

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

LECH LECHA

Turning Pain into Purpose

In this week's Parsha, Lech Lecha, we read that Hashem commanded Avraham that he and all his male descendants have a Bris (circumcision). And so, at the age of ninety-nine, he circumcised himself, thereby entering into a covenant with Hashem.

This is so significant that even today when someone has a Bris, the blessing we say is "to enter him into the covenant of Avraham, our father."

The Rambam (Maimonides) tells us that when we do a Bris today, it is not done because of the command to Avraham; rather, we

do it because of the command Hashem gave to Moshe at Sinai. The same is true regarding all mitzvahs that our ancestors kept before the giving of the Torah. Though they did these mitzvahs, we are not required to do them because they did, but rather because Hashem

commanded us to at Mount Sinai. If this is the case, why do we say, "To enter him into the covenant of Avraham, our father," wouldn't it make more sense to say, "To enter him into the covenant with Hashem?"

Another question. Mitzvahs are meant to be done with joy, as it says, "Serve Hashem

with joy." Yet here, we are required to do something that causes pain, which is the opposite of joy. Even more, pain is part of the mitzvah, and because of that, we don't use anesthetics or anything else to numb the pain. Why are we required to do a mitzvah that causes pain? And why is pain part of the mitzvah?

The Shulchan Aruch Harav (The Code of Law from Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the first Rebbe of Chabad) tells us that the Neshama enters the body at the Bris. However, we are taught that while still in the womb, an angel teaches the baby Torah, which would mean that the Neshama is already present in the womb. So what does he mean by saying that it enters at the Bris?

There is a difference between the Neshama being present and it entering the body. When a boy is born, the Neshama is already present; however, it is not fused with the physical body. The act of the Bris on the physical body fuses the physical and the spiritual, the new Neshama, with the body.

This is also the purpose of every Jew, to make this world into a dwelling place for Hashem's presence by fusing physical existence with holiness. We do this by using physical objects and places, in their natural state, for mitzvahs or to serve Hashem. When it comes to the body, we do a Bris to do this fusion, and since we want the effect to be complete, we do it in the most natural way, hence the necessity of pain.

EVERY PAINFUL SITUATION G-D PUTS US THROUGH CAN BE VIEWED AS A MISSION AND AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH.



While in normal circumstances, we may not put ourselves into a situation that will cause our bodies pain, here, in order to fulfill Hashem's commandment properly, we find joy in doing His mitzvah even with the pain.

By a girl, the fusion happens at the naming. This is why we try to name a girl by the Torah at the first possible opportunity.

The question is asked: Why do we make such a big deal about Avraham's sacrifice at the Akeida, the binding of his son Yitzchak onto the altar, when throughout our history, many have sacrificed themselves in a similar fashion and perhaps greater, and what more, Avraham had a direct command from Hashem, while they did not? The answer is that he was the first, which breaks the ice for the rest. It is hardest to be the first, but once it has already been done, it is easier for others to do.

The same is true for the Bris. Avraham was the first, making it easier for those who came after him.

You may ask: How can you compare self-sacrifice with Bris? By self-sacrifice, there is a mental edge that makes it a little easier, knowing that Avraham already did it. However, a Bris is done to a baby, who has no idea what Avraham did or didn't do. And what's more, knowing that Avraham already gave the ultimate sacrifice gives a mental edge to another in a similar situation. But just because Avraham had a Bris first doesn't make the physical pain of a Bris any less.

This is the reason why we say the blessing, "to enter him into the covenant of Avraham." Because just like Avraham, everyone who has a Bris is as if he is the first.

The same is true for all the painful situations Hashem puts us in. If we can see them as a mission from Hashem, we will find meaning, purpose, and maybe even joy in them.

This is one of the ideas that t has kept me positive since I was diagnosed with ALS. I feel that Hashem has chosen me for a mission. And though I don't like my situation and I want to be healed, I understand that Hashem put me here for a reason. And as long as I am here, I will use my situation to do His work in any way I can, uplifting the spirits of people through teaching, smiling, and finding good in the people I meet.

May Hashem send Moshiach and put an end to our pain. The time has come.

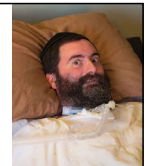
"Dear Rabbi Yitzi,

Your words are always so beautiful and powerful and I admire you very much. We wait with you for the cure, or even sooner, the miracle!"

- Etty G, Great Neck

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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