

The Lecture Series With Reb T (Biweekly): *The Shiur where we talk a topic per session with some practical lessons*, Tonight's topic is "**Commit & Don't Quit!**"

Sources from Sefaria (unless noted otherwise); Lookout for the *Points To Carryover (PTC's)*

All Shiurum on [shiurenjoyment.com/shiurim/shiurim-reb-t/](http://shiurenjoyment.com/shiurim/shiurim-reb-t/) -Shoutout to Jake W. & Eli N.!

The Lecture Series, The P.A.L., The Audio D.T., and O.T. Talk Show are on different Podcast Forums

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-The Shiur should serve as a zechus l'illuy nishmas Leib Ben Natan & Elimelech David Ben Dov Beryl  
The Shiur should also serve as a zechus for the refuah sheleimah of Yisrael Yitzchak ben Rivka Leah,  
Shlomo Ben Sarah Dina, for the continued health and nachat of Livia Margalit bat Ilana Devorah to her  
family, and for anyone sick or needing a yeshuah or refuah  
and the Shiur should be for a Zechus for shalom bayis for those who are struggling and as a zechus for  
those who are looking for their zivvugim/marriage partners

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Many of us are no stranger to commitment. We take on massive amounts of roles, jobs responsibilities, and commitments in our own life, the biggest one probably marriage, and next to that, having and raising children. Think about your own life. What is the biggest commitment in your life?

In our own lives, anything we set out to do and to keep up with is a commitment that we need to stick to. If you join the Daf you have a commitment to continue and do it every day. If you do shnayim mikra, its supposed to be done every day. If you are part of daily learning emails like I am, you're supposed to read them every day. If you run workshops or seminars, or mentor others, it is a commitment depending on the frequency, but we need to keep to it.

If you are a writer, you commit to deadlines. If you're working on a book you commit to writing it and finishing it. If you take a job you commit to that job and have to do it every day, whatever the roles may be whether a banker, lawyer, doctor, teacher, therapist or the like.

### **Make Sure to Commit and Don't Quit!**

When I think about working for the public school system, like I do, when you think about the years we're supposed to put in, it sounds like a long commitment. 30 plus years to retire! That sounds like ALOT. However, when we take it day by day it's not as bad. Break down commitments into daily manageable tasks.

*Miriam Webster defines commitment as "adherence to something to which one is bound by a pledge or duty." [everydaypower.com](http://everydaypower.com) points out that "Commitment is the ability to stick with something long after the initial excitement is gone. Commitment is a decision to stick with a project, idea, relationship or goal - even when it's not easy."*

The phrase that pops into my head that can apply to many of us is "I'm no stranger to commitment." I further would say that this phrase also would apply to many of us: "I know commitment well and I live with it all the time."

Going to Grad School for a profession is a big commitment, For me, Three years for OT school, for me was a commitment. Actually in the first semester, I was THIS close to pulling out. I remember sitting with my mom in the sukkah talking about how I couldn't do it. How I wanted to pull out, but was convinced to stay and thank g-d I did.

Living a Jewish life with it's holidays, halachot/laws, and the like is a major commitment.

I think also of a commitment I recently started, working on online semichah in a ten month or so program course. It is very hard, and Halacha is very very difficult for me. In the first semester, I was also THIS close to quitting many times, and I was very unhappy in it, and angry that it came so hard to me. I begged

my wife to let me leave, but she talked me though it to stay and told me it'll all be good, and how right she was. Thank g-d I am now halfway through and hope to Hashem he lets me get through it and pass it.

So many times especially in the beginning I wanted to quit my shows, especially when not seeing results or feedback, but thank g-d, I was led on the path to continue by Hashem to keep seeing it through. In general in life, we need to stick with our commitments, and find ways to breather fresh air into them.

Any commitment we have, we have to keep at and stay with. DO NOT QUIT! Stay the course!

Commitments come in many forms, shapes, and sizes. Take the idea of prioritizing spouses, kids, family. Who should come first? How do we show that they come first? Unfortunately in the world today there is a major problem of “Parallel lives” where people in a relationship are not interacting or joined together, not involved in activities together. Dont be parallel-be joined, in unison, with proper priorities.

**Don't take your spouse or your relationships, especially with Hashem for granted. Put in the work, put in the effort, put in the giving, for it to be a beautiful relationship and for it to be a wonderful back and forth.**

Early on in the Torah in Bereshis, Hashem points out in Bereshis 2:24

**וַיֹּאמֶר הָאֱלֹהִים זֶה הָפֶעַם עִצָּם מֵעַצְמֵי וּבֶשֶׂר מִבְּשָׂרִי לְזָאת יִקְרָא אִשָּׁה כִּי מֵאִישׁ לִקְחָהּ זָאת:**

**Then the man said, “This one at last Is bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh. This one shall be called Woman, For from man was she taken.”**

**עַל־כֵּן יַעֲזֹב אִישׁ אֶת־אָבִיו וְאֶת־אִמּוֹ וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד:**

**Hence a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, so that they become one flesh.**

A man leaves his parents home and becomes ONE person with his wife. He leaves everything behind and is one with her. She is and must become his priority and everything else is left behind. She is the most important. Everything he does directly affects her. He must stick with her and do everything for her, when he takes action he must think how it will affect her. For example, I am not a morning person; I hate mornings. If I come off as cranky and grumpy, it rubs off on my wife, affects her, and ruins her day. I have to make sure to work on being better at mornings, to positively affect all of our days.

Think about what you do and how it affects your spouse, kids, or others. For example:

- If you go to a Kiddush for an hour, while the wife is beside herself with the screaming kids, even if you bring food home for them (Which you Should!), it will not help, and that time was not properly spent.

-If you are super obsessed with sports, what is the priority? Do you go to the friend and watch the game for 4 hours while leaving her alone that whole time to take care of everything else? Is that true VDAVAK Bishto? And if you do have an agreement with your wife about going off to the games or something similar, then ask her in advance, what can I do for you to make things easier later? Perhaps get the kids in pajamas or do the laundry before you go order dinner that night so she doesn't have to cook clean or cleanup.

