

The Nobleman and the Seed



Once there was a nobleman with power and riches. He loved everything. Learning and art, and all such things, he had partaken of. But the times were troubled in his country, and for some reason he lost all he had and was imprisoned. Then there was scarcely anything in his life. All he had was the cell, the prison yard, and, now and again, a word or two from his keeper. The cell was small and gloomy, the keeper silent, the yard confined and so closely paved with cobblestones that one could barely see the earth between them.



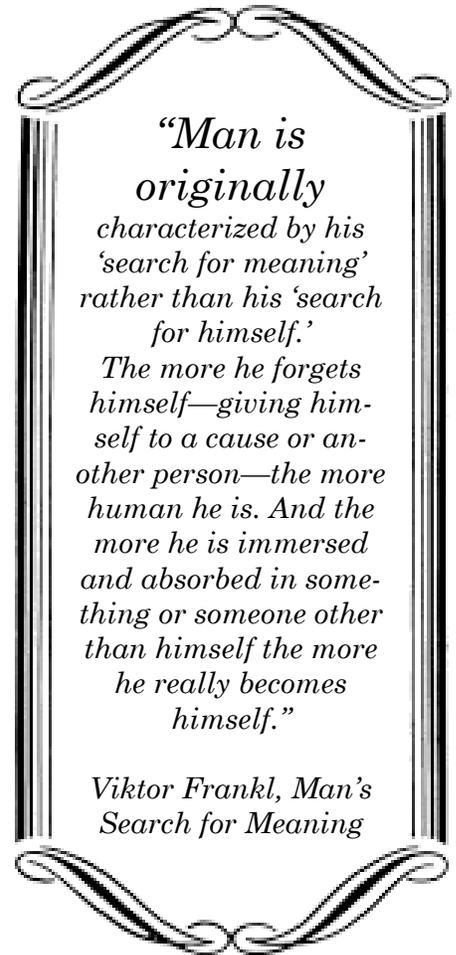
One day, as he walked in his yard, the man noticed that between two of the stones there seemed to be something. He looked closer. With the greatest attention he studied it, then he knelt on the rough stones and looked and looked again. His heart beat and his hands trembled, but with a touch as gentle as one could give, he moved a grain or two of soil and there, beneath, was something that the poor captive cried out for joy to see—a tiny plant. As if in a new world, and certainly as if another man, he cared daily for the tender little companion that had come to share his loneliness; he thought of it first in the morning and last at night. He gave it of his supply of water and, as a father, he watched over it.



The plant grew until one day the man saw that the little plant must either die or have more room. But it could not have more room unless a cobblestone was removed. Now this could only be done with the consent of the Emperor. It took many long weeks of correspondence but he did get his request to the Emperor and the Emperor gave his permission. So the plant was given more room, but even more the prisoner himself was given more room—he was liberated.



Just because the seed of a beautiful thing came to life in his tiny world, he found love for it. And that love gave him a new life because he cared for something—something outside himself. And it filled his life with beauty and hope. That love which is given outside of one's self, reveals the beauty of the world.



“Man is originally characterized by his ‘search for meaning’ rather than his ‘search for himself.’

The more he forgets himself—giving himself to a cause or another person—the more human he is. And the more he is immersed and absorbed in something or someone other than himself the more he really becomes himself.”

Viktor Frankl, Man’s Search for Meaning



There will now and again come to us a scene, a remembrance, so full of beauty and pleasure that we shall feel rich in the possession of it.

~Thomas Tapper