

## **For He is your life and the length of your days. (30:20)**

A Jew is defined by his relationship with Hashem. Nothing else is considered living. A person who truly cares about – and values – his life devotes his time to Torah study or to strengthening his relationship with Hashem. Some of us pass through time, not realizing that the greatest Heavenly gift is slipping by with each passing minute. The gift of life is immutable – once it is gone, it is gone forever. Thus, the defining outlook of a Jew is, “How do I value my spiritual life? Is it my primary objective, or does it place a far second in my value system?” Therefore, when the Torah enjoins us to “choose life,” it is an admonishment to make Hashem the primary focus of our life. Otherwise, we are merely existing; our lives have no enduring meaning or value.

**Horav Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach, zl**, devoted his every waking moment to Torah study. His *avodas hakodesh*, service to the Almighty, was his primary sense of being. Thus, when he was asked by a distinguished *rav* from Tel Aviv to meet with him at 4:00 p.m., he was on time, waiting patiently. Every minute counted. At 4:15, the *rav* had not yet arrived. *Rav* Shlomo Zalmen left, slightly annoyed. When the *Rav* arrived fifteen minutes later and asked why *Rav* Shlomo Zalmen had not waited – after all, the bus from Tel Aviv is not always on time – *Rav* Shlomo Zalmen replied, “You should have taken an earlier bus, arrived early and waited. Why is my time not important to you?”

While this was not typically the nature of *Rav* Shlomo Zalmen, it was his way of intimating, “My life is valuable, and I do not have the luxury of wasting fifteen minutes.”