Side point—that doesn't necessarily mean that she has to cook in the family, men feel free to cook... or sign up if I get enough interest, to my “Cook Like A Man” series, where I tell you how I do the cooking throughout the week and for Shabbos.

One of the best things to realize is what we can do for the spouse: Make sure to give a meaningful comment or a few each day to the spouse—wow, you did such a great job getting the kids ready it really helped me! Another thing to realize is not to put everything on the spouse, and not to expect all roles to fall on the wife! In fact, I try to reverse role our house and try to do things including cooking, dishes, laundry, and more. In addition, make sure to give the spouse what they really want or need, not what you think they want or need. For Instance—

-If they really want you to help out and clean around the house and instead you buy a Roomba vacuum for them, you're missing the point.

-If you waste an hour finding and spending a ton of money on flowers when she really would have preferred you spending that hour home helping with the dishes, you're missing the point.

—>Always keep the spouse on the mind. Always think what he or she would want from you in how to spend time and how to take care of them. Always prioritize how best to spend the most and proper time with them.

Think about what is worth fighting about, what is worth really disagreeing or giving each other a hard time about. I remember once reading, maybe on [aish.com](http://aish.com) that the phrase in your mind should be with your spouse and with disagreements that may pop up “is this worth losing your shalom bayis about? Is it worth it to lose the peace over this?” For example, is it really such a big deal to change into shabbos shoes to say mazel tov at a simcha if your spouse asks? Is it worth a fight?

Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski, ZT'L would say, as quoted from his book “Growing Each Day,” a prescription for Marriage:

*The secret of peace in the home is the awareness that husband and wife are not two distinct individuals living in a contractual relationship, but are one unit. If they love each other, they are also loving themselves. If they respect each other, they are respecting themselves.*

*Rabbi Rosner points out in his Sefer “Shalom Rav” in this PAST WEEK’s parsha,*

*Rav Yosef Soleveitchik draws a parallel between the Mishkan and our own homes by focusing on the vessels described in the parsha.*

*((As a side note—The Mishkan was a place to let Hashem in, and of course our homes we have to let Hashem in as well. I don't remember where I heard it but the Hebrew words for man and woman, Ish and Isha are different by two letters—that of the yud and the Heh, and when Hashem is in the home and the relationship, the two are connected. But if Hashem is not allowed in, all that's left is the aleph and shin, the aish, a fire, which is strife and in and of itself is not the good foundation for a relationship and it will not be a good relationship.))*

*Rav Soleveitchik continues to explain that the vessels for the Mishkan were basic elements in a home, like the table (Shulchan), lamp (menorah), and chair (Aron for Hashem, the chair for Hashem). The golden mizbeich, and the offerings are what we do in the house, and that comes later. We should bring Hashem into our homes, using these items, such as a table to serve guests, a bed to house guests, the lamp to learn and study Torah.*

*Further, it may be said that the Aron can symbolize Torah, which should be the foundation for the couple. The menorah may symbolize shalom bayit, peace in the home, represented by the shabbat candles. When my wife lights, I feel an aura, a metaphysical feeling permeating the house. That's what the lights should do for us. The shulchan represents hosting guests, singing, saying divrei torah, and learning. The kiyur represent purity, used for washing hands for the meal. The mizbeach may symbolize sacrifices, the sacrifices a couple needs to make for one another in life, and on a continual basis, which draw them closer to one another .*

**A key to a good home may be where there is a home full of torah mizvos and Chessed where it is shared by both spouses who prioritize to do things together, and not lead separate existences gd forbid.**

aish.com points out with author Karen Wolfer Rappaport

Many married couples lead parallel lives.

*When one does whatever it takes to spend the least time or to purposely lessen time with a spouse, you are leading parallel lives. Often times, you are not conscious of this process, but the impact is very real. When you are involved in your own endeavors, concerns, friends, even wishes and dreams, at the exclusion of your spouse, you are leading a parallel life.*

*It doesn't have to look or sound nasty. It can be very quiet, subtle, and insidious. But before you know it, you begin to understand you are "going it alone" in what should be a partnership. In a parallel life scenario, there is very little opportunity to give, to appreciate, to join, or to love. Physically you live together under the same roof, but emotionally you are miles apart.*

*In Genesis, we are given a description as to how Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, came into being. They were created as a single person in an apparently unified state. It is said that Adam and Eve were "back to back" at that point. Then God blesses the "back to back" Adam and Eve: "...be fruitful and multiply because it is not good for man to be alone." In order for them to follow this commandment, they are then separated.*

*Now Adam and Eve have a choice. They can remain back to back, as now separate entities, or they can turn around and relate "face to face."*

*We all confront the same choice, as did Adam and Eve, in our [relationships](#). Do we remain back to back, living separate, parallel lives or do we relate to each other face to face – intimately, honestly, consciously, informed?*

*Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh explains that a "back to back" relationship is one in which each partner is involved in fulfilling their own interests. In contrast, a "face to face relationship" is where each partner acknowledges and respects each others individual needs. (1)*

*Rabbi Ginsburgh points to the fact that while people's backs are similar to each other, the face is a unique part of each individual. Therefore relating in a "back to back" fashion indicates a lack of interest in the uniqueness of the other, whereas a "face to face" relationship expresses each partner's innermost considerations.*

*When we are back to back, it is possible to cover the basics in a relationship – the food can be bought, the chores can be delegated, the diapers can be changed. But it does not mean we are connecting emotionally, it does not mean we "see" each other. We can be busy with the daily grind and avoid facing our affective life. This is not the state of oneness that a Jewish marriage aspires to.*

*How do we create a mature, authentic relationship? Face to face is getting to know your better half – their likes and dislikes, precious moments in their lives, their favorite composer, the most traumatic event to happen in sixth grade, everything about them. It all has meaning for them, and it is very personal. Turn to your spouse when they turn towards you. Listen to your partner's longings and goals, and make them yours. Appreciate them and help them to attain these yearnings. Cultivate gratitude for the unique human being that they are. Nurture your affection and admiration by reminding yourself why you fell in love. The more they feel seen in the relationship, the more you will as well.*

**aish.com also points out from author Rabbi Jonathan Bienenfeld**

*There is good advice in the research of Dr. John Gottman, an expert marital therapist and author of the best-selling book, "The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work." Gottman speaks of the importance*

of what he calls “Love Maps,” a working knowledge of one’s spouse replete with information about who they are and what makes them tick. When difficulties arise between spouses – and they most certainly will – it is our knowledge that helps us weather the storm...

