



GROWTH

At The

SHABBAT TABLE

PARSHAT VA'ERA

Depressed?

The late R' Jonathan Sacks, of blessed memory, shared something remarkable.

Someone had once written a letter to the Lubavitcher Rebbe: "I am deeply depressed. I can hardly find the will to go on living. I pray, and I am not moved. I fulfill the commands, yet I feel no satisfaction. I need the Rebbe's help."

Before he was a leader, the Rebbe ran a publishing house. He was thus able to send a brilliant reply without using a single word. Using typographical symbols, he simply ringed the first word in every sentence, which was "I." The Rebbe was communicating that the reason the individual felt miserable was because he started every sentence with the word "I." Only by abandoning the "I" and focusing on helping others can one begin to feel true contentment.

As Viktor Frankl always used to say, "The door to happiness opens outward"...

Refuah Sheleimah, b'toch she'ar cholei

Yisrael:

Ariel Ben Frida Noach Ephraim Ben Elka Sara
Avigayil Bat Tehillah Tzvi Dov Ben Sarah
Frida Bat Yaffa Noach Yisrael Ben Victoria Yaffa
Miriam Bat Bakol Chana Bat Malka David
Ben Rivka David Ben Tzivia Rena Bat Bakol
Ariella Bat Hila Yitzhak Ben Naama Yehoshua
Ben Miriam Zev Dovid Ben Sara Rachamim Ben
Shifra Sofia Bat Vera Barno Eliron Ben Leah

"A single act of kindness may not change the world, but it can change someone's entire world." (R' Paysach Krohn)

The Greatest Honor

A certain boy who grew up in Bnei Brak had eventually come to leave his home and abandon Judaism. Some time later, he was about to marry a non-Jewish girl.

One of his friends had pleaded with him to at least give his parents the dignity of a goodbye. Obviously, they wouldn't come to the wedding, but he could at least bid them farewell. The kid thought about it and agreed. He called his parents and told them that he would come home for Shabbat. He stipulated that he wouldn't participate in the Shabbat meals – he would merely be at the home and allow for them to converse.

The whole Shabbat, the boy was on the porch, smoking, while the family was eating the meals. There was palpable tension; they didn't say anything, and he didn't say anything. Finally, on Shabbat afternoon, the father walked outside to the porch and invited his son to attend a shiur by R' Aharon Leib Shteinman with him. "R' Shteinman?" the boy asked. "Okay... I'll come." The father was shocked, and took his son to the lecture of the renowned rabbi. They sat through the small shiur, and after it concluded, all those in attendance got up and passed by the rabbi to wish him a "Good Shabbos." When the father finally reached the rabbi, he wished him a "Good Shabbos" and introduced him to his son. Immediately, the son made a disclaimer: "And I don't keep Shabbat." Just in case he may have thought otherwise, the boy felt compelled to set the record straight right away and avoid any confusion.

"How long?" asked R' Aharon Leib, undeterred. "Two years," came the boy's reply. "In two years, have you ever thought of keeping Shabbat? Did you ever feel like you wanted to keep Shabbat?" The young man responded in the affirmative. "How many times?" Somewhat confused, the boy said, "Maybe four times," thinking about the Rosh Hashanahs and Yom Kippurs of the past two years where he sat and contemplated observing Shabbat. R' Aharon Leib persisted, "How many minutes each time did you have these considerations?" Perplexed as to where this was going, the young man shrugged. "I don't know, 10 minutes?"

At that point, R' Shteinman was ecstatic. "So you're telling me that in two years, you had 40 minutes of where you thought about keeping Shabbat? 40 minutes of where you were a ba'al teshuvah? 40 minutes in which you reached a place in Heaven that a complete and wholesome tzaddik can't reach? Despite whatever you went through in life, you still had thoughts to be able to return to the Almighty and rose to the Heavenly Throne for 40 minutes? Wow!! It is an honor to wish you a good Shabbos!"

Not expecting this response in the slightest, the boy broke down. He went home and cried in his bed. R' Aharon Leib's love penetrated directly into his heart. Within a year, he figured things out and broke off the wedding. Before anyone knew it, he was back into a religious lifestyle.

We can never underestimate the power we have by just finding the good in others and holding space for unconditional love. No judgment, no blame, no guilt. Just a good eye and a warm heart...

(Story recounted by Charlie Harary)