



Eternal Connections

BUILDING
OLAM HABA AWARENESS

Mitzvos are opportunities

Grab and Eat, Grab and Drink

The famed *maggid*, Rav Yaakov Galinsky, would relate that as a young child he was quite rambunctious. His father decided to send him away to the Novardok yeshivah in Bialystok, which was well-known for its emphasis on character improvement.

When Rav Yaakov entered the *mashgiach's* office to gain admittance to the yeshivah, the *mashgiach* discerned his potential, but noted his spirited nature as well.

"Young man," the *mashgiach* told the young Yaakov. "You can't just be admitted to the yeshivah. You need to learn *mussar* to refine yourself. Go learn some *mussar* and then come back."

Not easily discouraged, Rav Yaakov left the yeshivah and began looking for a place to learn. It was dark outside by the time he entered a small *shul*, which appeared empty. But then he noticed a small candle flickering at the front of the room and a sweet voice coming from that direction. He walked closer and saw a young man chanting the words of the Gemara: "*Chatof ve'echol, chatof ve'ishte d'alma d'azlinan minei k'hilula damei*" – Grab and eat, grab and drink, because this world that we will [eventually] leave is like a wedding (*Eruvin 54a*). The young man chanted the words over and over again with great feeling. The message penetrated. Young Yaakov understood: This world is like a wedding. If you don't come on time to the wedding and take something to eat and drink while you can, you'll miss your chance. Soon the wedding will end, and the food will be cleared away.

Rav Yaakov left the *shul* a changed person, and went on to lead a remarkable life, inspiring thousands of people with his wisdom, insight and targeted lessons.

Who was the young man sitting in that dark *shul*, who inspired young Yaakov? It was none other than Harav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, the Steipler Gaon, father of Harav Chaim Kanievsky.

(Rabbi Dov Weller, *The Eishes Chayil Yamim Noraim Treasury*, Artscroll Publications, page 35)

We're all here for a short time. Shouldn't the words of the Gemara chanted by the Steipler change our lives?

לע"נ יוסף אברהם בן משה הלוי

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Take This Home

What are we doing with the precious, limited opportunities we have here on this world? If you find yourself about to turn down a mitzvah today – the chance to wash and *bentch*; give someone a ride; go the extra mile for a parent or spouse – stop and think: I want to grab the mitzvah while I still have the chance.

In Short

"When a person is *niftar*, he's transformed from being a *mehaleich* into being an *omeid*. He's accomplished much, he's very close to the *Kisei Hakavod*, the Throne of Glory, but he can't do anything else for himself. No more *mitzvos* can be performed, Torah cannot be learned, there's no longer any *shemiras halashon* or *chessed*; he stays...at that same level...he can't progress any further. When a son says *Kaddish*, learns Torah, refrains from *lashon hara*, when a daughter performs *mitzvos* and *chessed* and takes care of her family and Klal Yisrael, they transform the parent from being an *omeid* into a *mehaleich*. He's no longer staying in the same spot; he's becoming elevated. He continues to *shteig*, to grow."

– Rabbi Moshe Tuvia Lief

(*To Comfort and Be Comforted*, Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah Publications, page 156)

It Happened to Me!

My Olam Haba Moment

Putting greater focus on Olam Haba has changed the tone in my house. Instead of telling my kids, "Clean up the toys/set the table for Shabbos/*bentch* before you forget," I find myself saying, "Who wants to grab a mitzvah?" If you think it sounds cliched, I can tell you that if you really mean it and demonstrate it yourself, the kids pick up on it, and hear the message and internalize it.

Here is one example that really happened. This morning, the baby wanted a cracker, and I asked my five-year-old daughter to get it, as my hands were full. Busy with her toys, she just sat where she was until I said, "Do you want to grab the mitzvah?" Immediately, she got up and ran to help.

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