Can you articulate your spouse’s greatest personal ambitions? What about their professional ones? What activities they find most meaningful? Most stressful? Their pet peeves? Their favorite activities or worst fears? If money was no object, where would they live and how would they spend their time? Seeking out the answers to these questions – in increasing detail throughout life – transforms a relationship from a passive state of being into an active pursuit of understanding and, ultimately, admiration. Possessing such a detailed knowledge of your spouse is the difference between living parallel lives in a shared space and living a unified life, joined by the deep knowledge we have of one another.

If love is something that you fall into, you can just as easily fall out. But when *love* is something that is intentionally crafted, strengthened through every bit of knowledge we glean about our spouse, that love is perpetually fortified, even in the face of life’s stresses and setbacks. Knowledge is indeed power. Not the power to exploit or manipulate, but the power to will fuel your relationship far into the future.

To me, for a relationship to have the best effect, there has to be constant time together, every single day. That means prioritizing to spend every day with the other person, something every day, as much as possible. This applies on whatever works for you whether it be watching something together every day (i.e. Shiur, lecture, inspiring talk,), listening to something together everyday (i.e. podcast, Shiur, etc), reading something together every day (ie torah book, page per day, parenting book page per day, etc.), or just spend time doing something together every day—ie make fun date night events or ideas with themes, such as painting together, or a puzzle task together or a board game together, reading next to one another, etc. Take time to sing together with your wife and family, especially on Shabbos ,the zemiros of the three meals and after shabbos—in our house, we break out the guitar often in the winter months for the kids and I play a musical havdala and songs for bed for my wife and the kids. Play music together if you both play an instrument! Do things together, shared tasks and activities in the leisure or play realm of the main areas of occupation that we talk about in OT land, everyday!

**But the person must be put first, prioritized, every single day. It gives both yourself and your spouse something to look forward to each day, no matter how stressful things are that day that you know that you’ll have that time to sit down together and relax and share together.**

**Actually, my favorite time that I look forward to of the ENTIRE week is on Friday night, when the kids are sleeping, and my wife and I read our Jewish novels next to each other on the big comfy couch with the special Shabbos snacks of pomegranate seeds and sour sticks. Often my wife and I swap books and read the same book one after another and have kind of a “Jewish novel book club” to discuss which characters were the favorite, what part of the story we are up to, what we really liked or not etc. Reading together on shabbos for me is the zenith of the entire week for me.**

No-one says you can’t have your own likes and your own interests, but it should NOT be to the exclusion or detriment of spending time with the spouse, or prioritizing time with the spouse. Do you own interests on your own time when you’re not otherwise spending time with the spouse or kids. If I want to do something and I know it would bore my wife, I wait until she’s busy with something else or sleeping; I bli neder never want to take away from the time we spend together.

Here are some examples to implement it with a few that I myself have tried to do sometimes to prioritize and properly implement commitment priority:

-I’d love to talk to my friend when he calls at 530, but the kids are crazy and my wife needs help, so I’ll call back when she naps at 945.

-I’d love to watch the documentary right now, but my kids need me so I’ll watch when they’re asleep.

I would love to record at 7pm, but its my priority to first hang out with my wife so I'll record at 10 when she naps.

I'd love to play guitar every day at 7 pm, but I'll bli neder play motzei Shabbos for the family instead by bedtime.

I'd love to watch the funny cat video my friend sent me now, but it's better to first spend time doing something together and that she'll enjoy too, so i'll watch my video later when she falls asleep.

Marriage and children are some of the biggest commitments of our life, and relationships are like flowers, without putting in the effort and the time with the right priority and focus, g-d forbid they wilt and die. This applies to all relationships not just marriage—we also need to spend time with our kids every day, playing with them, being silly with them, reading with them, etc.

Further, we should check in with friends to make sure they are doing okay, as well as with extended family, but not by taking away time from our own spouses or kids. In fact, I've had great conversations catching up with my good friends for hours, but I called once my Wife fell asleep.

Further, realize also that many of the “commitments” in our life are in essence, not real or not important.

### **Shaya Ostrov points out on ou.org that**

*There is a major problem with the explosion of technology and information overload in today's Western society. The contemporary world we live in is saturated with what a close friend of the author's has coined as **Weapons of Mass Distraction**. There is a hardly a moment when we do not feel pulled in countless directions—by our iPhones, professional commitments, interests and hobbies, social networks, and the latest headlines.*

*While many of these commitments and concerns are legitimate aspects of our lives, the overall effect creates an ongoing sense of tension that can easily become impatience, agitation, anxiety, worry and insecurity. Under these conditions we never really feel settled or peaceful within ourselves, yet we have come to consider this unsettled state of mind “normal.” We tend to worry about job security, Facebook friends, maintaining our workout schedule, the sense that life is slipping by if we don't keep up, and countless other concerns that pervade our everyday thoughts and feelings. This becomes our default and many of us are unaware that life can be any different.*

*The author explains that the answer in his eye in Menuchat Hanefesh:*

*Menuchat Hanefesh is a state of mind that empowers us to develop relationships that are deeply meaningful and fulfilling.*

*Though Menuchat Hanefesh can be literally translated as a “tranquil soul,” no single word or concept can possibly capture the complexity and depth of its meaning. When we cultivate Menuchat Hanefesh in our lives, we are learning to achieve a state of mind that is focused, clear, calm, decisive and very secure. Essentially it is the opposite of fragmentation.*

