

Olam Haba - Section 1 - Why Should a Person Study Olam Haba ?:

Why a Person Should Study Olam Haba :

1. **Rav Avigdor Miller:** “When a person has a firm conviction of the World to Come, he is going to be very careful in utilizing his life.”
2. **Bereishis 25,29:** וַיָּבֹא עֵשָׂו מִן־הַשָּׂדֶה וְהוּא עָיֵף Esav came in from the field and was weary.
3. **Talmud Bava Basra 16b:** That wicked Esau committed five transgressions on that day that Abraham died: He engaged in sexual intercourse with a betrothed maiden, he killed a person, he denied the principle of God’s existence, he denied resurrection of the dead, and he despised the birthright.... he denied the principle of God’s existence, as it is written here: “What profit is this to me” (Genesis 25:32); and it is written there: “This is my God and I will glorify Him” (Exodus 15:2). When he questioned the profit of “this,” he was challenging the assertion that “this is my God.” And he denied resurrection of the dead, as it is written: “Behold, I am at the point of death” (Genesis 25:32), indicating that he did not believe in resurrection after death. And he despised the birthright, as it is written: “And Esau despised the birthright” (Genesis 25:34).
4. **Question:** How could an intelligent man like Esav who certainly was convinced that Olam Haba existed, have this moment of weakness and deny the existence of Olam Haba ?
5. **Bereishis 25, 27:** וַיִּגְדְּלוּ הַנְּעָרִים וַיְהִי עֵשָׂו אִישׁ יָדָע צִיד אִישׁ שָׂדֶה וַיַּעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם יֹשֵׁב אֹהֶלִים: When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the outdoors; but Jacob was a mild man who stayed in camp.
6. **POINT:** Yaakov constantly viewed the tradition that man is created for the World to Come, until it came into his bones and became a certainty to him. Esav learned it in a superficial way. He did not spend time convincing himself more and more. Therefore, in time of emergency, when Esav saw his great ancestor subject to such humility - lying dead - he lost control.
7. **Talmud Berachos 5b:** Rabbi Elazar fell ill. Rabbi Yoḥanan entered to visit him, and saw that he was lying in a dark room. Rabbi Yoḥanan exposed his arm, and light radiated from his flesh, filling the house. He saw that Rabbi Elazar was crying, and said to him: Why are you crying?.....I am not crying over my misfortune, but rather, over this beauty of yours that will decompose in the earth, as Rabbi Yoḥanan’s beauty caused him to consider human mortality. Rabbi Yoḥanan said to him: Over this, it is certainly appropriate to weep. Both cried over the fleeting nature of beauty in the world and death that eventually overcomes all.
8. **POINT #1:** When Esav witnessed his grandfather lying dead, he had even more distress !
9. **POINT #2:** Even a young man like Esav (aged 15) must labor and acquire in his mind conviction of these great principles.
10. **Chagigah 9b:** There is no comparison between someone who learned topic 100 times to someone who learned it 101 times.

11. POINT: Yaakov reviewed the concept of Olam Haba hundreds of times, and little by little, that conviction became real to him in his brain. He as always strong and never “weary” - even momentarily like Esav, who did not labor to notify himself against the Yetzer Hora.

Why Belief in Olam Haba Is So Important:

