



“Remember - You Are Never Alone”

February 2019

Recently I attended a wake of one of our members, who succumbed to their illness of depression, and committed suicide. The partner of the member came over to me (we'll call the partner "Tom") and said, "Rabbi, the pain of losing a loved one to suicide is indescribable, our lives will never be the same. We all have the same thoughts of feeling helpless of why we didn't see any clues or any symptoms of the pain of our loved ones. Then you have the usual remarks of how nobody cares about us and the stress of the job". Tom continued, "Lets start a movement called "Remember, You Are Never Alone", and our motto is going to be, instead of saying "What is the Department doing for me?" lets start saying "What can we do for each other?"".

When we need back up on a job, we never hesitate to get on the radio and ask for an assist, let us remember when we need emotional help not to hesitate to reach to a partner, friend or professional, because in our family "Remember, You Are Never Alone". That said, we cried, we hugged and I promised Tom I would spread the word. As I was pulling away from the funeral home deeply engrossed in thought, it reminded me of a story from my youth , "Life 101--Sharing of Souls".....

In a small corner of Brooklyn New York, there is a bakery owned by a gentleman named Jack. I remember that as a young boy we used to frequent this bakery, visit with Jack and would always be treated to some jelly cookies, as we sat at a coffee table set up in a corner of the shop. He was a very special human being. He was a survivor of the Nazi concentration camps and had the prison numbers tattooed on his hand. Even as young boy I was fascinated and enthralled by Jack's stories of faith, sacrifice and determination to survive, even under the most difficult of circumstances. If one of our visits , It was a bit slow at the shop, Jack came over, sat down at the table with us and said, “You know why it is that I’m alive today”? We were all ears and eager to hear some enlightening words from Jack. He continued “let me tell you a story. I was a kid, just a teenager at the time. It was a cold winter day, we were on the train, in a crammed boxcar, being taken to Auschwitz concentration camp. Night came and it was freezing, deathly cold, in

that boxcar. The Germans would leave the cars on the side of the tracks overnight, sometimes for days on end without any food, and of course, no blankets to keep us warm," he said. "Sitting next to me was an older gentleman – this beloved elderly gentleman, I recognized at once, was from my hometown, but I had never seen him like this. He was shivering from head to toe, his skin was starting to turn purple from lack of blood circulation and he looked like he was fading away. So I wrapped my arms around him and began rubbing and massaging him, to warm him up get his circulation going. I rubbed his arms, his legs, his face, his neck. I begged him to hang on and not give up. All night long; I kept the man warm this way and kept whispering encouragement into his ear. I was tired, I was freezing cold myself, my fingers were numb, but I didn't stop rubbing the heat on to this man's body. Hours and hours went by this way. Finally, night passed, morning came, and the sun began to shine. There was some warmth in the cabin, and then I looked around the car to see some of the other people crammed in the car. To my horror, all I could see were frozen bodies, and all I could hear was a deathly silence. Nobody else in that cabin made it through the night – they died from the frost. Only two people survived: the old gentleman and myself... The old man survived because somebody kept him warm; I survived because I was warming somebody else..."

Jack continued "Let me tell you one the greatest secrets of life. When you warm other people's hearts, you remain warm yourself. When you seek to support, encourage and inspire others; then you discover support, encouragement and inspiration in your own life as well". That, my friends, is "Life 101". With that Jack got up went back to work. The moral of the story is " the most beautiful way to keep your soul warm and to enrich your own soul, is to reach out to a friend in need, and help warm their soul, help them with their burden, you will both walk away

feeling your burden a bit lighter and your souls warmed. Because when you bring sunshine and a smile to the soul of another you make your Lord smile, and He in turn will bring sunshine and a smile to your soul". That my friend is called "Sharing of Souls.

Now a short story from the humor files to keep you smiling "The Canoe, the Boat, the Helicopter"... A very religious man was once caught in rising flood waters. He climbed onto the roof of his house and trusted G-d to rescue him. A neighbor came by in a canoe and said, "The waters will soon be above your house. Hop in and we'll paddle to safety."

"No thanks" replied the religious man. "I've prayed to G-d and I'm sure he will save me". A short time later the police came by in a boat. "The waters will soon be above your house. Hop in and we'll take you to safety."

"No thanks" replied the religious man. "I've prayed to G-d and I'm sure he will save me"

A little time later a rescue services helicopter hovered overhead, let down a rope ladder and said. "The waters will soon be above your house. Climb the ladder and we'll fly you to safety."

"No thanks" replied the religious man. "I've prayed to G-d and I'm sure he will save me"

All this time the flood waters continued to rise, until soon they reached above the roof and the religious man drowned. When he arrived at heaven he demanded an audience with G-d. Ushered into God's throne room he said, "Lord, why am I here in heaven? I prayed for you to save me, I trusted you to save me from that flood."

"Yes you did my child" replied the Lord. "And I sent you a canoe, a boat and a helicopter. But you never got in." Moral of the story: "Don't discard the gift, just because it didn't come gift wrapped like you expected".

On behalf of ALL the Chaplains, May G-d bless you and keep you safe. Should you need a shoulder to lean on, an ear to listen, or perhaps some good humor to share, don't hesitate to give us a call.

Compliments of your Police Chaplain

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