**Keeping a calm clear faced mind means to focus and prioritize who and what is most important—the spouse and the kids, then the job, family, other commitments. But first and foremost is the spouse and then kids and then the rest. Then everything can fall into order, realizing what is really the most important commitments.**

[aish.com](#) also points out on a recent article from Tod Jacobs and Dr. Peter Lynn

*First define what a marriage is: Jewish mystical sources define marriage as a unique coming together of two people, each of whom has committed to do everything possible that they can to give that other person the life that they want and deserve. Two individuals, who often could not be more different to each other, can come together with a shared set of ideals and commitment to build something together that transcends the two of them. The unity they achieve can, through thick and thin, offer a lifetime of intimacy, comfort, support, friendship and well-being.*

*The Torah view of marriage is that rather than focusing on what I can get (strange coincidence that the Hebrew word for divorce sounds the same!), my marriage will largely be defined by what I can give.*

*-Marriages don't just happen; they have to be built.*

*-You love where you give.*

*In reality, our Sages teach us that we love where we give. The more I give, the more of myself I invest into the other, the more I expand myself and find myself there. In that process, my (healthy!) love of self expands to include the other and creates real oneness. It is the complete opposite of taking, demanding, expecting... So if you really want to love your spouse, start giving and giving.*

Rabbi Blech points out on [aish.com](http://aish.com) important key points to remember, first talking about a key idea:

*Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, a famous rabbi, Talmudic scholar, and Jewish philosopher of the 20th century noted **the striking truth that love increases by giving – the more we give, the more we love.** That explains the striking anomaly that parents normally love their children more deeply than their offspring love them - not in spite of the fact that parents have done more for their children than the reverse but precisely because of it.*

### **1. Realize that Love isn't a noun, it's a verb.**

*"I'm in love" is passive. "I love you" is active. The Hebrew word for love, ahavah, has as its two-letter root the word hav (give), preceded by the letter aleph, which means "I will give." True love is far more than an emotion. Loving is doing and giving. It's acting out of concern for another's well-being. It is an affirmation of our willingness to give.*

### **2. Realize that the opposite of love isn't hate, it's indifference.**

*Elie Wiesel captured a profound truth:*

*"The opposite of art is not ugliness, it's indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy, it's indifference. And the opposite of life is not death, it's indifference. The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference."*

*Antonyms help us better understand the real meaning of words. We've established that love is a verb, an idea that needs to turn feelings into actions.*

*Let's take that a step further and identify love's greatest enemy. Marriages aren't most often destroyed by "acts of war" between partners. Like plants that need constant watering, marriages wither from lack of the basic attention human beings require to combat the fearful state of solitude.*

*That's why we don't fall out of love. We fall out of caring and sharing, out of communicating and connecting, out of recognizing the importance of taking the time to appreciate moments we have together - and then we wonder whatever happened to love!*

*Love begins with passion and thrives with perseverance. Like any important project, it can't be taken for granted. It requires constant work and effort. And its greatest enemy is indifference. Lovers don't usually go from love to hate. But they do very often go from love to boredom, from love to silence, from love to neglect and to lack of attention.*

### **3. Realize that you need to Make your love unconditional.**

*The Sages offer a profound insight into the difference between temporary and permanent love: “A love that is dependent on something – when the thing ceases, the love also ceases. But a love that is not dependent on anything never ceases (Ethics of the Fathers, 5:16).*

*Temporary love is love that is based on a particular feature of the beloved. He is rich. In time he may lose his wealth. He is strong. In time he may lose his strength. He is handsome. In time he may lose that. True love needs to build a foundation of permanence on the entire person.*

We have to understand the key essence of what it means to be involved in a commitment and what it means to properly work on our relationships with spouses, friends, and family, and our relationships with Hashem as well.

As Jews For Judaism points out on their website (an organization that strengthens and preserves Jewish identity by responding to religious coercion, promoting critical thinking skills, and providing spiritual guidance and support), on <https://www.jewsforjudaism.org/knowledge/articles/commitment/> :

*As far as slogans go the Oakland Raider NFL franchise had it right. They marketed their team to the world with the catchphrase “**Commitment to Excellence.**” By and large, the Al Davis owned club of the 70’s and 80’s lived up to that motto. Of course, “**Commitment to Excellence**” is a concept not restricted to professional sports, it is a mantra one should intone while setting out to accomplishing anything in life. In Jewish living it is an imperative.*

*For starters, commitment means loyal devotion to the cause of upholding a unique legacy in the world. Legend has it that when the Torah was revealed at Mount Sinai over 3000 years ago it was offered to the other nations of the world, as well. We are taught that ancient peoples such as the Canaanites, Babylonians, Ishmaelites, and others, were given the opportunity to accept this divinely inspired system of living. However, as representatives of these nations inquired as to what was written in this legal document they demurred. Each one had an objection. This one did not want to give up theft. The other one refused to abandon a career of bloodshed. Another did not want its immoral lifestyle to be cramped.*

*Sure enough, only one nation was willing to take the plunge, the Israelites. There are variations to this legend and diverse explanations as to exactly how the law was presented, but the gist of the story teaches a profound lesson in commitment. Regardless of ideological or ethnic background, constant challenges are imposed on a person’s independence and individual freedom while trying to fulfill tenets of one’s belief. Commitment to a cause, or spouse, often entails making uncomfortable decisions and compromises...*

*Commitment can spawn ambivalence because of its attendant assumptions. Some may assume, for example, that commitment at work means long hours and greater productivity. While to others it may mean self-sacrifice for the sake of the team. In marriage, commitment implies changing from the individual “I” to the collective “I”. In other words, making decisions with another person in mind. A Talmudic passage teaches that couples should strive to achieve the domestic tranquility symbolized by the dove. One interpretation of this metaphor is that the dove, keeps its partner for life. Secondly, a dove, like other graceful birds, is as comfortable soaring in the heavens, as it is perched on a tree limb.*