1. **Chovos Halvovos Shaar Yichud Hama’aseh 5:** O Man! You should know that the great archenemy you have in this world is your own yetzer (evil inclination). He is interwoven in the forces of your soul and intertwined in the order of your spirit. He associates with you in the guidance of your physical and spiritual senses. He rules over the secrets of your soul and of what is hidden in your breast. He is your advisor in all of your movements whether visible or invisible that you wish to do. He lies in wait, watching your steps to lead you astray. You are asleep to him but he is awake to you. You look away from him but he does not look away from you. He masks himself as your friend, and pretends to show love. He enters in your inner circle of close friends and advisors. From his gestures and signs it appears he is running to do your will but in fact he is shooting deadly arrows at you to kill and uproot you from the land of the living.....Among the strongest of his weapons which he will fire at you and wage war with you in your innermost being - is to ***try to cast doubt on things you deem to be true, and to confuse what is clear to you, and to confuse your mind with false thoughts and erroneous arguments, and to draw you away from what is for your benefit, and to cause you to doubt what is clear to you in your faith and religion.*** If you will guard yourself from him, and ***have ready the weapons of your intellect to wage war with him, and deflect his arrows away from you, you will be saved and will escape from him*** with G-d's help. But if you leave your matters to him, and you are drawn after his will, he will not let up on you until he destroys you from both worlds, and uproots you from both lands, as written of one member of his legions...***The first matter*** the yetzer will try to cast doubt in your mind, and will try to convince you is that ***the soul cannot exist without a body, and that the soul perishes along with the body, and has no existence after the death of the body.*** He uses imaginative arguments, which don't hold if a man contemplates them, and the purpose of this is to induce you to pursue the temporary pleasures, and fleeting desires, and so that you adopt the outlook of the group of men which the verse describes "let us feast and drink because tomorrow we will die" (Yeshaya 22:13). If you take counsel with your understanding on this, you will distance from this outlook with clear proofs which the early ones already brought and which are mentioned in the words of the prophets.
2. **Pirkei Avos 2,14:** Know what to answer the Apikorus.
3. **Rav Isaac Sher :** “Which apikorus does it mean ? It means the apimorus in you!
4. **POINT:** It is our purpose in this world to fight and overcome the Yetzer Hora !
5. **Bereishis 1,31:** And Hashem saw everything He made and said it was very good.
6. **Midrash Rabbah 9,7:** It is ‘very good’ refers to the Yetzer Hora.
7. **POINT:** We can accomplish something valuable in this world by fighting the Yetzer Hora, which we can not do in the next world.

8. **MOSHOL:** A rich man on vacation who feels he is losing money while vacationing instead of earning money back home at work.
9. **POINT #1:** We earn our reward by learning the answers to the Apikorus Yetzer Hora.
10. **POINT #2:** If the Yetzer Hora can attack and defeat our belief in the eternity of the soul after the body dies, he doesn't need to do anything else.
11. **POINT #3:** Even if you have clarity in other aspects in the fundamentals of Emuna, you are not immune from attacks against "hash'aras hanefesh."
12. **Observation:** No matter how much your intellect tells you that soul lives forever, when you look at the dead body, all your faith can come crashing down !
13. Confronting death is the acid test that can expose the weakness of a person's faith - even if you spend your whole life doing Mitzvos !

Olam Haba Is Mentioned in the Torah:

1. **Bamidbar 23,10:** Let my soul die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like his.
2. **PROOF #1:** which means the Jewish people, he's pointing to Yisroel - and let my end be like his...What did Bilaam want? He was talking about what happens after death.
3. **Bereishis 15,15:** And you shall come to your fathers in peace.
4. **PROOF #2:** Even though Avraham was not buried with his fathers. Rather it means in the world of the afterlife, where Noach, Shem and Ever and previous fathers are found.
5. **Bereishis 25, 8-9:** And Abraham breathed his last, dying at a good ripe age, old and contented; and he was ***gathered to his people***. His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite, facing Mamre.
6. **PROOF #3:** Avraham was the first of the patriarchs to be buried in the Cave of Machpelah. Who, the, was he gathered to ? The phrase "gathered to his people" can not be talking about a physical cemetery.
7. **PROOF #4:** The deaths of Yitzchak, Yaakov, Yishmael, Aharon, and Moshe are also described as "and he was gathered to his people."
8. **PROOF #5:** The Torah prohibits things like contacting the spirit of the dead. If the torah didn't believe in the afterlife, why would it prohibit contact with dead spirits?
9. **PROOF #6: Shmuel 1, 28, 19:** The spirit of Shmuel - who had previously died - was conjured up to speak to King Shaul.
10. **PROOF #7: Shmuel 2, 12, 23:** (after King Dovid loses a son) : "Can I cause him to return anymore? I am going to him; he is not returning to me." Dovid was consoling himself that at least eventually he will meet his son in the World to Come.
11. **PROOF #8: Koheles 3, 20-21:** Everything is going to one place. We all come from the earth and we all return to the earth. [However,] who knows [and understands the] spirit of mankind, which goes up [to the heavens], as opposed to the spirit of an animal, which goes down below into the earth.

