

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

PARSHAT CHAYEI SARAH

Making Your Life Yours

This week's parsha, Chayei Sarah, begins, "And Sarah's lifetime was 127 years, the years of Sarah's life."

The question is asked: If it already said, "And Sarah's lifetime was 127 years," why does it add, "the years of Sarah's life?"

Another question: Why does the Torah tell us how long Sarah lived, as opposed to the other matriarchs, whose years aren't told to us? The Zohar says, that because she went down and came up from Egypt, she merited to have an exalted state of living, which means that her life now was filled with a very high spiritual state as a gift from above. He concludes that "her life was hers," meaning, that she was master over every aspect of her life, and even more, not only did she receive the gift of an exalted state of living, but she internalized it, and mastered that as well.

The Rebbe Rashab (the fifth Rebbe of Chabad, Rabbi Shalom Dovber Schneerson of Lubavitch) explains the words of the Zohar:

The first part of the verse, "And Sarah's lifetime was 127 years," means that she merited an exalted state of living, and the second half of the

verse, "the years of Sarah's life," teaches us that her life was hers.

Rashi explains that the extra words, "the years of Sarah's life," come to teach us that her years

were all equally good, which means free of sin. How do we reconcile Rashi's interpretation with the words of the Zohar, that "her life was hers?"

We have a rule, that what our patriarchs and matriarchs did, is a lesson to us, their children, as to what we should do. If the Torah tells us extra words, "the years of Sarah's life," which means equally good, free of sin, it means that we should also have equally good years. How can this be a life lesson for us to follow? A lesson can be applied to the present and the future, but not the past. If someone had committed sins in the past, how can his years be equally good, free of sin?

This is where teshuva comes in. There is a kind of teshuva that could correct the past as well as if no sin was ever committed - when someone does teshuva out of love.

What is teshuva from love? There are different reasons a person does teshuva. Sometimes it is done out of fear, either because he is afraid of punishment or he feels that he will not get what he needs from Hashem if he doesn't correct his ways. Then there is the person who wants to get closer to Hashem. He yearns from the depth of his heart and thirsts for a relationship with Hashem, only to get closer and closer. Doing teshuva from this approach is called teshuva from love.

Being that it is possible to change the past, it is possible to follow Sarah's lead and have all your years equally good. In other words, a Jew has total control over his life, even his past, if

SEARCH FOR G-D WITH JOY BECAUSE JOY BREAKS ALL BARRIERS.



he wants to. And when he does, it becomes his life just like Sarah's life was her's.

How does changing the past work?

On a basic level, because he realizes that he sinned, he is full of remorse, and he feels cut off. Therefore, he becomes bitter over his lowly situation, and that pushes him to do teshuva. Now, because it is the sin that motivated him to do teshuva, repair the bond, and come closer to Hashem than he was before the sin, it is the actual sin that brought him closer. Superficially it is a sin with all its trappings, but through his teshuva, he reveals a hidden good from within the sin, and that takes the place of the sin.

On a deeper level, teshuva from love is so powerful, that it reaches a place that is beyond the creation of time. Time is also a creation and there are spiritual realms before or beyond the existence of time. At the moment of teshuva, you are beyond time, and there is no past, present, or future, therefore, it is as if you are transported to before the sin and it is corrected.

Not only do we learn this lesson from Sarah, but because she was at such a high level, and she was able to internalize it and take ownership of every aspect of her life, it means that we could as well. Because Sarah is our mother, and it is in our genes to be like her. Therefore, we have the ability to have all our years equally good and that our lives be ours, just like her.

You might think, "I am not holy enough or special enough to be able to do teshuva from love." It is a mistake to think that way, every Jew is holy and special and can do teshuva from love. It is not the easy route, it will take work, learning about Hashem, understanding why He created the world, and why He created you. But when you begin to understand, your love for Hashem will start to burn inside you, and with time and effort, the fire will grow and lead you to teshuva from love.

If you follow these steps, you will begin to see

Judaism differently. Instead of it feeling as a burden you are responsible for, you will begin to have a passion for it and do it with joy. And joy is the key to breaking all boundaries and reaching the greatest heights. You will even do your teshuva with joy, passion, and love, and you will become the master over your life, past, present, and future, just like Sarah our mother.

May our efforts to get closer to Hashem, bring us to "serve Hashem with joy." This joy will break all boundaries, especially the constraints of this dark and bitter exile, and usher in the coming of Moshiach. The time has come.

If you want to learn about Hashem, I suggest learning the book of Tanya as a starting point.

"Dear Rabbi Yitzi

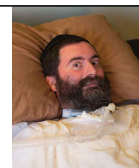
I recently started following you on Instagram and learning about your story and perspective and I was really impressed... So many challenges, yet you remain so positive. You are a Tzadik!

May Hashem say enough to your hardships!"

- Miriam F, Zurich

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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