SESSION 3

IN BLESSED MEMORY OF NIREL ZINI

The Michael and Andrea Leven Family Foundation

LEGACIES INITIATIVE

OLAMI MENTORSHIP

NIREL

Nirel Zini was murdered alongside his fiance-to-be Niv when Hamas terrorists stormed into Kfar Aza on October 7.

Nirel was one of the kindest, selfless and most generous people that you could meet.

Here is a powerful story about Nir to give us perspective.
In 2014 upon completing his officer training course Nirel was assigned to command a platoon in Har Dov, a very volatile area. He was replacing the previous commander that had been killed by a rocket.

Nirel embraced the challenge with dedication and compassion and initially stayed on the base for five consecutive weeks barely sleeping, and never even having a chance to remove his boots.

After five weeks Nirel Was given a brief weekend furlough and was told that he would be replaced by another officer at 2 AM.

To save Nirel travel time, Nirel's dad Amir, drove from their home in the far south of Israel all the way to the base up north to pick him up.

When Nirel's dad arrived, he noticed that Nirel was having a heated discussion with one of his soldiers. The discussion ended after a few minutes, Nirel then entered the car and the two of them began traveling southwards towards their home in Telamim.

On the journey Amir asked Nirel what the discussion with the soldier was about. Nirel shared that the soldier had been guilty of insubordination and was docked from going home for the weekend. Even so, the soldier begged him to allow him to go home as he was from a very poor family and each weekend when he would return home, he would work so that the family would have a little bit of money to live off of.

Nirel decided to keep him on base to face his punishment, nevertheless, he told the soldier that he personally would take care of his family and that he would do his best to ensure that they had what they needed.

At about 7 AM, Nirel and his dad reached the center of Israel whereupon Nirel asked his dad if he had a few extra minutes. When his dad replied in the affirmative, Nirel directed his dad to a large commercial army food depot, Nirel entered the facility and returned a short while later with cases and cases of non-perishables, pasta, canned food... enough for months.

Nirel then asked his dad if he had any cash and when he replied that he did, they made another stop at a local grocery and Nirel purchased enough food to fill the rest of the car. He bought perishables for Shabbat, cake, dairy products, chicken, fish, drinks and wine ...

Nirel then asked his dad if he could drive him to an address in Holon. A while later, they arrived at a decrepit apartment building in an impoverished neighborhood. Nirel asked his dad to pull up to the entrance and Nirel began to unload the many food items and carry them up three flights of stairs.

When Nirel's dad offered to assist him, Nirel replied that he would have to do it alone to spare them any embarrassment. He explained that as long as it came from him they would assume it was from the army, but if his dad was a part of it they would begin to suspect that perhaps it was charity!

After many trips up and down the stairs Nirel returned to the car sweating profusely, but with a satisfied smile on his face.

As they headed home Nirel shared with his dad that he was shocked by the appearance of the apartment which did not even have the most basic furniture. The family slept on mattresses and stored their clothing and personal items in plastic boxes. They lived in crushing poverty.

However, Nirel was not yet done. For the duration of the trip and even when they arrived home, Nirel was on his phone trying to arrange furniture for the poor family. Like a seasoned officer, he assigned the task of coming up with various pieces of furniture to different friends and acquaintances and by the time the afternoon arrived, a truck full of second hand furniture was waiting to be delivered to the poor family in Holon.