12. **PROOF #9: Koheles 12,7:** the dust will return to the ground as it was [in its original state] and the spirit will return to God Who gave it.
13. **PROOF #10: Talmud Sanhedrin 90a:** All Israel has share in the world to Come, as it is stated: “And your people are all righteous, they shall inherit the land forever; the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, for My name to be glorified” (Isaiah 60:21).
14. **PROOF #11: Vayikra 26,12:** And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be My people. **Rashi:** I will (as it were), walk with you in the Garden of Eden as though I were one of you, and you will not be frightened of Me.
15. **Tiferes Yisroel:** This Mishneh applies this verse to the world to come, since in this world not all Jews are righteous, nor is there eternal life here. Rather, in the World to Come, all Jews are deemed righteous once their souls are cleansed after death.
16. **Rambam:** The “land” that they shall forever inherit is “the land of the living” (Tehilim 142,60) an allegory for the spiritual reward in the World to Come.
17. **Alshich:** “a branch of My plantings’ refers to the soul, which God planted in this world to be nurtured and developed. It also refers to the Jew planted in the World to Come.
18. The Jewish people are referred to as the “work of My hands.”
19. **R’ Yerucham Levovitz:** The Jew is “planted” in this world in order to find fulfillment in the World to Come. Everything in this world gives birth to great consequences in the world to Come, and in that sense the latter is prepared even while we are still on earth.
20. **Rambam Laws of Teshuva 8,2:** The goodness which is in store for the righteous is the Life of the World to Come – Life which has no Death, Good which has no Evil. This is what is written in the Torah: ***that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days (Deut. 22:7)***, and from tradition we learned: that it may be well with you, in a world that is entirely good; that you may prolong your days, in a world that is entirely long; and that is the World to Come. The reward of the righteous is that they will earn this pleasantness and never be cut off or die; and the punishment of the wicked is that they will not merit this life, and will be cut off and die. And anyone who does not earn this life is the dead who will never live, but is cut off in his wickedness and lost like an animal; and this is the “cutting off” that is described in the Torah, as it says, that soul shall utterly be cut off (Numbers 15:31). From tradition we learned: cut off, in this World; utterly, in the World to Come, i.e., that soul which has separated from the body in this world will not earn the life of the World to Come, but will also be cut off from the World to Come.
21. **Pirkei Avos 4,17:** One hour of repentance and good deeds in this world is better than all the time in the world to come. And one hour of pleasure in the world to come is better than all the time in this world.
22. **QUESTION:** The Torah only describes physical rewards in this world. Why doesn't the Torah explicitly describe the the ultimate reward of Olam Haba ?
23. **ANSWER #1- Kuzari:** Once the Torah is going to go into detail, then it's open to competition. Along will come some faker and say, I'm going to offer you better things than are written in the Torah. Once it's specified what you are going to get, then some competitor will come along; Mohammad. Mohammad offers his people

a lot of beautiful women in a garden. He says there will be a garden with fruit trees and streams flowing, and women all you want: that's what it says in the Koran. So let's say the Torah will promise him a thousand women, Mohammad will raise the price to two thousand women. So the Torah doesn't want to say anything, so ***nobody should be able to compete.***

