

# WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

## PARSHAT VAYECHI

### Becoming a Man

The Haftora for Parshas Vayechi tells of King David's last words and instructions to his son Shlomo and it gives a tally of his years as king.

The connection to our Parsha is Yaakov's last words to his children and Yosef's last words to his brothers.

The Haftora begins to tell us, that when the time of David's passing was nearing, he instructed his son Shlomo. "I am going the way of all the earth, and you should strengthen yourself and become (ish) a man."

At this point, Shlomo was twelve years old, before Bar Mitzvah. These words are a message from every parent to their Bar Mitzvah boys crossing into manhood, "strengthen yourself and become a man." Why does he need

to strengthen himself to become a man?

**FOR ME, THERE IS NO GREATER NACHAS THAN MY CHILDREN GROWING UP AND BECOMING A MENTCH AND A TORAH-OBSERVANT JEW.**

In Hebrew, there are four terms for the word "man," adam, ish, enosh, and gever. Adam refers to the intelligent aspect of man, the mind, brain, etc. Ish is

the emotional side of man, feelings, heart, etc. The last two, Enosh and Gever, are the way Adam and Ish express themselves. Enosh refers to emotional or intellectual weakness. Gever refers to emotional or intellectual strength.

What is strange in this verse is the use of the word "Ish," which refers to the emotional. The reason why a boy enters manhood at thirteen is because that is when he becomes a Bar Daas, which is the natural development of his intellectual properties. However, here, David uses the word "ish," which has to do with his emotions. Wouldn't it make sense to say "Adam?"

The intellectual aspect of man remains in his thoughts and can only be expressed by coming through his emotional self, in speech and action. The development of a person's mind does not ensure that he will act correctly that is why we find a lot of smart people doing stupid and destructive things. It takes effort to apply what you know so that it affects how you act. So, while a boy enters manhood because of the natural development of his intellectual properties, it takes personal effort to apply what he knows to how he acts because that is not natural. Therefore, David's instructions to Shlomo are as if to say - I know that you are smart, but that won't help you unless you can apply it to the way you act. So "strengthen yourself," meaning, you will have to put in your own effort and hard work to become an "Ish," an emotionally well-developed person. Only then will your great wisdom be useful and serve you well. (Lekutei Diburim 1, p214)

The same is true for every Bar Mitzvah boy; if he wants to become an Ish, he will have to put in the effort.

The first mitzvah that a Bar Mitzvah boy



becomes obligated to do, is the reading of the Shema. Here we see the same idea, that knowledge doesn't necessarily bring to action.

The Shema begins, "Hear O Israel, Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is one. And you will love Hashem your G-d, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your means." But between the first two verses, our great sages inserted another verse, "The name of Hashem's glorious kingdom is blessed forever and ever." Why did they feel the need to add this verse? Isn't the knowledge of Hashem's oneness enough to bring him to love Hashem?

The answer is the same as before. Just because you understand something doesn't mean you feel it. The extra verse is to apply it to yourself by actively accepting Hashem's dominion over you (Lekutei Torah Vaeschanan).

Another mitzvah that comes with Bar Mitzvah is Tefillin. The Torah says, "You shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they should be as totafos between your eyes." By the Tefillin that goes on the arm, the Torah says, "You shall bind them." However, by the head Tefillin, it says, "they should be." Why the difference? Another interesting thing is that the head and the arm Tefillin are two separate mitzvahs, but in order to put on the head Tefillin, you are required to first put on the arm Tefillin. Why?

The answer is in the same vein as the previous answer. The head Tefillin sit on the part of the head where the brain is; it is connected to the intellect. Because the intellectual properties of a person develop naturally, all the Tefillin needs to do is "be" there. Whereas the arm Tefillin are near the heart, which is connected to emotions, and the arm and hand are all about action. Therefore, effort needs to be exerted to "bind" them because emotional development comes through effort. And being that our intellect is expressed via our emotions, the emotional

self needs to be developed first so that the intellect can be properly expressed. Hence, the Tefillin of the arm has to be on before the head. (Lekutei Sichos 39, p28-29)

I see this with my children as well. Thank G-d I have been blessed with smart children, but I see how much work it takes for them to be the great kids they are. For me, there is no greater nachas, than watching my children growing up and becoming a mentch and a Torah observant Jew.

May our efforts we put into our children be fruitful. May we watch them grow into mentchen, and may they always be a source of nachas, to Hashem, to the Jewish people, and especially to us.

*"Dear Rabbi Yitzi*

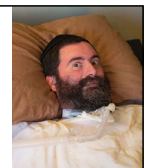
*Thank you so very much for all the wonderful chizuk and words of Torah wisdom! Baruch Hashem, you help me every day to be a better person, to feel closer to Hashem and keep going! I really appreciate it.*

*May Hashem bless you and your family with all the berachos humanly possible to have."*

- Nechama F, Brooklyn

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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