

Eulogy for Edna Davis (Nov. 5/93)

IN THE TORA PORTION WE READ TOMORROW, WE READ OF THE DEATH OF FATHER ABRAHAM AND MOTHER SARA.

IN TELLING OF THEIR DEATHS, THE TORA AND OUR RABBINIC SAGES STRESS THEIR LONG ACCOMPLISHED LIVES AND THEIR ATTAINMENT OF OLD AGE.

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-- TRANSLATED: IN OUR BIBLE "ABRAHAM

WAS OLD, ADVANCED IN YEARS.

A TRUER TRANSLATION WOULD READ "AND ABRAHAM WAS

OLD, HE CAME WITH HIS DAYS".

ABRAHAM REACHED HIS ADVANCED YEARS BRINGING WITH

HIM NOT A FRAGMENTED LIFE OF WASTED DAYS, HE BROUGHT WITH HIM ALL HIS DAYS. HIS LIFE

HAD SUCH MEANING, HIS DAYS HAD BEEN SPENT SO WELL, THAT HE COULD LOOK BACK TO HIS PAST WITH SATISFACTION.

HE COULD LOOK BACK ON A LIFE WHOSE DAYS WERE NOT WASTED.

HIS LIFE WAS A CONTINUUM THAT FLOWED FROM YOUTH THROUGH THE PROCESS OF AGING -- A CONTINUATION OF AN ACTIVE, FAITHFUL AND PRODUCTIVE LIFE.

SIMILARLY, IT IS SAID OF SARAH THAT SHE LIVED A HUNDRED YEARS AND TWENTY AND SEVEN YEARS.

WITH THE WORD "YEARS" REPEATED BETWEEN EACH NUMBER, TO INDICATE THAT THE AGING YEARS AND THE YEARS OF YOUTH WERE EQUALLY PRODUCTIVE. THAT SHE RETAINED HER PURITY AND HER INNER BEAUTY AND HER WISDOM THROUGH THE ENTIRE SPAN OF HER LIFETIME.

SARAH LIVED ALL HER YEARS WITH A TRUE ZEST FOR LIFE AND ITS NEXT ADVENTURE.

IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT FOR SOME, HUMAN NATURE WILL EMPHASIZE THE MEMORIES THAT ARE MOST RECENT.

THAT EDNA DAVIS WILL BE REMEMBERED BY SOME PEOPLE PRIMARILY FOR HER COURAGE IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY:

FOR HER STRENGTH DURING HER LONG PROTRACTED ILLNESS.

SHE FOUGHT HARD -- SHE SUFFERED MUCH -- BUT THERE WAS A STRONG WILL TO LIVE

-- TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT. THESE ARE ADMIRABLE QUALITIES. THEY REFLECT A

CONTINUUM OF LIFE FILLED WITH ZEST THAT FOLLOWED HER EVEN TO HER SICK BED. THESE

PAST YEARS OF PAIN HAVE SHOWN HER AS A BRAVE WOMAN OF CHARACTER. BUT IT IS WRONG TO DEFINE HER LIFE BY THE YEARS OF FRAIL HEALTH. LIKE ABRAHAM, EDNA DAVIS LIVED A LIFE THAT WAS **

A LIFE THAT WAS AN ADVENTURE.

A LIFE FILLED WITH ZEST AND VIGOR AND FUN.

EDNA HAD THE TRUE GIFT OF ENJOYING LIFE.

OF MAKING EACH DAY COUNT.

THE TORA

RECORDS AT THE END OF ABRAHAM'S LIFE THAT

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THAT GOD BLESSED ABRAHAM IN ALL THINGS.

AND TODAY OUR MEMORIES OF EDNA DAVIS MUST GET BEYOND THE ILLNESS TO THE MANY YEARS OF HER LIFE THAT WAS BLESSED IN SO MANY WAYS.

SHE HAD THE BLESSING OF A 56 YEAR MARRIAGE TO A MAN SHE LOVED DEARLY. THE UNION OF JULIUS AND EDNA WAS A STORY BOOK ROMANCE.

A STORY OF CHILDHOOD

SWEETHEARTS WHOSE LOVE FOR EACH OTHER NEVER WANED.

