

Good Shabbos Everyone. In this week's parsha Vayeira, we read about Avrohom and Sorah's kindness in welcoming guests into their tent. In fact, Avrohom Avinu built his tent with openings on four sides so that it would be easy to welcome guests. Avrohom Avinu, the father of the Jewish people, was the paradigm of Chesed - kindness. The Talmud in fact tells us that a Jew is distinguished by three character traits: shyness, mercifulness, and dedication to doing acts of kindness. (Yevamos 79b) The Talmud goes so far as to say that someone who lacks one of these qualities must be checked out to make sure that he is really Jewish! The following inspirational story, told in the first person, illustrates how one Jew went in the footsteps of Avrohom and Sorah.

"I was a student at Stern College of Yeshiva University in Manhattan. For the two-and-a-half years that I was there, I encountered many homeless people who sat on street corners and asked for money.

Although I tried to help all of these people as much as I could, there was a man named Kenny who I went out my way to help. The unique thing about Kenny was that although he was probably paranoid and schizophrenic, he always had a smile; his face always radiated sunshine. Even if I did not have money for him when I saw him, I always tried to say just a quick hello to him every day to let him know that I cared.

As soon as I finished my studies at Stern College, I left for Israel. Shortly after I arrived in Israel, my parents told me that they wanted me to fly back to New York to go to the graduation ceremony. Although I wanted to see my parents, I did not think it was worth us all of us going to New York (my parents are from Georgia) just for my graduation.

But my parents said it would be a highlight of their life to see me at graduation, so I agreed to go with them.

After my graduation, when my dad, sister, and I were walking around Manhattan, I spotted Kenny. I had not seen him in about a year but we recognized each other. Kenny jumped up when he saw us and said to my dad, "Sir, your daughter was always so nice to me and would give me money or just say hello to me whenever she saw me. She made me realize that people care and she would make my day when I saw her."

After we walked away, my dad turned to me and said, "Wow, hearing what Kenny said was one of the happiest moments of my life. It meant much more to me than your graduation, because seeing Kenny and hearing what he said made me feel like a success. I then realized that I did something right in the way I raised your sister and you." (story from Rabbi Baruch Lederman)

Let us all endeavor to be like Avrohom and Sorah, the Patriarch and Matriarch, who always sought to do kindness with others. **Good Shabbos Everyone.**