*The salient message for couples in these two explanations is one of profound consequence. Firstly, it is a commitment to stay together. In the “Throw Away” society that we live in today, we have been conditioned to think in terms of “Why bother to fix it when we can buy a newer one cheaper.” The logic follows that if it applies to automobiles, computers and clock-radios, why can’t it apply to marriages? Indeed, many liberal-minded mental-health professionals counsel married couples in precisely this fashion. Growing apart? Don’t see eye to eye anymore? Not getting enough out of the relationship? Why bother going through the trouble of working on it when dissolution is so simple? **How about remembering the dove and our vows and check to see if we are honoring our commitments before abandoning ship?***

***Judaism believes in the sanctity of the relationship, and properly nurturing it every single day.***

*Second, the dove is just as comfortable on terra firma as it is in the friendly skies. This means, as a metaphor, that one should strive to achieve in marriage a level of connection and love to one's spouse that it no longer matters who is giving and who is receiving. When both are content with either scenario, the couple knows they have reached the level of the collective "I." Marriage is not 50/50, its 100/100, everyone giving as much as possible to each other. Likewise, when there is pain and suffering for one, the other should experience it as his/her own.*

*The story is told of a great sage, whom I believe was Rabbi Aryeh Levine, the tzaddik of Yerushalayim, who lived in Israel during the first half of the previous century. He paid a visit with his wife to the podiatrist who warmly greeted the couple as they entered the office. The physician then asked the rabbi what seemed to be the problem. Without pretentiousness or hesitation the venerable sage announced, "My wife's foot is hurting us." How many of us express ourselves in daily life with this type of commitment, connection, and concern for our spouses? ...*

*Next time you ponder a new commitment, climb up that "mental diving board" with courage and conviction. Yes, commitments contain unknowns, and some warn of possible failure. It is common for people to neither jump nor climb back down the "ladder," but rather to stay stuck at the end of the board, immobilized in pros, cons, obstacles, and worries. In this state of mind, the obstacles begin to rule, obscuring the vision, blunting motivation. Life is too short to indulge in what ifs. As that eminent Civil War poet once said "Of all things said of mouth and pen the saddest indeed are 'it might have been.'"*

If we can properly incorporate the idea of what it means to really commit, to never quit, to make sure to incorporate how to give and how to prioritize our spouses, our kids, and figure out how to live out each day, then we have a real recipe for wonderful interactions and relationships, which hopefully bring real peace not only in our own homes but in the world at large.

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**Let's look at some other sources.**

[ויקרא כ"ד:ח:8](#)

He shall arrange them before the LORD regularly every sabbath day—it is a **commitment** for all time on the part of the Israelites.

[סוטה כ"א א:י"ג:13](#)

Due to his continued **commitment** to the Torah, when the time comes for him to die, it is clear to him that he will go to the place of his eternal reward.

[בבא מציעא מ"ט א:ו:6](#)

It is prohibited for one to make a **commitment** that he has no intention of fulfilling. Rav Kahana made his **commitment** in good faith and reneged due to changed circumstances. That is not prohibited.

***PTC. We are no strangers to commitment especially in the Judaic lifestyle. Make sure to rise up and own up to commitments and to fulfill them right. IF you can't do it the whole way, the right way, don't do it at all.***

[בבא מציעא מ"ט א:ז:7](#)

But with regard to one who reneges on his **commitment**, the Sages are displeased with him. Apparently, one who reneges is considered to have acted in bad faith.

[הטור הארוך, שמות י"ט:ט:2](#)

Subsequently, Moses confirmed to G'd that the people had indeed made such a **commitment**, i.e. that this had been their intention already when they had said that all G'd had commanded they would do.

[Tur HaAroch, Deuteronomy 18:17:1](#)

“they have done well in what they have said.” They did well to believe in the prophet, and therefore I will continue to relate to them by means of prophets in the future, also. It is possible to interpret that when the Israelites undertook to accept Moses as an intermediary and they promised obedience to what he would instruct them to do in the name of Hashem, that Moses here implies that he viewed this as a commitment which would remain in effect for their relationship with future prophets, also.

***PTC. Live up to our credo as a people when we first got the Torah: “Nasseh vinishmeh.” First do, then talk/hear/think about it later. Commit to do and worry about details later, especially when asked by a spouse to take care of something.***

[Chizkuni, Deuteronomy 20:5:1](#)

אשר בנה, “who has built;” the Torah here teaches the correct order in which young men are to approach the subject of matrimony; first they have to make a commitment to the woman they have chosen; then they have to provide for their bride a place to live in; then they have to establish a sound economic base, such as planting a vineyard. Having done so, they may proceed to complete the wedding ceremonies. The reason why such people are excused from fighting in an expansionary war, is that their worries about if they will be able to complete their plans for the future will distract them from performing their military duties to the best of their abilities. They will worry that in spite of promises from G-d they may be or have been guilty of sins which will be used by G-d to withdraw His protection from them when they are facing danger.

***PTC. Fulfill your commitments in the right way and do things in the proper order—FIRST take care of your spouse, then your kids then yourself. Order your days and life in the right way, attacking one thing at a time in the proper manner, i.e. feed wife first then kids then self***

[Kav HaYashar 39:3](#)

...If a person behaved righteously and feared Hashem continually, if he clung to Him lovingly every day and was whole in his commitment to Torah, fear of Heaven, mitzvos and good deeds, then all his days will be crowned and garbed with splendor and majesty.

[Or HaChaim on Genesis 3:6:5'ה'י'ג'י'על בראשית](#)

We find a parallel to such considerations when we consider how many covenants G'd concluded with the Jewish people to ensure that they would not go back on their **commitment** to observe the Torah....G'd did not consider it sufficient to just give the commandments to the Jewish people without creating a legal device to make the **commitment** irrevocable.