AT AGE 4 OR 8 (THERE ARE

DIFFERENT VERSIONS) JULIUS ASKED EDNA TO MARRY HIM.

AT THE TIME THEY WERE SITTING

ON A PICKLE BARREL.

SHE DECIDED THAT THE TIME WAS NOT YET RIPE, THAT MAYBE THEY

SHOULD WAIT A WHILE.

SINCE THAT TIME THEY DID EVERYTHING TOGETHER. CHILDHOOD SWEETHEARTS EVOLVED INTO HIGH SCHOOL ROMANCE.

AND THAT EVOLVED INTO A DEEP FRIENDSHIP AND

WHEN LATER SOME LAWYER WOODED EDNA BUT STOOD FIRM AND SAID SHE WOULD HAVE TO GIVE UP HER FRIENDSHIP TO JULIUS, EDNA REALIZED HOW IMPORTANT JULIUS WAS.

AND THEIR FAIRY

TALE ROMANCE BECAME WEDDED BLISS

THEY ENJOYED MANY THINGS TOGETHER.

DANCING, TRAVELLING, WORKING.

THEY WORKED TOGETHER AND PLAYED TOGETHER.

LATER, THEY ENJOYED WINTERS TO

HAWAII TOGETHER.

THEY ENJOYED SMALL INTIMACIES TOGETHER.

ELAINE REMEMBERS

THAT THERE WASN'T A DAY THAT JULIUS DIDN'T BRING EDNA COFFEE IN BED.

FIONA RECALLS

SHOPPING TRIPS WHEN THE 70 YEAR OLD COUPLE WOULD WALK TOGETHER HAND IN HAND LIKE

NEWLY WEDS. THERE WAS NOTHING, NOT EVEN SICKNESS THAT COULD COME BETWEEN EDNA AND JULIUS.

THE TWO OF THEM HAD A GREAT ABILITY TO LOVE LIFE.

ELAINE RECALLS THAT

EVEN WHEN SHE WAS ILL, THEY WOULD DANCE AT WEDDINGS, JULIUS DANCING WITH EDNA IN HER WHEEL CHAIR.

ELAINE TELLS OF HOW THEY WENT ON A CRUISE A YEAR AGO.

EDNA THOUGHT IT A

GREAT TRIUMPH THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE DAY THAT SHE NEEDED HOSPITAL CARE.

SOMEHOW THEY KNEW THEY NEEDED THIS LAST FUN TIME TOGETHER. AND THEY WERE NOT PREPARED TO ALLOW ANYTHING TO GET IN THEIR WAY.

DURING THE YEARS OF HER ILLNESS, JULIUS WAS A SOURCE OF STRENGTH TO HIS BELOVED EDNA. IN HOSPITAL, HE WAS ALWAYS BY HER SIDE, FINDING WAYS TO SHARE INTIMACY EVEN IN SICKNESS. THEIR MARRIAGE EPITOMIZED THE TRADITIONAL SECULAR WEDDING IMAGE; IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH -- TILL DEATH DO YOU PART.

IT IS PERHAPS NO ACCIDENT THAT TOMORROW'S TORA READING RECORDS THE DEATH OF BOTH ABRAHAM AND SARA IN THE SAME CHAPTER. AFTER LIVING A LIFE OF ADVENTURE AND ACCOMPLISHMENT TOGETHER, THERE WAS A SPIRITUAL NEED TO JOIN EACH OTHER IN THE OTHER WORLD. AND NOW EDNA JOINS JULIUS SO THEY CAN BE TOGETHER FOR THE NEXT ADVENTURE.

OF SARAH IT WAS SAID BY THE RABBI THAT SHE RETAINED HER PURITY AND BEAUTY EVEN IN OLD AGE. THAT SHE WAS PURE AND BEAUTIFUL AT AGE 127 AS A 20 YEAR OLD AND A 7 YEAR OLD. OF EDNA IT CAN BE SAID THAT SHE RETAINED THE SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE AND IMPULSE AT 70 THAT SHE HAD AT 7.