24. **ANSWER #2 - Kli Yakar:** In order to reach the religious/intellectual level in which service towards God can be ***for its own sake (li-Shemah)***, and not for the receipt of reward or fear of punishment.
25. **ANSWER #3 - Kli Yakar:** R. Abraham ibn Ezra in Parashat Ha'azinu (Deut. 32:39): not even one out of a thousand people can intellectually grasp the notion of olam-ha-ba, but the Torah was given to all the children of Israel. Since ***a physical being cannot understand the non-physical nature of olam ha-ba***, the Torah simply hid mention of this from the masses, due to their feeble intellects. But the ultimate reward is in the World to Come.
26. **ANSWER #4:** The Shelah (Toldos Adam, Bayis Achron 156) When the Torah describes the physical rewards it is actually referring to spiritual rewards, but the words that it uses are words that we use to ***refer to the physical counterparts to those spiritual elements.***
27. **ANSWER #5: Kli Yakar:** R. Bahya ibn Pakuda: ***The rewards of the Torah are all supernatural.*** For how else can the meteorological phenomenon of rainfall be dependent upon a certain people observing specific commandments? But the soul is by nature a metaphysical being, and it is not unnatural that it will (eventually) leave the body and this physical realm. Indeed a verse in Psalms (37:34) essentially states this. From the fact that only the wicked who receive kares do not merit a share in the world to come, one can deduce that as a matter of course, one who is not wicked will indeed receive a share. Hence, ***there was no need for the Torah to mention the obvious!***
28. **ANSWER #6: Kli Yakar:** At the time when the Torah was given, the nations of the world denied the possibility of Divine Providence. They also asserted that whatever was done in the world was done out of necessity, not out of choice. ***The Torah wished to strengthen the concept of Divine hashgahah*** (and of human free choice as stimulating the possibility of hashgahah) as a cornerstone of Jewish belief. Had the Torah mentioned the reward in the World to Come instead of reward in this world, people would have simply persisted in their erroneous belief. (However, by emphasizing that the fall of rainfall, for example, was not necessary but was contingent upon human action, the Torah sought to refute that view.) People would not mind delaying their reward in the World to Come, if they could live a little bit longer here on earth. Thus, even though the ultimate reward is in the World to Come, ***the Torah presented a reward that people naturally desire, and taught that it is in human power to achieve it.***
29. **ANSWER #7: Kli Yakar:** The nations of the world at the time when Moses received the Torah sacrificed towards the stars and constellations in order to receive agricultural benefits (rainfall and the like). When God gave the Torah, He ***wished to wean the children of Israel away from these behaviors, and therefore***

emphasized that observance of the laws of the Torah will yield these benefits, whereas any sort of idolatrous worship will produce the opposite result. But He did not need to promise them anything regarding the world to come, for ***the nations of the world were not promised success in the World to come for their efforts in the first place.***

EVEN A TALMID CHACHAM CAN LACK CONVICTION IN OLAM HABAH:

1. **Talmud Chagigah 15b:** Shmuel found Rav Yehuda leaning on the bar of the door, crying. He said to him: what are you crying for? He said to him: Is it a small matter, that which is written with regard to Sages who have sinned: “Where is he who counted, where is he who weighed? Where is he who counted the towers?” (Isaiah 33:18). He proceeded to explain: “Where is he who counted”; for they would count all the letters of the Torah. “Where is he who weighed”; for they would weigh and compare the minor and major transgressions of the Torah. “Where is he who counted the towers”; for they would teach three hundred halakhos concerning the details of tent impurity involving a wooden closet floating in the air. If they studied a subject so removed from reality in such depths, how much more so did they analyze other issues. And Rabbi Ami said: Doeg asked Ahithophel three hundred questions with regard to a closet floating in the air, as they were both great Torah scholars. And we learned in a mishna (Sanhedrin 90a): Three kings and four commoners have no portion in the World-to-Come, a list that includes Doeg and Ahithophel. If such great Sages could sin and forfeit their share in the World-to-Come, we, who are less knowledgeable than they, what will be of us? He said to him: there was mud [tina] in their hearts, i.e., they had certain flaws that prevented their Torah learning from protecting them.
2. **POINT:** In addition to all forms of perfection - including greatness in Torah knowledge and greatness in character, Doeg and Achitofel still were lacking in proper Torah attitudes. They had a weakness in convictions of the existence of Olam Haba. They were expected to labor to make Olam Haba a certainty just as much as they laboured in the rest of their studies.

