

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

CHOL HAMOED PESACH

Speak To The Dry Bones

The Haftora for Shabbos Chol Hamoed Pesach is a prophecy from the book of Yechezkel. Hashem took him to a "valley that was full of dry bones." He saw how Hashem brought them to life again. This Hashem explained was a message to the Jewish people, that though they feel like dry bones, hopeless and cut off, nevertheless Hashem will revive them out of their graves, in the time of Moshiach.

Why do we read this on Shabbos Chol Hamoed Pesach? Rav Hai Gaon testified, that we have an oral tradition, that the resurrection of the dead will occur in the month of Nissan. But this only explains why it should be read in Nissan. Why read it on Pesach? The people will be resurrected with the dew of Torah, and being that we start praying for dew on Pesach, it is befitting for us to read about the resurrection as well. So now we have a reason to read it on Pesach.

**SOMETIMES
THE MOST
VULNERABLE
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AND MINDS TO
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THE REALITY IN
FRONT OF US.**

But why on Shabbos Chol Hamoed Pesach? The regular Pesach readings are connected to the day they are read on and they are annually recurring themes. The resurrection of the dead is connected to Nissan and Pesach, however, it will be a one-time event and is therefore not a recurring theme. Being that we don't have Shabbos Chol Hamoed Pesach every year, it is therefore also non-recurring, making it

the perfect time to read this Haftora.

In the Haftora, Yechezkel says, "The hand of Hashem was upon me..., and He placed me in a valley, and it was full of bones, and he passed me over them, around and around, and behold there were very many on the face of the valley, and behold they were very dry." Hashem tells Yechezkel, "Son of man..., prophesy to the bones, and say to them, 'dry bones, listen to the word of Hashem.'"

There is an amazing lesson to be learned from here with regard to spreading the teachings of Torah.

Some mistakenly think about Jewish people who are not involved, that they shouldn't put any energy into trying to teach them Torah, and perhaps even avoid them altogether, because of some rabbi who called them "dry bones."

Dry bones is a euphemism for someone who is void of Torah. In most cases, it was out of their control, as they grew up in a home where no Torah or Judaism was taught to them.

Torah is our lifeline, it is compared to water, just as a fish can live without water, so too, a Jew can't live without Torah.

Some have a hard time teaching Torah to such a person. They ask, "When have our ancestors done this? Why should we start a new tradition that was not done in the past? Is this even acceptable? They have no connection to it. Let them first get involved, and when they are somewhat connected, I will start to teach them.

The answer to these questions are found in these verses.

Hashem says to Yechezkel, "Speak to the very dry bones," not just dry, but "very dry." And say to them, "Listen to the word of Hashem." Who were these dry bones from? Rashi tells us that it was 30,000 from the tribe of Efraim, who left Egypt 30 years before the Exodus, and the Philistines slaughtered them. By leaving early, before Hashem wanted them to, they were going against His Will. It is to these very dry and "going against Hashem's Will" kind of people, that Hashem says, to say to them, "Listen to the word of Hashem."

One may think, I will find one such person, and concentrate my efforts on him; that way it will be most effective. To this, the verse says that there were "very many" dry bones. In other words, focus on many, not just a few.



Now you might ask, "Okay, if they come my way, I will be glad to teach them, but do I have to go out of my way to reach them?" To this, the Haftora says that Hashem took Yechezkel into a "valley," a low place. Meaning not only going out to reach them but even to a place that is void of Torah.

The Haftora now tells us that this strategy will work, as Yechezkel continues, "And I looked, and behold there were sinews upon them..., and then flesh..., and skin covered over them... And the spirit entered them, and they came to life, a very very great multitude." By going about it this way, you will be effective, they will come back to Torah, and not only a few, but a very very great multitude.

The Haftora continues with Hashem telling Yechezkel, that what he just saw is a message to the Jewish people who are saying, "Our bones are dried out, our hope is lost, we are cut off." These are three expressions of hopelessness, each getting progressively worse.

"Our bones are dried out," refers to someone who realizes that he has been living a life void of Torah. Nevertheless, he knows that he can always return to Hashem, even after a lifetime without Torah.

"Our hope is lost," refers to someone who thinks that after so many years, "how am I going to change?" This is worse because he doesn't see the possibility of returning to Hashem. But even in his case, because he still lives among other Jewish people, through their love for another Jew, they will surely have an effect on him, and he will also return.

"We are cut off," refers to the person who has left the Jewish community, and because of that, there isn't anyone to have an effect on him. Still, Hashem will find a way to awaken in him an urge to return.

Whatever the case may be, Hashem says, "Behold I will open your graves, and I will take you out of your graves, My nation, and I will bring you to the land of Israel... I will put My spirit in you and you will come to life, and I will place you on your land, and you will know, that I Hashem have spoken and have acted." May it happen soon, the time has come.

Here is what my wife Dina said and wrote about the dry bones. It is so meaningful and true. I added it, so you can gain from her wisdom and perspective.

I often wonder what we will be like when Moshiach comes. I imagine we will be a bunch of dried bones, broken and cracked. Pushed to the brink from all of the challenges we have, and so tired of being brave on the outside when we are so wounded and scared on the inside.

But it's to this very pile of bones that we need to speak. To prophesize about the future and remind us of the

good yet to come. To allow our tears to dampen the dryness and to revive our spirit of hope. Sometimes the most vulnerable thing we can do is to open our hearts and minds to hope, despite the reality in front of us.

Be brave and be hopeful. Be honest and be open to the pain and tears of others. We need the tears to dampen our dryness and awaken our bones. The gates of tears are waiting. Let us not focus on how the bones are dressed or which synagogue these bones pray at. We are all so similar. We have the same pains and the same hopes and dreams for ourselves and for our families. We want the same future for our grandchildren, and we can help each other.

"Dear Rabbi Yitzi,

I saw your video titled "I matter."

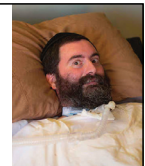
Thank you for sharing your story, may Hashem continue to bless you!

Thank you for all you do, and yes, you do matter!"

- Evelyn S, Connecticut

RABBI YITZI WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU! SEND YOUR MESSAGE TO:
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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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