



RAV MOSHE HAUER

Life Is Just Beginning



➔ Klal Yisrael is blessed with hundreds of yeshivah graduates who fill the ranks of its shuls and communities. These men are learned and committed *bnei Torah* who are taking their places in the professional and commercial worlds. Their numbers could not have been anticipated even a generation ago, and they represent an outstanding resource for Torah and *kiddush Hashem*. What are the typical characteristics of the successful working *ben Torah* who continues to thrive years after leaving the walls of the yeshivah?



1 SPIRITUALLY AMBITIOUS

Given the high-cost of *frum* Jewish life, one cannot readily meet a family's needs by simply "punching the clock" at work. One must be ambitious and creative, expanding reach and capacity so as to fund inevitably growing budgets.

This same sense of ambition should be brought to *avodas Hashem*. What makes for sustained success as a *ben Torah* is a refusal to simply "punch the clock" Jewishly by making it to minyan and a *shiur* or learning seder, and giving tzedakah. Ambition in Torah study includes exploring new areas of Torah, sharing Torah orally or in writing, and/or achieving mastery through formal testing programs, such as Dirshu. The ambitious Jew brings tefillah to life by an active effort to constantly infuse fresh meaning into his davening. And the engaged community member is driven to find new and meaningful ways to make a real difference in his community and in the lives of its members.

2 WELL-ADJUSTED AND SELF-AWARE

In every educational framework, all students start out together sharing a core curriculum. As they move along, the greatest success is achieved by those who differentiate, not in a radical sense, but by identifying and pursuing their unique skills and interests, creating for themselves a fitting and meaningful role.

The successful *ben Torah* will consciously and confidently adjust to the reality that upon leaving the broad highway of the yeshivah, he must find the particular path that will constitute his unique *avodas Hashem*. Rather than yearn for the good old yeshivah days, he will see his life as a *ben Torah* opening up ahead of him. In that light, he will be sure to identify "*chelkeinu b'Torasecha*," the area of Torah that his heart is drawn to study, as well as the area of service that fits his unique skills and interests. He will understand that at this new stage of his life he must adopt the mantra of Rav Chaim of Volozhin: "This is what man is all about; he was not created for himself, but rather to help others in whatever way he can." This will guide him to clearly define and identify with his role within his family and community.

3 PART OF A CHABURAH

One of the most motivating aspects of life in the yeshivah is the sense of belonging to a group of people and an environment dedicated to the service of Hashem. The value of that group identity is inestimable, and it is perhaps one of the biggest losses experienced when leaving the yeshivah. But it does not need to be lost.

Rather than focusing on how often he can visit his old yeshivah, the successful working *ben Torah* will be determined to find or to form a new group that shares his values and spiritual ambitions. Ideally, his group will have a rav or mentor with whom they will get together regularly to discuss the new challenges and opportunities of their current stage of life.

The successful working *ben Torah* understands that indeed life is just beginning. He is ambitious about his *avodas Hashem* in the years ahead. He is well-adjusted to his new reality, and ready to embrace the opportunities of this next stage. And he is committed to travel the road ahead with the company and encouragement of others who share his dreams. Together, *b'ezras Hashem*, they will accomplish great things for HaKadosh Baruch Hu, for Torah, for their families, and for Klal Yisrael. ●

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