

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

YOM KIPPUR

I Chose to Live, so Should You

It is now over 5 years* since Hashem gifted me with ALS. But this week, we celebrated a milestone. It is 3 years since I had a tracheostomy.

It was the day after Rosh Hashanah. I had been using a machine called a bipap to help me breathe, but still, I seemed to be fading. My wife Dina took me to the hospital, where I was diagnosed with pneumonia, and my oxygen level was dangerously low.

It was at that point that I was given the choice to have the tracheostomy and live, or not and put an end to the suffering and difficulties. Legally and halachically, it was my choice. With Dina's support, I chose to live.

The simple fact is that if I would not have had it then, I wouldn't be here today and

possibly wouldn't have lived through the week.

Another fact is that the true sacrifice in this story is my wife's. She is the one who has the brunt of the hardships,

taking care of me and the family with love and tears. She has to be mother, father,

wife, caretaker, sometimes nurse, and a multitude of other titles. I can't begin to imagine how much she suffers, not having a normal husband to do what husbands do for their wives.

All I am able to do is listen and write to her, but she has given me a life and the ability to watch my children grow up. With her support and womanly cleverness, she pushes me to be a better father, to study Torah more and more, and to write. I owe it all to her.

Being able to see my children grow is one of the greatest pleasures. It is incredible that with all the hardships, they found a way to function as normal and healthy kids should. And I get to see them, talk to them, and experience their personalities and talents.

Over the past five years, we were blessed to see amazing kindness from all over the world. And especially the Los Angeles community. But no one more than the five exceptional people who have taken on the responsibility of taking care of me and my family. We call them the Fantastic Five. They started the Hurwitz Family Fund, and in over five years, they haven't wavered. They are truly amazing.

After having the tracheostomy, I lost the use of my right hand, and with that

FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE IN YOUR LIFE. THERE IS SO MUCH YOU CAN DO AND SO MUCH MORE YOU CAN GIVE.



went my ability to communicate. Before that, I would type on an iPhone for communication and writing blog posts. For those 9 days in the hospital, I couldn't communicate, and I just let go and put my trust in Hashem, and my wife made sure I was taken care of.

I was in recovery in the ICU when I began to understand the importance of bikur cholim, visiting the sick. Even though I wasn't able to communicate, I felt uplifted with every visit, whether it was a rabbi or lay person, man or woman.

My children, being too young to enter the ICU, to my pleasure, snuck in. I can't begin to tell you how much I enjoyed seeing them.

As Yom Kippur was approaching, we wondered what kind of holiday we would have in the hospital. The thought sounded grim, but we were in for a surprise.

Just before Yom Kippur, a woman was ushered into the room right next to mine. Her children were with her, and when it came time for davening, they came to my room and, with the most melodic voices, they sang the davening; it was truly uplifting.

Over Yom Kippur, we had several visitors who walked to the hospital to see us. All in all, that Yom Kippur was one of our most memorable ones.

I am blessed to live at a time when there are technologies that keep me alive, such as the ventilator that breathes for me and the incredible computer that reads my eye movements so I can communicate.

While life is full of difficulties, pain, and suffering, there is so much to be grateful for. While I understand the hardships, I

choose to focus on the positive parts of my life, and that keeps me going. There is my wife, my children, family, friends and you. I have the opportunity to learn and teach Torah. There is the hope that in the future, a cure will be found or perhaps a miracle even sooner.

Each of us has so much good in our lives. Even within the suffering and difficulties, there is so much good to be found. Focus on the positive in your life now, and see all the love that is around you. There is so much you can do, and so much more you can give.

May you have a good and sweet year, and may Moshiach come and put an end to all the suffering. The time has come.

**Written in 2017*

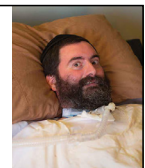
*"Dear Rabbi Yitzi,
Thank you for being a part of my life and inspiring me
and uplifting my soul!*

*Wishing you a happy and sweet new year!
With lots of love:"*

- Daniel R, Miami

RABBI YITZI WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU! SEND YOUR MESSAGE TO:
(937) 770-4802 | TORAHFROMMYEYES@GMAIL.COM

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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