[Maaseh Nissim on Pesach Haggadah, Magid, Dayenu 2:1](#)

God's judgments of others and His acts on behalf of the Jewish people made it clear to the whole world that we are “the children of the living God.” By simply performing these acts of judgments, then, God made it so that no matter what happened He was committed to Israel.

[Shaar HaEmunah Ve'Yesod HaChassidut, Entrance to the Gate of Beit Yaakov 1:2, החסידות ויסוד האמונה](#)  
[פתח השער לבית יעקב א'ב'](#)

In Judaism, in general, faith is not necessarily an abstract feeling or concept, but a level of stability and unwavering **commitment**, in the sense of “faithfulness.”

[Major Themes in Modern Philosophies of Judaism, CHAPTER 4; Faith and Law 2:4; מרכזיים](#)

[בפילוסופיה היהודית המודרנית, פרק ד; אמונה ומשפט ב'ד'](#)

Living one's own life authentically demands that the existentialist **commitment** issue into action. But only faith, i.e. affirmation without action, is purely individual.

[Machzor Rosh Hashanah Ashkenaz Linear, The Morning Prayers, First Day of Rosh Hashana, Recitation of Shema 113](#) [מחזור לראש השנה - אשכנז, תפילת שחרית, יום ראשון של ראש השנה, קריאת שמע ק"ג](#)

The Jew declares his **commitment** to Hashem, and states that His precepts are not forced upon him. On the contrary, they are beloved, cherished, delightful and pleasant to him.

[Flames of Faith 15:46](#) [שלהבות של אמונה ט"ו:מ"ו](#)

When we withstand evil's attractions we give God great joy... We are fulfilling our **commitment** to him that we accepted with birth when we swore to be a tzaddik.

[From David to Destruction, Yarav'am ben Nevat and the Splitting of the Kingdom, Underappreciated Asa 22](#) [מדוד ועד לחורבן, ירבעם בן נבט וחלוקת הממלכה, אסא הבלתי מוערך דיו כ"ב](#)

We must always grow in our **commitment** to Hashem and His Torah, and never be satisfied with merely maintaining the spiritual status quo.

**PTC. Live up to our commitments to Hashem and others as he does to us, and make sure to put commitments into action, as relationships and commitments need tending to on a constant basis**

[From David to Destruction, Eliyahu HaNavi and the Drought of Faith, Dancing Between Two Opinions 14](#)

*However, our relationship with Hashem is not based on mere compliance and obedience. A relationship, as opposed to compliance with a loan payment agreement, is meaningless without full commitment. Our commitment to Hashem is compared in Shir HaShirim (and elsewhere in Tanach) to a relationship between spouses. Any reasonable spouse finds it completely unacceptable for his or her partner to be less than completely devoted to their marriage. Partial spousal devotion is equivalent to a complete lack of spousal devotion... Hashem expects unwavering **commitment**, just as a spouse demands and deserves unconditional loyalty, not one born simply of crass opportunism.*

**PTC. We must be completely devoted to Hashem, as well as to our spouses, full throttle ahead. We must be in our best selves, giving our time, energy, attention, resources, and shared time with our spouses and with Hashem living a life the right Torah way.**

[From David to Destruction, Eliyahu HaNavi Ascends, Elisha's Outstanding Request 17](#)

It is enormously important for a Jew to harbor high ambitions. Elisha does not think small. When faced with an impromptu last request for Eliyahu HaNavi, Elisha makes a great appeal. When given the opportunity, Elisha makes an immediate grand request to facilitate his new role as Eliyahu HaNavi's successor. We should emulate Elisha's high ambitions and aspire to double our commitment to Judaism, our impact on our communities, and on the broader world.

[From David to Destruction, Malchei Yehudah; Achaz, Chizkiyahu, and Menashe, Understanding, But Not Justifying Menashe 20](#) [מדוד ועד לחורבן, מלכי יהודה; אחז, חזקיהו ומנשה, להבין אך לא להצדיק את מנשה כ"י](#)

Instead, we should leave with the sober message that if we do not maintain high standards and remain steadfast in our **commitment** and adherence to the Torah, we too can easily slip...

**PTC. We must harbor grand ideas of what our commitments can look like and try as hard as we can to fulfill and emulate that ideal, especially in our relationships with Hashem and with spouses**

[Gray Matter II, Beit Din, Lifnim Mishurat Hadin, Acting Beyond the Letter of the Law 29](#)

The great importance of acting beyond the letter of the law is clear. In fact, the Gemara ([Berachot 7a](#)) states that God prays that He should act *lifnim mishurat hadin*. Rav Walter Wurzberger (*Ethics of Responsibility* p. 32) reports that Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik once said, "Halachah is not a ceiling but a floor." Similarly, Rav Aharon Lichtenstein writes, "Traditional halachic Judaism demands of the Jew both adherence to Halachah and commitment to an ethical moment that, though different from Halachah, is nevertheless of a piece with it and in its own way fully imperative" (*Leaves of Faith* 2:52). Rav Yitzchak Herzog (*Techumin* 7:278-279) vigorously argues with some (unidentified) non-Jewish writers who assert

that rigid law represents the Jewish ideal of justice. Rav Herzog insists that *lifnim mishurat hadin*, an expression of kindness within our legal framework, characterizes our true ideal.

***PTC. WE must go above and beyond for our relationships, our commitments, our spouses and Hashem. The standard itself is not good enough is not gold enough, is not the ideal. Go further than required be truly kind and generous and Chessed oriented for others, especially the spouse and of course Hashem.***

[Gray Matter IV, Non Observant Jews, Inviting a Non Observant Jew for a Shabbat or Yom Tov Meal](#)  
גריי מאטר ד, יהודים שאינם שומרי מצוות, הזמנת יהודי שאינו שומר מצוות לסעודת שבת או יום טוב א'י

A positive spiritual impact is enormous, as outreach professionals agree that seeing a joyous family experience a peak Torah event such as a Yom Tov meal has motivated many to increase their level of **commitment**

[Peninei Halakhah, Festivals 1:1:3](#)

We are commanded to sanctify these days. We do this by not working then, by studying Torah, by rejoicing in the festival, and by thanking God for all the good that He has given us. All this leads us to remember the Lord, our God, Who chose us from among all the nations, gave us His Torah, sanctified us with His mitzvot, drew us close to His service, and called us by His great and holy name. In this way we transcend our daily lives and mundane activities. We improve ourselves by perfecting our character and purifying our heart; we strengthen our commitment to Torah and mitzvot; and we recall our vital mission – repairing the world under the sovereignty of the Almighty.

