

A Loving Mother

Regrettably, Rav Meir's mother did not live to see the light of her life shine brilliantly throughout the world. She passed away as a young woman during the first world war. Her son never forgot his mother's love and sacrifice. Indeed, once Rav Meir was speaking to a large assemblage of men and women. Suddenly, in middle of his address, he declared with great emotion, "Be happy and filled with joy, my dear mother, as you rest in Gan Eden. You have truly earned your reward. Look down at the eminence that your son has achieved. Take note of his distinction as a gadol b'Yisrael, Torah leader."

Understandably, the audience was shocked. While it was certainly true, what possessed Rav Meir to make this public declaration in the middle of his speech? Why would he laud himself publicly at this venue? After a moment Rav Meir turned to the balcony where the women were seated and proclaimed, "You women of Klal Yisrael, righteous, holy mothers of the Jewish People, if you, too, desire and aspire that you shall have sons that are Torah luminaries, scholars and rabbanim, then follow in the footsteps of my revered, beloved mother who sacrificed her life so that her son could distinguish himself in Torah."

Rav Meir sought to dramatize a point. He wanted to captivate the people and grab their attention so that they they would hear his message. He succeeded. Now, if we will also listen, it will prove worthwhile to us, as well.