



Eternal BUILDING OLAM HABA AWARENESS Connections

Mitzvos are
opportunities

Before the Gate Closes

This winter I had an “aha moment.” It’s always more powerful when you come to an understanding on your own than when you hear the idea from others.

I had planned a trip with a friend to help break up the long winter. We had just three days to get away, and planned everything, down to the food and as much “sun time” as possible. My son-in-law had given us a pass to the United Airlines VIP lounge, so after we checked our bags, we went to relax in the lounge. We got there and settled in with some hot coffee. Suddenly, we spotted a counter with all kinds of mini condiments. We were so excited (not because it was free – although we all love freebies), because we had just commented on how we had forgotten to pack ketchup, mustard and the like. In an unobtrusive manner as possible, we started stuffing our pockets with these simple treasures.

Suddenly, I caught sight of a sign that read, “Please keep track of the timing of the departure of your flight, as we do not make any announcements in the lounge.”

In a panic, we made a dash for the departure gate. As we neared the gate, my friend called over her shoulder, “The area is empty!” I followed her, only to hear the agent say, “Sorry, the gate is closed.”

My mind went racing. *What now? Go home? Was it worthwhile to go away for only two days?* We begged and pleaded, but the agent said there was nothing he could do because he had already ordered our luggage to be removed from the plane. With a sinking pit in my stomach, I realized this was for real. After we pleaded some more, he agreed to check if the luggage had not yet been pulled off – and *B”H* it had not. He called down and cancelled the luggage retrieval, pulled out a large ring of keys, and led us through one locked door and then another until at last we were on the plane.

As soon as I settled into my seat, it hit me: *Wow, what a lesson for life. Here we had planned a trip to “paradise,” and had almost squandered the opportunity because we were distracted with little things that were extras.*

I turned to my friend and said, “Let’s focus on that pit-in-the-stomach feeling, that utter despair, the panic we felt when we were told there was nothing to do. Imagine after 120 years, when we come up to *Shamayim* and are greeted by a *malach* with a big set of keys. Imagine that sinking feeling when we’ll see the different gates to Gan Eden and are told, ‘Sorry, you missed the flight. You were too busy filling your pockets with goodies. Had you stayed focused on your ultimate destination, you could have enjoyed the goodies without missing the flight.’”

(Ruchy Rosenfeld, *Comfort, Courage and Clarity Handbook, Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah Publications*, page 79)

Are the goodies helping us achieve our ultimate goal or distracting us?

Take This Home

It has become so easy to get swept up in the rampant materialism surrounding us. Rather than focusing on what you lack or wish you had, make a list of three things you are grateful for and how they are helping you achieve your spiritual goals.

In Short

“Now’s the time to build wealth. Real wealth. Wealth that isn’t transient. The pennies you drop in a *pushke* may look like they’re made of copper, but they’re really made of the finest gold.”

(Rabbi Avigdor Miller on *Teshuvah and the Yamim Noraim*, *Judaica Press*, pg. 212)

It Happened to Me!

My Olam Haba Moment

My daughter called to tell me she had a toothache, necessitating an emergency visit to the dentist. I was feeling frustrated, as the only available appointment was right in the middle of my workday. To make matters worse, I had just been at the dentist’s office the previous evening with my son. Feeling harassed and annoyed, I headed out to pick her up from school, when I had an epiphany: Hashem loves me, and now He’s handing me another opportunity for *chessed*. My changed perspective changed my whole day!

לע"נ רבקה בת שמואל יוסף

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