



GROWTH

At The

SHABBAT TABLE

PARSHAT BO

Paying Respects

R' Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, a very holy and pious Jew, was once seen attending the funeral of a well-known miser. This man, Mr. Horowitz [1], had been known to have been blessed financially yet never gave any charity or participated in communal projects. Certain individuals were somewhat confused why R' Levi Yitzchak would attend the funeral of such a man, to which the tzaddik responded, "I want you to know that I sat as a judge in the court a few times, and every single time this man came to court, he lost." This perplexed them even further, and R' Levi Yitzchak clarified what he meant by disclosing one such occurrence.

Another individual living in the neighborhood struggled immensely to make ends meet. He felt like he had tried everything, but to no avail. The downtrodden man didn't know how to tell his wife that they were completely broke, and so, he wrote a letter in which he told his wife that he would travel overseas in an attempt to make money. He reassured her that, in the meantime, she would be financially secure. "I made arrangements with the fellow down the block, at the corner," he wrote. "He will supply you with your needs every Friday." After having signed the letter, he fled. By the time his wife got home, he was already long gone. She read the letter and accepted her new predicament, feeling bad for her poor husband. She walked down the street and knocked on her neighbor's door. The neighbor – Mr. Horowitz – greeted his neighbor, "How can I help you?" She started to explain that she came to collect the money. Of course, Mr. Horowitz had no idea what she was referring to, because her husband hadn't actually made any arrangements. Overwhelmed by utter embarrassment, her husband had completely abandoned her, leaving her to fend for herself.

Seeing the confusion on Mr. Horowitz's face, the wife began to sheepishly stammer, "My husband said that he arranged with you while he's away on business that you would take care of the finances..." After a few moments, he realized that her husband had fooled her. Seeking to avoid causing her further embarrassment and anguish, he quickly responded, "Ohhh, right, of course. Come right in." He took out an envelope, placed some cash inside, and gave it to her. "Here you go; I'll see you next week."

This went on for a year and a half. Sure enough, the husband's business ventures overseas proved successful, and he traveled back home with a significant sum of money. The whole return trip, he had

been petrified; he knew he had left his wife penniless and hadn't told anyone to take care of her. He knew that if she was still alive, he would be a dead man. As he opened the door to his home and was expecting the worst, he was bewildered when his wife rejoiced upon his arrival. After she sat him down for a celebratory dinner, he ran down the block to Mr. Horowitz's house. "You took care of my wife for a year and a half?" he asked. The wealthy neighbor responded in the affirmative. "I can't thank you enough, you're such a righteous man," the husband admitted. "I just made a lot of money overseas. Please send me the final bill and I'll pay everything I owe in full." Mr. Horowitz shook his head, "No, I don't want your money." The husband was baffled. "But you laid out the money for me! Allow me to reimburse you!" Mr. Horowitz explained that he wanted the mitzvah of taking care of someone for a year and a half, and he wasn't willing to give it up. "But she's my wife and it's my responsibility to take care of her!" the husband argued. "Yeah, but it's my mitzvah and I'm not giving it back to you," the generous neighbor countered. They brought their dispute to court, appearing before R' Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev. After careful deliberation, the verdict was that Mr. Horowitz had lost the case; he ended up having to receive the money.

This was the man whose funeral R' Levi Yitzchak had attended. The rabbi had explained to his audience that this man had done such types of chesed for many other people. He always fled from honor and never publicized how he would constantly help others; although people had come to know him as the town miser, he took care of many people behind the scenes. Everyone had thought the man was sad and pathetic, but R' Levi Yitzchak knew this was a very holy Jew. [2]

We never really know the whole story behind other people. Often, we can hardly even see the underlying depth, majesty, and greatness that is intrinsic to our own souls. When we look for the good in ourselves and in others, abandoning the notion that we have the full picture clear, the world takes on a whole different perception and becomes a much brighter reality.

[1] Fictional name

[2] Story recounted by R' Chaim Rosenfeld

"Live in such a way that those who know you but don't know G-d will come to know G-d because they know you."

Refuah Sheleimah, b'toch she'ar cholei Yisrael:

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|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Ariel Ben Frida | Gavriel Ben Dina | Avigayil Bat Tehillah | Shlomo Ben Etal | Tzvi Dov Ben Sara | Frida Bat Yaffa | Noach Yisrael Ben |
| Victoria Yaffa | Miriam Bat Bakol | Chana Bat Malka | David Ben Rivka | David Ben Tzivvia | Rena Bat Bakol | Ariella Bat Hila |
| Ben Naama | Yehoshua Ben Miriam | Zev Dovid Ben Sara | Rachamim Ben Shifra | Sofia Bat Vera Barno | Eliron Ben Leah | Eliana Rachel |
| Bat Shifra | Shoshana Raizel | Baila Bat Mindel Kaila | Dora Devorah Bat Marusia Mazal | Uriel Ben David | Yochai Shimon Ben | Daniella Odet |

Dedicated in loving memory of Chaim Ben Salfra & Leonid Simis