

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

Hashem is our life. He sustains and infuses us with life. For this alone we should love Him. To do this, we must study His Torah for its sake. Love means to care only for the subject of one's love – not for any other reason. One who studies Torah for ulterior motives will not come to love Hashem. We love G-d as a result of our love/study of the Torah. The two go hand in hand. *Horav Reuven Karlinstein, zl*, relates a story that he heard from the son of *Horav Shmaryahu Greineman, zl*, who never left the side of the *Chazon Ish, zl*.

The grandfather of the *Chazon Ish's* grandfather (his great—great grandfather) was the famed *Baal ha Pardes* and *Rav* of Konigsberg. He was a contemporary of the *Gaon, zl, m'Vilna* and often corresponded with him and also with *Horav Yonasan Eibyshutz, zl*. Shortly before his passing, the members of his community asked him, “Who will be your successor? Who will be our *Rav*?” He instructed them to travel to a certain community and speak with its *Rav* concerning assuming the rabbinic leadership of Konigsberg.

They traveled to this city and, after meeting with the *Rav*, offered him the *rabbanus* of Konigsberg. He then asked, “Is there a *yeshivah* in your community?” “But of course, a nice *yeshivah* with students that spend their days and nights learning.” He asked a few more questions before agreeing to accept their offer. He insisted, however, that they remain in the city for *Shabbos* so that he can address his community and offer the proper leave-taking of them. They agreed to spend *Shabbos*.

Friday morning, the *Rav* summoned them to his house and said, “I have changed my mind. I will not be joining your community.” The men were floored. They thought that everything was settled to each one's satisfaction. “What is wrong?” they asked. “The *Rav* had agreed. Why is his honor changing his mind?”

He explained. “The following morning after I agreed to go with you, I noticed my *Rebbetzin* weeping copious tears. I asked what was wrong. She explained that every week she washes the clothes of the *talmidim*, students, of our *yeshivah*. (In those days it was a strenuous and difficult job, consisting of heating water and scrubbing the clothes in the burning hot water. There were many students in the *yeshivah*. Understandably, she was busy with this every day.) The heads of the community interjected, “We have a group of women whose job it is to wash the students' clothes. The *Rebbetzin* will not have to trouble herself anymore.”

“You do not seem to understand,” the *Rav* explained. “This is the *Rebbetzin's* life. With each garment that she washes, dries and smooths out, she partners with the students' learning. This is her Torah learning. My *Rebbetzin* said, ‘If you take this from me, I have no reason to live. Without my partnering with the students in their Torah learning, what value is there to my life?’

“How can I deprive my *Rebbetzin* of life?”

The *Chazon Ish* would often relate this story, to show the love for Torah evinced by the previous generations.