



# GROWTH

## At The SHABBAT TABLE

### PARSHAT BEHA'ALOTECHA

#### Making an Imprint

R' YY Jacobson shared a touching story with a potent message.

*Due to thousands of rockets coming from Gaza towards Southern Israel for multiple years, the people there have anywhere between 5 and 30 seconds to run for cover. To address this vulnerability, Israel had built miguniyot (steel-reinforced, stand-alone safe bomb shelters) on almost every block in the south, designated to withstand artillery impact. Elyasaf Mariah, a kind and humble painter living in Southern Israel, realized that for a young mother with her children hiding in one of these shelters as rockets land all around them, the protection they provide is challenged by their gloomy, plain, and concrete appearance. And so, Elyasaf took his palette and brushes and began to paint the inside and outside of all these shelters. A flock of birds, a sunrise, a splash of random colors, a breathtaking sunset, a child laughing, a graceful animal, a majestic mountain, a beautiful landscape. He added a soothing calm to these life-preserving edifices, reminding the trembling Jews that there is a beautiful world on the outside. He made sure to paint each shelter differently, giving each of them their own unique flavor and personality. Everyone loved Elyasaf and appreciated his kindness and sensitivity.*

*Then came the horrors of October 7th. Sirens blared, thousands of rockets were launched into Israel, and people fled to the closest migunit. Thousands of young Jews at the festival ran in every direction searching for one of these shelters. A few moments later, it became clear that thousands of terrorists have infiltrated Israel and were performing a mini-Holocaust. Clenched together in these bomb shelters, panicking Jews began calling their loved ones, family members, friends, and police to come and save them. "Please come, we are in a bomb shelter!" they pleaded. The problem was that there were hundreds of these structures. "Which shelter are you in? Where are you?" How could a family member, friend, or police possibly find this needle in a row of haystacks? But the people didn't know an address; the only*

*thing they could describe was the picture – the image painted on the walls of these shelters.*

*Suddenly, Elyasaf began receiving frantic messages and calls from family members. Call after call was describing a different Elyasaf creation – a butterfly with two small boys chasing it, a girl in a green dress holding a white balloon – and Elyasaf knew exactly where each bomb shelter was located. Remembering what mural he had painted on each shelter, he had been able to direct the loved ones and police to the exact location.*

*Had you asked Elyasaf on October 6, 2023 what he did for a living, he would have merely replied, "I am a simple dyer." Nothing dramatic. It turns out that he did not know the work he was doing. He thought he was just a simple painter, but in reality, he has helped so many in one of the most difficult days in recent Jewish history. Had the police phoned the IDF chief of staff, Israel's Defense Minister, or even the Israeli Prime Minister himself, nobody would be able to help them locate these shelters. There was only one human being in all of Israel who could save the day: Elyasaf the painter.*

In life, we often fail to realize and appreciate the work we're doing. We must internalize that wherever we are and whatever we are doing is by Divine Providence, and when one does it with all his heart, planting seeds of goodness, kindness, and love, the achievements are unfathomable. The Talmud teaches: Each person ought to say, "For me the world was created." Although the truth of this statement can be easily doubted, Elyasaf teaches us how true it is. There was something he could accomplish that no other person in Israel or the world could. To think of ourselves as just simple people trying to survive is a superficial description. Judaism teaches that G-d tells us: I need you. And wherever you are in the world, no matter your vocation or occupation – no matter your emotional state or life situation – you are in the business of saving lives, lifting hearts, and lighting up a dark world.

In loving  
memory of  
Abo ben  
Mazal Tov

#### Refuah Sheleimah for the Wounded Soldiers, b'toch she'ar cholei Yisrael:

Avihu Rafael ben Anat	Itai ben Sigal	Itai Rafael ben Rotam	Alon ben Lilian	David ben Ziva	Chaim Daniel ben Hodaya
Chaim Ido ben Anbal	Yehonatan ben Adette	Yehonatan Chaim ben Chemda	Yehonatan Chaim ben Tamar	Miriam	
Yochai Yehuda ben Sigal Chava	Yosef ben Chana	Yechiel Aryeh Leib ben Idit	Linor bat Shlomit	Moshe Chaim ben Karen	
Matan Shachar ben Anat	Nurit ben Esther	Niko Navon ben Karina	Yehudit	Netanel Avraham ben Tichye Simcha	
Odad Efraim ben Vivian	Aren Rafael ben Elka	Roi Chaim ben Meirav	Shlomo Yitzchak ben Rachel		

*"Sometimes, the journey is hidden from us so that we rely not on the destination but on the One leading us there." (Meaningful Minute)*