

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

PARSHAS BEREISHIS

A Jewish Woman Is a True Blessing

Parshas Bereishis is not only the first Parsha of the Torah, it is also the first Parsha of the year. Following all the holidays, we leave the sanctity and closeness with Hashem of the holidays, and enter the mundane days of the year. There is a Chassidic tradition to announce after Simchas Torah, "V'Yaakov halach l'darko," which means, "And Yaakov went on his way." "Yaakov" is the Jewish people, and the "way" is the continuation of our mission to make this world into a home for Hashem. The holidays provided the rejuvenation and the spiritual fuel needed to accomplish our mission in the dark and physical world.

There is a Chassidic expression, "The way you set yourself up on Shabbos Bereishis, so goes the whole year." So we can understand that Shabbos Bereishis is super important to our mission of transforming the world, and it is pivotal in taking the energy of the holidays and applying it to our service to Hashem all year round.

Being that we read Parshas Bereishis on this Shabbos, there must be messages here for us to set the foundation and the tone for a meaningful and productive year.

In Parshas Bereishis, we read about the first sin that was committed, eating from the tree of knowledge.

From the Midrash we know that the prohibition of eating from the tree of knowledge was to end after three hours. Daylight is divided into twelve hours. In the ninth hour, Hashem commanded Adam not to eat from the tree, and as the twelfth hour on that day, which was Friday, was to come

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to an end, it would be Shabbos, and the prohibition would be over.

It begs the question: Adam was the holiest and greatest of all men, Hashem Himself formed him. Couldn't he contain himself for three hours? And even though there are reasons given, explaining why he had to eat from the tree and the benefits that we have because of it, the simple fact is that the prohibition was for three hours, and he couldn't resist the temptation. Why not (it wasn't even chocolate)?

The one and only purpose of the evil inclination is to get a person to go against Hashem's will, either by committing a sin or by getting him or her not to do a mitzvah. Therefore, the more necessary it is for the mitzvah to get done, whether for the person, for the place, or for the time, the more the evil inclination tries to stop it from getting done.

This is why we find that sometimes it is a struggle to do the simplest mitzvah, and when you think about it, it doesn't make sense to you, "Why am I struggling with this?" It is because it's so important that you do the mitzvah, that the evil inclination puts in extra effort to make it difficult for you.

The Talmud has a discussion based on the question, "What (mitzvah) was your father most careful with?" Since every one of us has a mitzvah that we specifically were created to fulfill more than any other. And because it is so important for you to do that mitzvah, the evil inclination makes it hardest for you to do, even if it is the smallest and simplest thing.

This is how you can figure out what mitzvah is most important for you to do. The thing you struggle with most, that is probably your mitzvah. And it doesn't have to be one of the 613 Biblical commandments. It could be a Rabbinical enactment or even a tradition, it is all Hashem's will, and it could be the thing that you were sent here to do.

This is also one of the explanations of the adage of



our sages, "Whoever is greater than his fellow, his (evil) inclination is greater." Because he is greater, his mitzvahs are more powerful. Therefore, the evil inclination puts up a greater fight.

Another explanation is, that for there to be true free choice, there has to be a balance between the forces of good and the forces of evil. So when a person is given a great soul, great abilities, and an important mission, he is given a powerful evil inclination, and therefore, greater challenges.

Now we will understand why Adam couldn't withstand the temptation. Since he was the greatest man to ever live, formed by Hashem, and because his actions would have the greatest impact, affecting all the generations until the present one, we can only imagine how powerful the evil inclination was, and how much effort he put into getting Adam to stumble. He came in the form of a snake, and simply wouldn't give up until Adam ate from the tree.

When Hashem wanted to give the Torah to the Jewish people, He said to Moshe, "So shall you say to the house of Yaakov (the women), and speak to the sons of Israel (the men)."

Why were the women to be told first? So that the situation that happened with Chava, wouldn't repeat itself. She didn't hear the commandment not to eat from the tree of knowledge directly from Hashem, and therefore, she was able to make the mistake of telling the snake, that "it shouldn't be touched," which Hashem didn't say, which led to eating from the tree. Had Chava, who was also formed by Hashem, (as it says, "And He built the tzela- the side of Adam and fashioned it into a woman"), been told directly from Hashem not to eat from the tree, she certainly wouldn't have eaten from the tree, and what more, she would have made sure that Adam would not as well.

Now that Hashem was giving us the Torah, He made sure that the women were first. That way it is certain that it would be kept, and they would use their womanly wisdom to make sure that their husbands and children do the same.

So the lesson here is, since we should strive to make our homes into a "small Beis Hamikdash," a place of Torah and mitzvahs, and a place where Hashem will feel at home, the importance of the Jewish woman, the backbone of the home, can't be stressed enough. If the wife is in, the whole home will be a place where Hashem will feel at home.

So every husband should put in the effort to connect with his wife with understanding and in a peaceful way and strive to be on the same page, that the home will be a Torah home.

If you are on the same page, she will surely be a "help" to you. And she will use her womanly wisdom, as the Talmud tells us, "An extra wisdom was given to the woman," to influence the whole home, including the children and the husband, to follow in the ways of Hashem, and the home will certainly be a "small Beis Hamikdash."

I am blessed to see this in my home. Were it not for my wife Dina, I don't know if I would be half the man I have become. She knows just how to get me to be a better father, learn more Torah, and be a better person. She is always pushing us to be better and to do more. And she simply won't tolerate anything that is inappropriate. A Jewish woman is a true blessing.

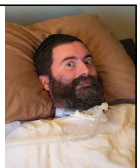
This is also the meaning of the wedding blessing, said under the Chupa and at Sheva Brachos. We ask Hashem to make the bride and groom joyous, "as You made joyous those You formed (Adam and Chava) in Gan Eden, mikedem (back then) ."

Why does it say "mikedem," isn't it obvious that it happened back then?

Rather mikedem refers to the time of Gan Eden - back then, the way they were in the beginning before they ate from the tree.

If your home will be a small Beis Hamikdash, we will certainly merit to see the third Beis Hamikdash and experience the Garden of Eden the way Adam and Chava experienced it before the sin, with the coming of Moshiach. The time has come.

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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