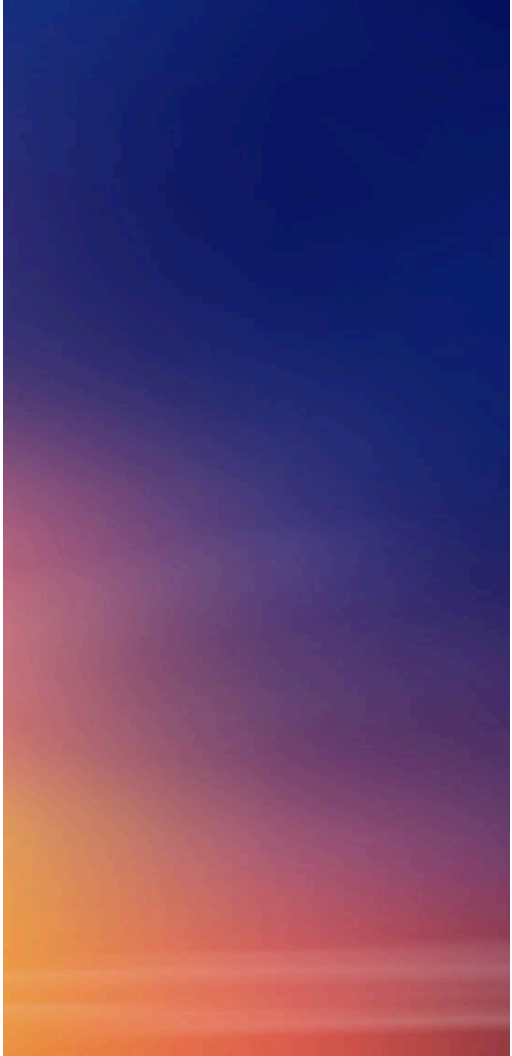
Shortly before Shabbat an elated Nirel shared with his family that his soldier's family's home was fully furnished!

It was only then shortly before Shabbat that Nirel started to think about himself!

The above story is classic of how Nirel viewed and interacted with the world around him. Nirel looked for opportunities to assist others. He had an uncanny ability to find those individuals that society overlooked and empower them with a sense of purpose and belonging. Nirel's incredible joie de vivre and positive energy made him a magnet to anyone that he met.

Shortly before Nirel was murdered, he sat down with his fiancée Niv (who we will meet in a subsequent session) and his mom to discuss a personal dilemma. Nirel and Niv were slated to be married this summer, and when Nirel sat down to compile a guest list he was stymied. He had hundreds of people who he knew would expect a wedding invite as they considered Nirel as their best friend. Yet, it simply was not possible to invite them all. How should he choose who to invite?

When Nirel's mom shared this story with us, she concluded with a deep sigh, that sadly in the end, Nirel's entire list plus hundreds of others all showed up for Nirel, yet sadly, for his funeral...



To commemorate Nirel's legacy we will focus on his outstanding quality of selflessness and attempt to internalize this character trait by upgrading our lives in the upcoming week.

SELFLESSNESS

1. To get the conversation going, please share with one another who is the most selfless person that you know and a bit about why you chose that person.

2. Think about this: Selfish people view others through their own lens. They see the world around them in terms of how it will affect them. Selfless people try to view another person from the other's perspective even if it means putting others before themselves.

3. Who do you think lives an overall happier life? Selfless or selfish people? Why?

Here is a fascinating spiritual perspective on selflessness and its benefits.

- One of the basic cornerstones of Judaism is that each of us has a soul. The Torah teaches us that our soul is a “small piece of the Almighty Himself”.
- Another important foundation of Jewish belief is that the Almighty created the world 100% altruistically. In other words existence was created solely for our benefit.
- What follows is that being that we all possess a piece of the Almighty we innately possess a drive to give altruistically. In other words our purest essence is selflessness.
- Based on the above, it is no wonder that we feel a certain pleasure when we give. It is a sensation of being true to our very essence.
- Our tradition likens the soul to a candle. “The candle of the Almighty is the human soul”. Based on the above, can you figure out why your soul is analogous to a lit candle?

Can you think of a time in your life when you experienced the euphoria of selflessness?

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Here are a few practical ways to make selflessness a bigger part of your life.

1. Make an effort to compliment others.
2. Smile more!
3. Listen instead of speaking.
4. When someone shares their pain try to put yourself in their shoes and empathize.
5. Let someone else be the center of attention.
6. Exercise patience to others.
7. Perform one act of random kindness each day.

HELPING OTHERS WAS SO IMPORTANT TO NIREL

As you take this week to upgrade your life by focusing on assisting others, please **use this QR code or this link to send a message to Nirel's family.**

It will mean the world to them!

JOIN US NOW

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