[Redeeming Relevance; Genesis 6:28ה"כ](#)

Not only does Yehudah stress his personal responsibility for Binyamin to his father, he displays a high level of credibility in his **commitment** to live up to it.

[Contemporary Halakhic Problems, Vol II, Part I, Chapter I Sabbath and Festivals 25](#), בעיות הלכתיות עכשוויות, כרך ב, חלק ראשון, פרק א: שבת ומועדים כ"ה

Information regarding the mizvah of Sabbath lights has received wide dissemination and the mizvah itself has become potent neshek in inspiring greater **commitment** to Torah observance.

[Peninei Halakhah, Shabbat 5:15:2](#)

“R. Yitzhak stated: One must visit his rabbi on the three pilgrimage festivals” (RH 16b). This is in order to strengthen his connection to the rabbi, as a result of which he will strengthen his commitment to Torah and mitzvot.

***PTC. Make sure to surround yourself with positive role models and examples of good relationships and good sticking to commitment—i.e. loving couples who have the gold standard, a Talmud chacham adhering to a torah study regiment, seeing what a beautiful yom tov or Shabbos meal really looks like, etc.***

[Peninei Halakhah, Zemanim 14:1:2](#) א'ב'י'ד' א'זמנים י"ד

The greater our faith and our **commitment** to Torah, the closer we bring the ultimate redemption, when all evil will turn into good, and when joy will abound in the world.

[Shabbat Siddur Sefard Linear, The Morning Prayers, Recitation of Shema 113](#) תפלת שידור ספרד לשבת, שחרית, קריאת שמע קי"ג

The Jew declares his **commitment** to God, and states that His precepts are not forced upon him. On the contrary, they are beloved, cherished, delightful and pleasant to him.

[Contemporary Halakhic Problems, Vol IV, Introduction 25](#) ה"ה מבוא כ"ה, כרך ד, בעיות הלכתיות עכשוויות, כרך ד

Integral to the **commitment** for which we must strive is recognition and acceptance of the divine nature of the Halakhah in its entirety and its status as a self-contained value system.

[English Explanation of Pirkei Avot 4:5:1'א':ד':ה' אבות ד' משנה אבות ד' אגלי על](#)

However, one who learns in order to practice, which is an even higher **commitment**, is rewarded by even having the opportunity to practice the commandments.

[Redeeming Relevance; Deuteronomy, CHAPTER 8 The Bittersweet Song פרק 8, פדיון הרלוונטיות על דברים, שמיני ל"ב](#)

Our closest relationships should entail a deep, primal **commitment**. One will sometimes help his children for no other reason than the connection which exists between parent and child.

[Redeeming Relevance; Deuteronomy, CHAPTER 4 The Shema and all that Jazz 32](#)

The commitment required from the *nation* can be boiled down to two verses in the middle of this section: “Now, Israel, what does the Lord, your God, demand from you except to fear the Lord, your God, to walk in His ways and to love Him, and to serve the Lord, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the *mitzvot* of the Lord and His *chukim*, which I command you this day for your good? (Devarim 10:12–13). These essentially speak of a proper attitude toward God and complete obedience to His will.

**PTC. We must realize and internalize and act upon the fact that our relationships and commitments are not something that we are just tied down to or forced upon us G-d forbid, we must have the proper attitude about them and accept them and cherish them and be involved with them with delight, pleasantness, and good action and deed**

### **IN HONOR OF THE UPCOMING PURIM HOLIDAY**

*This past week's Haftarah focuses in on what it means to not fulfill a commitment. Hashem tasks Shaul the king through Shmuel the Navi/Prophet to wipe out Agag, a descendant of Amalek and the ancestor of Haman. Shaul fulfills much of the task, but he spared Agag himself, and the animals as well.*

### [Samuel I: 15](#)

Saul destroyed Amalek from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is close to Egypt, and he captured King Agag of Amalek alive. He proscribed all the people, putting them to the sword; **but Saul and the troops spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the second-born, the lambs, and all else that was of value. They would not proscribe them; they proscribed only what was cheap and worthless.** The word of the LORD then came to Samuel: “I regret that I made Saul king, for he has turned away from Me and has not carried out My commands.” Samuel was distressed and he entreated the LORD all night long. Early in the morning Samuel went to meet Saul. Samuel was told, “Saul went to Carmel, where he erected a monument for himself; then he left and went on down to Gilgal.” When Samuel came to Saul, Saul said to him, “Blessed are you of the LORD! I have fulfilled the LORD’s command.” **“Then what,” demanded Samuel, “is this bleating of sheep in my ears, and the lowing of oxen that I hear?”** Saul answered, “They were brought from the Amalekites, for the troops spared the choicest of the sheep and oxen for sacrificing to the LORD your God. And we proscribed the rest.” Samuel said to Saul, “Stop! Let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night!” “Speak,” he replied. And Samuel said, “You may look small to yourself, but you are the head of the tribes of Israel. The LORD anointed you king over Israel, and the LORD sent you on a mission, saying, ‘Go and proscribe the sinful Amalekites; make war on them until you have exterminated them.’ Why did you disobey the LORD and swoop down on the spoil in defiance of the LORD’s will?” Saul said to Samuel, “But I did obey the LORD! I performed the mission on which the LORD sent me: I captured King Agag of Amalek, and I proscribed Amalek, and the troops took from the spoil some sheep and oxen—the best of what had been proscribed—to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal.” **But Samuel said: “Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and**

