

EC

# Eternal Connections

BUILDING  
OLAM HABA AWARENESS

Mitzvos are opportunities

## It's Worth It

Naftali was already enrolled in university in his native England when he decided to go learn in Yeshivas Kfar Chassidim in Eretz Yisrael. His plan was to stay in the yeshiva for one year and then return home to continue preparing for his future career. As the year drew to a close, Naftali received several letters from his parents reminding him that it would soon be time for him to return home. Wishing more than anything to remain in the yeshiva, Naftali turned to his revered Mashgiach, Harav Elyah Lopian, for advice.

Reb Elyah was warm and wise and knew how to speak to the parents of his *talmidim*. But Naftali's parents were insistent that he return to England, where they could discuss the matter with their son in person. Realizing he had no choice, Naftali packed his bags and went to say goodbye to his *rebbe*. He did not know when – or if – he would ever return.

Reb Elyah greeted his *talmid* warmly and then shared with him the following story:

It was during WWI, and Reb Elyah, along with many others, had been drafted into the Russian army. Most families, lacking funds and requiring help at home, brought their sons home from the far-off yeshivas where they were learning.

Rebbetzin Lopian, however, insisted that, no matter what, she would not bring her sons home. She was adamant that nothing in the world was more important to her than their Torah learning.

With no men or boys to help her, the Rebbetzin struggled to manage her many responsibilities. But she performed her chores with joy, knowing that it was with these efforts that she was enabling her sons to remain in yeshiva.

One day, some of her neighbors were standing nearby as she clumsily attempted to milk the cow. "Why don't you bring your boys home already? The rest of us have all done so. What more will it take?" they demanded.

Rebbetzin Lopian stood up and replied, "Do you want to know why I do this? After 120 years, when I move on to the next world, I will walk into the room where our *Imahos* and Chavah are sitting, and I will take my rightful place among the other *nashim tzidkaniyos* of Klal Yisrael. A *malach* who is appointed to admit only those who are deserving might try to stop me, but I will tell him to look down below and see the *bnei Torah* that are my children and grandchildren.

"So, if you want to know if it is worth it, my answer is, 'Yes!' I can manage without my children's help now. But I will need their help then, when I want to enter Gan Eden. Keeping my children in yeshiva is the most worthwhile decision I can make."

Reb Elyah kissed his *talmid* goodbye and suggested he share this story with his parents.

Indeed, when Naftali's parents heard the story of Rebbetzin Lopian, they decided that they too wanted their child to open the gates of Gan Eden for them. Naftali soon returned to the yeshiva.

(Rabbi Yechiel Spero, *Touched by the Seder*, pages 104-106, ArtScroll/Mesorah Publications.)

**Keeping our eyes on the goal can help us make the best choices for our *ruchniyus* and encourage us to push on when we face challenges great and small.**

## Take This Home

The Chofetz Chaim discusses at length the idea that Torah study is the prime means of preparing and enlarging one's share in Olam Haba (see *sefer Toras Habayis*).

Can you think of a way to increase your investment in Torah study today?

- Learn something extra.
- Increase your learning time – start five minutes earlier or end five minutes later.
- Donate to support *talmidei chachamim*.
- Resolve not to disturb when your husband/father/son/brother is learning.

## In Short

In *sefer Shem Olam*, the Chafetz Chayim writes some vital and sobering truths:

Know, furthermore, that even one who has learned much and covered everything except for one section of Torah — for example, he learned five out of the six Orders of the Mishnah — will experience profound distress over this lack! ...someone [who neglected to learn a particular portion during his lifetime] will still be anguishing over his loss thousands of years later! In the eternal existence of the Upper Spheres, whenever these topics [featured in his missing section] come up in the course of learned discussion, he will be "like a mute who does not open his mouth" (*Tehillim* 38:14).

A person who considers this should be motivated to ensure that his time does not go to waste, so that nothing from his *cheilek* in Torah will go eternally missing.

(Rabbi Tzvi Hebel, *Living with Olam Haba*, Judaica Press, page 54.)

## It Happened to Me!

### My Olam Haba Moment

I had arranged to take my daughter to a special, once-a-season clothing sale that was by appointment only. I made babysitting arrangements for the younger children and prepared supper earlier in the day. Then my four-year-old got a deep cut. Hatzolah bandaged it but thought he would probably need stitches. Several minutes later, my husband walked in, with a few minutes to spare before he was to start with his *chavrusa*. When he heard what was going on, he immediately offered to take my son to the hospital instead of me.

I wavered. I was already wrung out from the afternoon's events, I was not looking forward to an extended wait in the emergency room, and I was so frustrated that my plans for the afternoon were falling apart. But I knew that if my husband would go, it would be at the expense of his afternoon *chavrusas*. It was not an easy or quick decision. But I knew that the Torah he could learn that afternoon could never be replaced. I took my son for the stitches myself, and I gained something precious that afternoon, something that I'll have for eternity.

לע"נ בלימה בת שמואל יהודה הלוי

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