



# Eternal Connections

BUILDING OLAM HABA AWARENESS

Mitzvos are opportunities

## To Name or Not to Name – Which is the Greater Merit?

Rav Michel Barenbaum was the *mashgiach* of Mesivta Tiferes Yerushalayim under Harav Moshe Feinstein. After Rav Michel's passing, a number of grandsons and great-grandsons were born to his family. Eventually, it came to someone's attention that, oddly, not one of those children had been named after Rav Michel. People began to wonder why this was so. Shouldn't family members have been pleased and honored for their child to carry the name of their illustrious grandfather?

Eventually, someone approached one of Rav Michel's children and asked why thus far no babies had been named for his revered father. The answer gives us an astounding insight into both how we can best benefit the *neshamah* of a *niftar* and where we should direct our efforts in general in this world.

In Rav Michel's will, he noted that while of course he would be honored to have children named for him, he would prefer that any newborn be named for a grandfather whose widow was still alive. Since Rav Michel's own wife had passed away before him, there was no widow who would feel comfort and joy in hearing that her husband's name was being perpetuated. With time, Rav Michel knew, children would probably be named for him, but he preferred to give widows the comfort of having a baby named for their husbands.

The calculation of what brings greater merit is simple. There are many *kibbudim* and *segulos* that certainly bring merit: opening the *aron kodesh* at *Ne'ilah*, acting as *sandek* at a *bris*, receiving a particular *aliyah*, and in the case of someone who has passed on, having a descendant carry on one's name. People commonly desire these honors, and to be sure, they are all worthy and meritorious. *Chessed*, however, is an actual *mitzvah d'Oraisa*, a fulfillment of *v'havta l'rei'acha kamocho*. Rav Michel knew that it was a far greater merit to consider and honor the feelings of widows than to have his name perpetuated by a descendant!

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(Rabbi Avrohom Asher Makovsky, *Living Chessed*, Artscroll Publications, page 33-34).

**Let us actively seek opportunities for *chedsed* with the mindset that there is no greater treasure or merit than a *mitzvah*!**

## Take This Home

Grab the next chance you have for a small, doable *chedsed*. For example, lift someone's spirits with a compliment; allow someone in a rush or with a crying child to go ahead of you in line; take out the garbage for your spouse, parent or coworker; bring someone a cup of water or coffee. The possibilities are endless – and so are the dividends!

## In Short

Rav Yisrael Salanter once passed a shoemaker who was working late at night. When asked why he was still working, the shoemaker explained, "*Kol zman she'haneir doleik, efshar od l'sakein*" – as long as the candle is burning, one can still repair! Rav Yisrael took this to heart and exclaimed, "As long as we are alive, we have the chance to work on ourselves!"

## It Happened to Me!

### My Olam Haba Moment

I really struggle with saying the full *Kriyas Shema al Hamitah*, as I am usually so exhausted by the time I get into bed. My *yetzer hara* lets me read something for a few minutes to unwind, but then it tells me to shut down when I start thinking about opening a *siddur* to say *Shema*. What sometimes help motivate me is reminding myself about how I feel in the morning, when I wake up and realize I lost another opportunity I can never get back. *Tonight I'll do better*, I think, and sometimes I do!

– A.S.

לע"נ ראובן בן חיים

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