**sacrifices As much as in obedience to the LORD's command? Surely, obedience is better than sacrifice, Compliance than the fat of rams.**

**PTC. Make sure to give in a way that benefits and is proper for the spouse and others. Don't give or do what you think they need or want, do and give what they really need or want.**

[The Artscroll Stone Chumash notes on the Haftorah of Parshas Zachor](#) point out that

*The original Amalek was the grandson of Esav and it was he who carried on his grandfathers legacy of hatred for the Jewish people. Only weeks after the exodus from Egypt Amalek made the first sneak attack from the exodus when they were weak and vulnerable... We read Zachor to commemorate that attack, and the decree to wipe the evil of Amalek and its people and ideology from the Earth.*

*Haman was a descendant of Agag, from the Chapter of Samuel I and the Haftorah of this past Shabbos.*

*The Artscroll notes further point out that*

*It is noteworthy that one of the beneficiaries of King Saul's misplaced compassion was Agag, the ancestor of Haman. The sages teach that Agag's wife conceived after the war during which Saul should have killed him but did not and that's how Haman came into being centuries later and came to threaten the very existence of the Jewish people. Those who question how the G-d of mercy could order the execution of "Blameless" people should take note: Saul's pity on Agag led to the near extermination of the Jewish people by Haman.*

**PTC. Don't have misplaced compassion or lack fulfilling the commitment to your spouse or kids. Don't have more compassion for those around you than for your own family, and don't have more compassion for animals or materials than for your own flesh and blood. Don't leave a commitment half done, fulfill it all the way, especially for your wife and kids. If you say you'll take out the garbage, don't bring it to the door and leave it there.**

[Peninei Halakhah, Zemanim 15:2](#)

*If we delve deeper, we will see that Haman's decree actually stirred the singular quality, the segula, of the Jewish people. The decree made it clear that the Jewish people were willing to make great sacrifices in order to hold onto their faith. After all, they could have assimilated among the gentiles and saved themselves from annihilation. Nevertheless, they did not try to escape their Jewish destiny. On the contrary, the decree inspired them to repent and strengthen their faith and commitment to the Torah and the mitzvot.*

*The events of Purim were so momentous that the Sages stated that Israel accepted the Torah anew at the time of Ahashverosh. In a certain sense, their renewed commitment at that time was greater than their original acceptance of the Torah on Mount Sinai. When the Torah was first given, Israel was forced to accept it, as it says, "They took their places at the foot of the mountain" ([Shemot 19:17](#)). **The Sages comment (Shabbat 88a):***

*This teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, overturned the mountain upon them like a cask, and said to them, "If you accept the Torah – good; if not – here shall be your burial." R. Aha b. Yaakov said, "This furnishes a strong protest against the Torah" (since they accepted the Torah under duress, they are not obligated to uphold it). Rava said, "Even so, they re-accepted it at the time of Ahashverosh, as it says, 'The Jews upheld and accepted upon themselves' ([Esther 9:27](#)) – that is, they confirmed what they had accepted long before."*

*...That is when it became clear that the people of Israel's connection to their faith and to the Torah were absolute. The terrible decree made it clear that the price of belief might be unbearable, but the Jews still chose to adhere to their faith, repent, and pray to God, without any coercion. Not only did they return to observe the 613 mitzvot, they even instituted additional mitzvot after they were saved: the mitzvot of Purim.*

**PTC. We should constantly re affirm recommit and re strengthen our commitment to our roles and relationships in life in the proper and right way especially to Hashem and to our spouses**

**Points To Carryover:**

**-We are no strangers to commitment especially in the Judaic lifestyle. Make sure to rise up and own up to commitments and to fulfill them right. If you can't do it the whole way, the right way, don't do it at all.**

**-Live up to our credo as a people when we first got the Torah: "Nasseh vinishmeh." First do, then talk/hear/think about it later. Commit to do and worry about details later, especially when asked by a spouse to take care of something.**

**-Fulfill your commitments in the right way and do things in the proper order—FIRST take care of your spouse, then your kids then yourself. Order your days and life in the right way, attacking one thing at a time in the proper manner, i.e. feed wife first then kids then self**

**-Live up to our commitments to Hashem and others as he does to us, and make sure to put commitments into action, as relationships and commitments need tending to on a constant basis**

**-We must be completely devoted to Hashem, as well as to our spouses, full throttle ahead. We must be in our best selves, giving our time, energy, attention, resources, and shared time with our spouses and with Hashem living a life the right Torah way.**

**-We must harbor grand ideas of what our commitments can look like and try as hard as we can to fulfill an emulate that ideal, especially in our relationships with Hashem and with spouses**

**-We must go above and beyond for our relationships, our commitments, our spouses and Hashem. The standard itself is not good enough is not gold enough, is not the ideal. Go further than required be truly kind and generous and Chessed oriented for others, especially the spouse and of course Hashem.**

**-Make sure to surround yourself with positive role models and examples of good relationships and good sticking to commitment—i.e. loving couples who have the gold standard, a Talmud chacham adhering to a torah study regiment seeing what a beautiful yom tov or a Shabbos meal really looks like etc.**

**-We must realize and internalize and act upon the fact that our relationships and commitments are not something that we are just tied down to or forced upon us G-d forbid, we must have the proper attitude about them and accept them and cherish them and be involved with them with delight, pleasantness, and good action and deed**

**-Make sure to give in a way that benefits and is proper for the spouse and others. Don't give or do what you think they need or want, do and give give what they really need or want. Ie not a robot vacuum when you're help is more needed**

**-Don't have misplaced compassion or lack fulfilling the commitment to your spouse or kids. Don't have more compassion for those around you than for your own family, and don't have more**

**compassion for animals or materials than for your own flesh and blood. Don't leave a commitment half done, fulfill it all the way, especially for your wife and kids. IF you say you'll take out the garbage, don't bring it to the door and leave it.**

**-We should constantly re affirm recommit and re strengthen our commitment to our roles and relationships in life in the proper and right way especially to Hashem and to our spouses**