THE MOST IMPORTANT FOUNDATION OF EMUNAH:

1. **MOSHOL:** Building without bothering to dig a foundation will eventually collapse.
2. **LESSON:** Many Jews build an edifice of Judaism with Emuna and observance without a foundation, such as a firm conviction of Olam Haba.
3. **Mesilas Yesharim, Introduction:** The writer says: I have composed this work not to teach people what they do not know but to remind them of what they already know and which is very familiar to them. For you will find in most of my words only things which most people already know and do not have any doubt about. But ***according to their familiarity and to the extent that their truth is evident to all, so too is their neglect very prevalent and forgetfulness of them very great.*** Therefore, the benefit to be gleaned from this book is not from a single reading, for it is possible that the reader will learn little that he did not already know. Rather ***the benefit derived [from this book] comes from review and diligent study.*** For [then] he will be reminded of these things which, by nature, people tend to forget and he will put

to heart his duties which he hides from....But few are those which devote thought and study to the matter of perfection of [divine] service: on love, fear, clinging, and the other branches of piety. This is not because they do not consider these things as fundamental....Rather their lack of devoting more attention to it **stems from its being so familiar and so evident to them that they see no need for spending much time on it**....Observe that matters of piety and fear and love [of G-d], and purity of heart are **not things innately implanted in a person whereby he would not need means to acquire them** such as sleep and wakefulness, hunger and satiation, and all the other responses naturally implanted in our nature. Rather, certainly it is necessary to employ means and strategies to acquire them.

4. **Mesilas Yesharim 1:** יסוד החסידות ושרש העבודה התמימה הוא שיתברר ויתאמת אצל האדם מה חובתו בעולמו ולמה צריך שישים מבטו ומגמתו בכל אשר הוא עמל כל ימי חייו. והנה מה שהורנו חכמינו זכרונם לברכה הוא, שהאדם לא נברא אלא להתענג על ה' ולהנות מזיו שכינתו שזה התענוג האמיתי והעידון הגדול מכל העידונים שיכולים להמצא. ומקום העידון הזה באמת הוא העולם הבא, כי הוא הנברא בהכנה המצטרפת לדבר הזה. The foundation of piety and the root of perfect service [of G-d] is for a man to **clarify and come to realize as truth** what is his obligation in his world and to **what he needs to direct his gaze and his aspiration in all that he toils all the days of his life**. Behold, what our sages, of blessed memory, have taught us is that man was created solely to delight in G-d and to derive pleasure in the radiance of the Shechina (divine presence). For this is the true delight and the greatest pleasure that can possibly exist. The place of this pleasure is, in truth, in Olam Haba (the World to Come). For it was created expressly for this purpose.
5. **POINT:** The foundation of all foundations is not to have Emunah in Hashem or to believe that Torah is from heaven. The foundation of foundations is to know that we are in this world to prepare for Olam Haba. We are here in this world to prepare for everlasting happiness.
6. **POINT:** No matter what we are doing at any time in our life, we should be thinking that he is doing **everything** to prepare for Olam Haba!
7. If this foundation of foundations is a clear conviction before your eyes, that our purpose is Olam Habah, then you can build. We should not view the afterlife as an annex, that is something that is **also** going to be given to us. No! It is **everything** !
8. This explains why the Chovos Halvavos tells us that the fore-most attack of the Yetzer Hora is against the belief in the afterlife.
9. **MOSHOL:** Why would person use a \$10,000 check to roll it as tobacco cigarette? Unless he thinks the check is not cashable.
10. **POINT:** If you always think in terms of eternity, you will be successful in this world , because you will weigh every one of your reactions towards every situation, as it pertains to your Olam Haba.
11. **POINT:** When you think about the next world, you will be happy in this life. You will enjoy this world more because of that. Anyone who lives for the next world has a lot of joy in this world.