

EC

Eternal Connections

BUILDING
OLAM HABA AWARENESS

Mitzvos are opportunities

Keeping the Connection

The Zahavs*, a secular family of five, were vacationing in America when tragedy struck. Involved in a terrible accident, the mother and children survived, but the father was killed on impact.

While devastated by her loss, Mrs. Zahav realized that she and her children had experienced a miracle; she had witnessed *yad Hashem*, and she decided to act upon what they had experienced.

The family returned to Israel, and they made a new life for themselves. They moved to Bnei Brak, where the mother enrolled her children in *cheder* and Bais Yaakov. With Hashem's help, they progressed nicely in their studies.

Still, their late start posed some challenges. One night, the oldest son came sobbing to his mother.

"We're learning *Shor Shenagach es HaParah* (the fifth chapter in Gemara Bava Kama)," he cried. "The whole class knows it except for me. There's no way I can pass the test we're having tomorrow!" There wasn't much the mother could do to help her son, but she did sit up with him until he eventually drifted off to sleep.

In the morning, the boy was a different person. He seemed calm and reassured.

"Don't worry about me, Ima," he told his mother. "I know the Gemara just fine."

The mother cast a puzzled glance at her child. "But you cried yourself to sleep last night, telling me you don't know the material like the other boys do!"

"Right," he answered his mother, "but now I know the Gemara!"

Now his mother was really confused. What was her son talking about!?

"How did that happen?" she asked.

"Abba taught it to me," he replied. Then he clarified: "Last night, Abba appeared to me in a dream. I asked him, 'Abba, do you know that we became religious?'"

"Yes, my son, I know," he said.

"And did you know that I'm learning Gemara?"

"Yes, my son, I know that as well. You see, when you and the family became *ba'alei teshuvah*, they allowed me to enter Gan Eden, even though I was devoid of merit. And not only that, *but whatever you learn down on earth, they teach me the same Gemara in Heaven!* You're learning *Shor Shenagach es HaParah*, aren't you?"

"That's right, Abba. The problem is that we have a test tomorrow, and all the other boys know the material. But I'm still behind. If you have also been learning it, could you teach it to me?"

"Of course, my son," Abba said.

"Abba taught me all the parts I didn't know. So now I'm completely prepared for the test," the boy concluded.

Although relieved that her son was in better spirits, the mother was not sure what to think about what he had shared.

Several days later, she received confirmation to dispel her lingering doubts. Her son had gotten his test back and proudly shared his mark with his mother – 100%!

(Rabbi Tzvi Hebel, *The Neshamah Sould Have an Aliyah*, Judaica Press, page 40)

Every time we learn Torah or do mitzvos in this world, we are providing for our parents and grandparents in the next world – and retaining our connection and closeness with them.

Take This Home

As you are about to learn something today – be it big or small – think of a deceased parent, grandparent, or other loved one, and declare, "May this learning be *l'iluy nishmas* [insert name *ben/bas* father's name]."

In Short

Excerpt from a letter written by Harav Yeruchem Levovitz, to his nephew, following the passing of his father.

We see from the words of the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh how we are to understand the idea of death as but a relocation from one city to another and not more... Your father has not, *chas v'shalom*, died; he is alive. This is but a change of location.

(Rabbi Doniel Hexter, *Voices of Consolation*, Israel Book Shop, page 87)

It Happened to Me!

My Olam Haba Moment

My tire was flat – again. For the third time in one week! Each time there was a different reason – once it was a plug that needed replacing; once it was a nail in the tire; and once it was a piece of metal imbedded in the tire. My gut reaction was disbelief that this was happening and frustration at the time and money I had to spend to fix it. But then I made an effort to retrain my thoughts.

This is what I told myself and then shared with my family: "We're in Chodesh Elul now. Clearly, we are deserving of a little more aggravation this year. B"H, this is how we are experiencing it. And B"H, we are not living in a world where things just happen by chance."

– T.B.A.

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