



Eternal Connections

BUILDING
OLAM HABA AWARENESS

Mitzvos are opportunities

What Will I Tell My Father?

Milan, Italy – Over one hundred years ago, a wealthy Jew was riding in his horse-drawn carriage one Friday, when he noticed Rabbi Lipa Kalashefsky, a *meshulach* from Yerushalayim, wandering through the streets.

“*Shalom Aleichem*,” he called. “What is a Jew like you doing in Milan?” Rabbi Kalashefsky introduced himself and then explained that he was looking for the Jewish quarter, in the hope that he would find a place to stay for Shabbos.

“Please, Reb Lipa, stay with us for Shabbos. We would be honored to have you,” said the wealthy man, whose name was Mr. Hilvicht.

Mr. Hilvicht helped Reb Lipa into the carriage, and the two men traveled together to the Hilvicht mansion. Once there, Reb Lipa was shown to the guest quarters, and he happily began to prepare for Shabbos.

During the Shabbos *seudah*, Reb Lipa looked around at his sumptuous surroundings and was impressed by the beautiful crystal, gold and silver items displayed in the ornate cabinet in the dining room. Suddenly, Reb Lipa noticed something strange on the middle shelf.

It was a plain-looking, broken glass flask, hardly an appropriate fit considering the other items displayed. “If you don’t mind my curiosity,” Reb Lipa addressed his host quietly, “that broken flask seems out of place. Is there a reason it’s there?”

“It’s a long story. If you like, I will be happy to tell it to you,” he replied. And then he began his fascinating tale.

“I was born in Amsterdam, but when I was 18 years old, my grandfather, who lived here in Italy, wrote to my parents that his health was failing, and he needed someone to come to help in his store for a while.

“My parents agreed to send me, thinking it would be advantageous for me to get some business experience, while

helping my grandfather at the same time. Within a few months, my grandfather took a turn for the worse, and I was tending to the business myself by day, and reporting to my grandfather at night. A few weeks later, he passed away.

“My parents wanted me to liquidate the business and return to Amsterdam, but I had gotten a taste of the business world and asked for permission to stay on for a bit.

“To everyone’s surprise, I began to do very well. The customers liked me, and I was selling more merchandise than my grandfather ever had. I wrote to my parents that I planned to remain in Italy.

“Soon, I opened a second branch of the store. I was busy day and night. One afternoon, I was so involved in my work that I didn’t *daven Minchah*. Then, I started to miss *Shacharis* too. In time, my observance of other *mitzvos* fell by the wayside.

“Eventually I married and built a family. I became very wealthy, and while I remembered that I was Jewish, I did not practice anything.

“One afternoon, I was walking in the street when I passed a young Jewish boy who was crying bitterly. Several friends gathered around the boy, who, between sobs, kept repeating: ‘What will I tell my father? What will I tell my father?’

“I walked over to the boys and asked what had happened; perhaps there was something I could do to help. The boys explained that their friend came from a very poor family. His father had carefully saved up throughout the winter to buy a flask of oil for Chanukah. This afternoon, he sent his little boy to buy the oil, warning him to come straight home afterward and not to stop and play with his friends, lest the bottle break. Upon passing his friends, the boy could not resist joining in their fun, and sure enough, the bottle broke and the oil spilled out. I looked with compassion at the little boy who was still whimpering, ‘What will I tell my father?’ and offered to walk

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back with him to the store, where I bought him a much bigger flask of oil than the original one. I told him to be careful and then sent him on his way, watching as he joyfully and carefully walked down the street.

“But as I walked home myself, the little boy’s words rang in my ear. ‘What will I tell my father?’ I thought to myself, *what will I tell my Father – my Father in Heaven – after 120 years?* I had drifted so far that I had forgotten it was almost Chanukah!

“I walked back to where the children had been playing and gathered up the broken flask and pieces of glass and took them home with me. That night, I lit a Chanukah candle and continued to do so for the rest of the holiday, remembering my parents’ home in Amsterdam. That Chanukah was the beginning of my return to full observance, and my family followed along. Our road back started with that broken flask and the boy’s words, ‘What will I tell my father?’ I keep that flask as a treasured reminder of the event that changed my life.”

(Rabbi Paysach Krohn, *Echoes of the Maggid*, Artscroll Publications, pages 135-139)

What will we tell our Father in Heaven when we stand before Him on the Final Day of Judgment?

Take This Home

When faced with a choice, or challenge or opportunity today, pose this question to yourself: What will I tell my Father? Will I be embarrassed about my actions or decisions? Will I be proud of what I did? Will He?

רב ישעיה בן ר' משה

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In Short

The Chafetz Chayim would say:

All the modern inventions – cameras, telephones, other new devices – were created to strengthen our *emunah*. They help us understand how Hakadosh Baruch Hu sees all our actions and records them.

It Happened to Me!

My Olam Haba Moment

This past Sunday afternoon I walked through the door of my house when the phone rang. It was the jewelry store, letting me know my bracelet repair was ready. The jewelry store?! I couldn’t believe it. I had literally just arrived home from the shopping center in which that store was located. I was so tired, and my children needed my attention. Why, why couldn’t they have called a few minutes earlier? Why hadn’t I thought to pop into that store before getting into my car for the drive home?

And then I remembered something that helped reframe my frustration. The Gemara tells us to see a minor discomfort as a gift. Hashem acts with *rachmanus*, and instead of giving us harsh punishments, he divides the punishments we deserve into small pieces – minor problems, inconveniences, and irritations. I would rather suffer these slight pains in *Olam Hazei* than suffer greatly in *Olam Haba*! It’s not, “Typical! Why do these things always happen to me?” Instead, it’s, “Hashem is sending me this gift with love.”

– D.W.

Share how Olam Haba awareness is making a difference in your life. Send your story to EternalConnections@ChevrahLomdeiMishnah.org.