



Eternal Connections

BUILDING
OLAM HABA AWARENESS

Mitzvos are opportunities

A Debt Repaid

A certain couple in Pressburg operated a successful business and contributed generously to the Pressburg Yeshivah. The wife created a fund specifically to pay students of the yeshivah to recite *Kaddish* for people who had passed away without anyone to say it for them.

When the husband passed away, the business quickly declined, leaving his widow with no means of support. To make matters worse, she did not have a penny with which to marry off her two daughters.

The brokenhearted woman went to the K'sav Sofer and told him of her sad plight. She conveyed that she had faith that Hashem would provide her with the money she needed for her family, but she was concerned that the recital of *Kaddish* would be discontinued. She tearfully pleaded with the K'sav Sofer to continue to fund the practice, and she promised to repay the money when her situation improved. The K'sav Sofer was greatly moved by her request and readily agreed to do as she had asked.

As the woman walked home, she was startled by the sudden appearance of a very dignified elderly gentleman with a long white beard. She was surprised when he struck up a friendly conversation with her, politely inquiring as to how she was managing financially. When she told him of her sad situation, he asked her how much she needed to marry off her daughters. Bewildered by the entire conversation, the woman delineated the large sum. The man drew out his checkbook, wrote a check for the full amount, and told her that it could be cashed at the local bank. The man suggested, though, that he sign the check in the presence of two witnesses, since the sum was quite large, and the bank might accuse the woman of forging the check.

The two went to the Pressburg Yeshivah, where they asked two *bachurim*, one of whom would grow up to become the great Rav Yosef Chayim Sonnenfeld, to serve as witnesses. The man signed the check in their presence, gave the boys another slip of paper bearing his signature as an added assurance, and then hurried away.

The dazed woman immediately went to the bank to cash the check. As expected, the teller needed to clear her request with the bank owner. The owner took one look at the check and collapsed in a faint. After being revived, the shaken banker asked that the woman be brought into his office. There, he asked her if she could identify the man who had written the check. She answered that she could and added that two students of the yeshivah had seen the man and could testify as to the veracity of his signature. The banker withdrew several photographs from a drawer, one of which the woman immediately identified as that of the man who had given her the check. The banker then ordered the teller to give the woman the money.

In a trembling voice the banker said, "The man who gave you the check was my father, who has been dead for ten years! Last night, my father appeared to me in a dream and said, 'I want you to know that from the day you departed from the path of Torah and married a gentile woman and stopped saying *Kaddish* for me, my soul knew no rest. Then a certain woman arranged to have *Kaddish* said for me by a student of the yeshivah, and my soul finally found peace. Tomorrow, this woman will come to your bank with a check that I am going to give her to cover the wedding expenses for her two daughters.'

"When I awoke this morning, I was shaken by my dream. I related it to my

wife, who assured me that it was pure nonsense. But now, the dream has come true before my eyes."

The banker subsequently returned to the path of Torah, becoming a complete *ba'al teshuvah*. His wife became a sincere convert, and together they raised a fine, religious family.

(Rabbi Shimon Finkelman, *The Story of Reb Yosef Chaim*, pages 34-36, ArtScroll/Mesorah Publications.)

Clearly, the recital of Kaddish, in which we are *m'kadeish Hashem's Name in public, does something very powerful in Shamayim!*

Take This Home

If you will be *davening b'tzibbur* today, before at least one Kaddish, savor the special opportunity you have to be *m'kadeish Sheim Shamayim*. Say it slowly and with feeling. You have just done something very special!

If you will not have the chance to do so, is there another way you can make a *kiddush Hashem* today? When you do, rejoice in the chance you have to do this great mitzvah.

In Short

Chazal tell us that the mourner is not the only one in *aveilus*. The *neshamah* is an *aveil* for itself... the *neshamah* is now coming to grips with the fact that it can no longer perform *mitzvos*, it can no longer get any *zechuyos*, and whatever station it's at now, that's the station it will be at forever and ever. Not only that, but we know that it is in the Next World where a person experiences the judgments, tribulations and recompense for his behavior in this world... It's a very trying time for the *neshamah*.

The *aveil* is able...through the *mitzvos* that he does, through the Torah that he learns and causes to be learned, to help the *neshamah* attain comfort and protection and actually accrue more and more merit.

(Rabbi Tzvi Hebel, "Comforting the True Aveil: Bringing Aliyah to the Neshamah." *To Comfort and Be Comforted*, Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah Publications, page 288.)

It Happened to Me!

My Olam Haba Moment

Night after night, my son was giving me a really hard time about getting to sleep. His behavior was eating up hours of my time, and the end result was that he was not getting enough sleep – which impacted his behavior during the day. One night, I was just so frustrated and exhausted, and I totally lost it with him.

Later, as I replayed images of the night's fiasco, I was mortified. How could I have acted like that? How could I have said those things? I found myself imagining how I would feel upon being made to watch a replay of myself up in *Shamayim*. *I never want to see what I looked like then*, I thought. I once saw somewhere that our punishment in the Next World will be our extreme mortification and remorse when viewing our mistakes and *aveiros*.

Reminding myself that there's a recording of whatever I'm doing is helping me stay on a better track.

לע"נ בלימה בת שמואל יהודה הלוי

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