmosphere of togetherness, speak to their hearts with love and kindness. Most important, make your spouse and children feel "most important."

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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