

EC

Eternal Connections

BUILDING
OLAM HABA AWARENESS

Mitzvos are opportunities

Repaying a Debt

It was a cold, wintry day in Yerushalayim when Mrs. Tzvia Sevitzy passed away. As she was a childless widow and the weather was particularly inclement, not many people were expected at the funeral. The family did not even send around a car to publicize the event, as is commonly done in Yerushalayim. How surprised they were when an unknown Belzer *chassid* appeared at the funeral, respectfully followed the bier and then asked to recite Kaddish for the *niftar*!

The only family member sitting *shivah* was Mrs. Sevitzy's elderly sister, and the days passed in relative quiet. But then, on one of the *shivah* days, the same *chassid* appeared. "You're probably wondering why I attended the *levayah*, and even more, why I asked to say Kaddish," he said. "Please allow me to share my story with you.

"I came to this country 50 years ago after the Holocaust. I had no family, so I was placed in an orphanage where your sister served as the housemother. As children without a mother, we were unkempt, but your sister spared no effort to care for us. She saw to it that we showered and changed our clothing, and she even combed our hair for lice.

"One day, while she was combing my hair, I burst into tears. Mrs. Tzvia, as we called her, asked me what was wrong – had she hurt me? I replied, 'Chas v'Shalom! I am crying because you take such good care of me, just as my mother would have, and I don't know how I can repay your kindness.'

"She replied, 'If you'd like to show your gratitude, say Kaddish for me after I pass away, as I don't have any children of my own.'

"And now, 50 years later, several hours before the *levayah*, Mrs. Tzvia came to me in a dream. She was sitting on a couch, and she said to me, 'Mein kind (my child), the time has come for you to repay your debt of gratitude. Say Kaddish for me.'

"I woke up very agitated, not knowing how I could find her or find out reliable information regarding her wellbeing – whether she had actually died or if this was a meaningless dream. It's been many years since I was last in touch with anyone from the orphanage.

"In the meantime, I went to *shul*, and on my way, I noticed a

small sign announcing the *levayah* of Mrs. Tzvia Sevitzy, a"h. I was shocked to see the news confirmed, and of course, I came to pay my debt to my surrogate mother."

This *chassid*, whose name was Rav Yitzchak Landau (the *shamash* of both the previous and current Bezler Rebbes), indeed recited Kaddish for the full eleven months following Mrs. Sevitzy's passing. And until his own passing, each year on her *yahrtzeit*, he learned *mishnayos* and lit a candle for her *neshamah*.

(Rabbi Tzvi Nakar, 24/7: *Contemporary Stories of Hashgachah Pratis and Emunah*, Tfutza Publications, pgs. 79-80)

How precious is the *zechus* of Kaddish recital. Both Mrs. Sevitzy and Rabbi Landau understood that this was a most appropriate form of *hakaras hatov* and of great value to a *neshamah* in the next world.

Take This Home

Learn an extra *mishnah* or recite a *perek* of *Tehillim Pily nishmas* a parent, grandparent, rebbe, teacher, beloved neighbor, or someone else to whom you owe a debt of gratitude.

In Short

When a person has firm conviction of the World to Come, he is going to be very careful in utilizing this life.

Rabbi Avigdor Miller (*Rav Avigdor Miller on Olam Haba*, Judaica Press, pg. 15)

It Happened to Me!

My Olam Haba Moment

I was very moved to hear about a program in which eighth graders are given some age-appropriate background about what happened in the Holocaust, and then each girl is given a "passport" with the name of one of the 1.5 million Jewish children killed. They are asked to try to do a mitzvah or say a *perek* of *Tehillim* in their child's memory whenever they can. The idea is to connect them to what happened and show them how they can actually do something for these children.

– R.G.

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