

EC

# Eternal Connections

BUILDING  
OLAM HABA AWARENESS

Mitzvos are opportunities

## True Love

Rabbi Uri Zohar was a highly successful *kiruv* personality in Israel, who used his charismatic personality to inspire others to return to Torah. He knew well the world of those who were far from Yiddishkeit; until the late 1970s, he himself had been a famous actor and director in the Israeli movie industry.

Upon the occasion his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, Rabbi Zohar agreed to be interviewed on national television. The interviewer seemed determined to deflate his image with her line of questioning, but Rabbi Zohar remained unruffled.

“Rabbi Zohar,” the interviewer challenged, “you were one of the most beloved movie stars in the history of Israel. Then you became religious and left your friends and fans behind. Just like that, you turned your back on all of them. Decades have passed and you are still religious. But isn’t the way you treat your neighbor a big part of religion? How can you justify letting so many people down by just walking out of their lives?”

Rabbi Zohar did not need to think twice. “The truth is,” he responded, “I do care – on a very practical level. I do something for my fellow actors and old friends that no one else does for them.”

“Really? What is that?” asked the interviewer.

Rabbi Zohar reached into his pocket and pulled out a small notebook. “Here,” he said. “Let me show you something. Many of my actor friends have passed on to the next world, and they have no religious children. There’s no one saying Kaddish for them on their *yahrtzeits*. I make it my business to find out their Hebrew names and mark down their *yahrtzeits* so I can say Kaddish for them.”

The camera zoomed in on the notebook so that all those watching could see the names written in it. Rabbi Zohar’s unexpected response and genuine display of concern for the welfare of his old friends made a strong impression on countless not-yet-religious Israelis.

But there is an astonishing postscript to this story. Rabbi Yosef Karmel, executive director of Lev LAchim, heard the following directly from Rabbi Zohar:

One day, a woman from Tel Aviv called Rabbi Zohar and identified herself as the daughter of an actress who had since passed on.

She told him she needed to relay a message to him. “My mother came to me in a dream three times in one week. She told me, ‘My *neshamah* is not elevated in Olam Haba other than one time a year, when Uri Zohar says Kaddish for me. But my *yahrtzeit* passed a few weeks ago, and he didn’t say Kaddish. He must rectify this!’”

Rabbi Zohar was confused. Indeed, he had been saying Kaddish for this woman since she had passed away several years earlier. What could

have happened that he had neglected to do so this year? When he pulled out his notebook to check, he realized that that year his wife’s relative had passed away on the day of the woman’s *yahrtzeit*. Busy with the *levayah*, he had indeed neglected to say Kaddish as he usually did!

*(Living Chessed by Rabbi Avrohom Asher Makovsky, Artscroll Publications, pages 172-174.)*

**When we do a mitzvah *l’iluy nishmas*, we are performing a unique kind of *cheded*. We are helping those who literally can no longer help themselves, now that they have moved on to the Next World!**

## Take This Home

Choose one mitzvah or *limud* to do *l’iluy nishmas* a loved one today, and before doing so say, “This should be a *zechus l’iluy nishmas* [insert Hebrew name *ben/bas* father’s Hebrew name].”

## In Short

“Sometimes we think that these things [*techiyas hameisim*] are way up in the clouds... You know what I say to people when they tell me that? You *daven* three times a day, or sometimes four, even five times a day [on *Shabbos*, *yom tov* and *Yom Kippur*]. What do you say in the very second *berachah* of *Shemoneh Esrei*? “*Baruch atah Hashem, mechayeih hameisim*” – Blessed are You, Hashem, Who revives the dead. We have a whole *berachah* about this in *Shemoneh Esrei*... It’s part of the *davening* we say every day!”

– Rabbi Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

*(To Comfort and Be Comforted, published by Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah Publications, page 136.)*

## It Happened to Me!

### My Olam Haba Moment

I was unsure what to do for my mother’s upcoming *yahrtzeit*, which is just a few days after my father’s *yahrtzeit*. As the oldest daughter, the arrangements fell on me, but I felt overwhelmed about the prospect of organizing a second *siyum* or *yahrtzeit seudah*, as we had been doing for my father for many years. Then I read that the Steipler advised his daughters to learn *Pirkei Avos l’iluy nishmas* their mother, and this really resonated with me, being that I have no brothers, but several sisters. We agreed to learn several *mishnayos* together and to split up the rest of the *perakim* so that between all of us we would learn the entire *Pirkei Avos* on the *yahrtzeit*. Although the day was sad for us, I felt that it was a positive and productive time, since we joined together to do something to directly benefit our mother’s *neshamah*.

– C.A.

לע"נ משה בן יהושע

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