



“The Bed By The Window”

April 2017

Recently I had a conversation with one of our members on the street that taught me a most important lesson in life. Please let me share it with you.

So for this story, we'll call our member "Billy". Billy is what we call a recovering serious alcoholic and substance abuser. So I asked Billy what made him go for help? He answered me "I got sick and tired of being sick and tired". So Billy went for help and now is part of a support group that assists and gives encouragement to others in the same situation. But one of the most important lessons he left me was when he said to me "Rabbi, we all have trials and tribulations in life, but I try every day to stop for a few moments and count my blessings". Wow, what powerful words, because even in the midst of all of the challenges that life throws at us, we all have blessings in life to be grateful for, for example having our eyesight that we can read this. And Billy made it his mission to share his story with those that hit bottom, to never give up on life the way our loving G-d never gives up on us. It reminded me of the story I heard recently about a hospital patient, called "The Bed by The Window" here it is.

Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour a day to drain the fluids from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back. The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in the military service, where they had been on vacation. And every afternoon when the man in the bed next to the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window.

The man in the other bed would live for those one-hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and color of the outside world. The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake, the man had said. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Lovers walked arm in arm amid flowers of every color of the rainbow. Grand old trees graced the landscape, and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance. As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene.

One warm afternoon the man by the window described a parade passing by. Although the other man could not hear the band, he could see it in his mind's eye

as the gentleman by the window portrayed it with descriptive words. Unexpectedly, an alien thought entered his head: Why should he have all the pleasure of seeing everything while I never get to see anything? It didn't seem fair. As the thought fermented, the man felt ashamed at first. But as the days passed and he missed seeing more sights, his envy eroded into resentment and soon turned him sour. He began to brood and found himself unable to sleep. He should be by that window and that thought now controlled his life.

Late one night, as he lay staring at the ceiling, the man by the window began to cough. He was choking on the fluid in his lungs. The other man watched in the dimly lit room as the struggling man by the window groped for the button to call for help. Listening from across the room, he never moved, never pushed his own button which would have brought the nurse running.

In less than five minutes, the coughing and choking stopped, along with the sound of breathing. Now, there was only silence-deathly silence.

The following morning the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths. When she found the lifeless body of the man by the window, she was saddened and called the hospital attendant to take him away-no words, no fuss.

As soon as it seemed appropriate, the man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone. Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look. Finally, he would have the joy of seeing it all himself. He strained to slowly turn to look out the window beside the bedIt faced a blank wall.

The man asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate who had described such wonderful things outside this window. The nurse responded that the man was blind and could not even see the wall. She said, "Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you."

Epilogue . . .

There is tremendous happiness in making others happy, despite our own situations. Shared grief is half the sorrow, but happiness when shared, is doubled. If you want to feel rich, just count all of the things you have that money can't buy.

And never pass up an opportunity of sharing a laugh or a kind word with a peer or a friend, for we never know the size of the burden on their hearts. You will make them feel better and you'll get that feeling in your heart that will make your day!

And here is one from our humor department to keep you smiling:

A young man asked an old rich man how he made his money. The old guy fingered his worsted wool vest and said,

"Well son, it was 1932. The depth of the *Great Depression*. I was down to my last nickel. I invested that nickel in an apple. I spent the entire day polishing that apple and, at the end of the day, I sold the apple for ten cents.

The next morning, I invested those ten cents in two apples. I spent the entire day polishing them and sold them for 20 cents. I continued this system of polishing and selling, each time reinvesting my profits into buying more apples." "Wow!" said the young man, "and that's how you accumulated your fortune?"

"Nah", said the old man, "my wife's father died and left us two million dollars."...lol... A warm fuzzy story that tickles the heart.

On behalf of ALL the Chaplains, Thanks for all the holy and noble work that you do when you hit the streets every day, "To Serve And Protect".

Just FYI as your Chaplains, we make house calls, should you need us, and we'll come to you. Your Chaplains (Fr. Dan Brandt, PO'S Joe Jackson, Kimberley Davis, Bob Montelongo) are available 24/7.

The Chaplains unit # 312-746-8458. A special shout out to Fr. Dan Brandt and Chaplain Bob Montelongo who are on the streets, in the Districts, every Wednesday afternoon through Thursday afternoon that's 18hrs. straight EVERY week to be with their flock. G-d bless them!

Should you need a shoulder to lean on or an ear to listen or perhaps some good humor to share, please do not hesitate to give us a call.

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