SHE WAS ALWAYS WILLING TO TRY SOMETHING NEW. WHETHER IT WAS THE LATEST OF GADGETS OR FASHIONS OR HAIR COLORS. SHE LEARNT TO SWIM AT AGE 70. SHE HAD THE IMPULSE ONCE TO BUY A HOUSE SHE SAW WHILE DRIVING DOWN THE ROAD. AT AGE 69, SHE HAD THE COURAGE TO LEAVE HER HOME IN ENGLAND AND BEGIN A NEW LIFE WITH HER FAMILY IN EDMONTON.

FIONA AND MIRIAM RECALL THE EXCITEMENT THEY WOULD HAVE WHEN SHE CAME TO VISIT. IT WASN'T THE GIFTS THAT GRANDMAS ALWAYS BRINGS. IT WAS THE FUN THEY WOULD HAVE TOGETHER. ROMPING IN THE PARK, HAVING PICNICS, GRANDMA EDNA PLAYING CHILDLIKE WITH HER GRANDCHILDREN -- SHARING HER SENSE OF ADVENTURE -- HER CAPACITY TO LIVE TO THE FULLEST. THEY REMEMBER LONG STORIES FILLED WITH WONDERMENT -- THAT WOULD CONTINUE FOR WEEKS. ALWAYS WONDERING -- WHAT EDNA WOULD MAKE UP NEXT.

MIRIAM RECALLS HOW GRANDMA WAS ABLE TO RELATE TO HER GRANDCHILDREN AT WHATEVER AGE THEY WERE. SHE WOULD TELL US RUDE THINGS -- SHE HAD AN AURA OF BEING SLIGHTLY NAUGHTY.

HERE WAS THIS TINY LITTLE WOMAN TAKING US FOR RIDES IN HER TINY LITTLE CAR AND TELLING US ABOUT SEX AND BOYFRIENDS -- AND THEN IMPISHLY SAYING -- DON'T TELL MOM WHAT I SAID. AND THERE WAS MIRIAM JUMPING UP AND DOWN UNWILLING TO WAIT TO DIVULGE EVERY DETAIL OF THEIR "PRIVATE CONVERSATION", WHILE FIONA WAS MORE CIRCUMSPECT -- PERHAPS AN INTERPRETATION OF MOTHER SARAH'S AGE WAS THAT AT AGE 127 SHE COULD RELATE TO ANYONE -- WHETHER 20 YEARS OLD OR 7. EDNA SHARED THAT TRAIT. SHE HAD THE CAPACITY OF SHARING LIFE AND IDENTIFYING WITH HER CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN AT THE APPROPRIATE AGE THEY WERE.

TO ELAINE AND JEFFREY, SHE WAS AN EXCEPTIONAL MOM WHO WAS ALWAYS THERE. ALWAYS LOVING AND GIVING. ELAINE RECALLS THAT SHE STRUGGLED TO MAKE HER FAMILY COMFORTABLE DURING THE HARSH WAR YEARS WHEN JULIUS WAS AWAY. SHE CREATED A HOME WHERE FRIENDS WERE ALWAYS WELCOME AND FED.

SHE WAS PROUD OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF HER CHILDREN. ELAINE RECALLS THE SACRIFICE SHE MADE WORKING HARD TO SEND HER TO A PRIVATE SCHOOL DURING THE WAR YEARS. SHE ALSO REMEMBERS THE TRUST HER MOTHER HAD FOR HER. SHE WAS A GOOD STUDENT AND A GIRL WHO EARNED THE TRUST OF HER MOTHER. AND IF SHE CAME HOME LATE, EDNA COULDN'T IMAGINE THAT SHE WAS DOING SOMETHING WRONG. SHE TRUSTED HER CHILDREN. SHE KNEW THEY HAD BEEN BROUGHT UP IN A HOUSE WHERE LOVE AND UNDERSTANDING WERE THE NORM AND SHE RIGHTFULLY ASSUMED THAT HER CHILDREN WOULD DO THE RIGHT THING. THE SENSE OF PRIDE LASTED A LIFETIME. ELAINE RECALLS THE NACHAS EDNA HAD WHEN SHE MADE A SURPRISE PARTY IN HONOR OF HER ACHIEVEMENT OF A MASTERS DEGREE IN 1983.

EDNA WAS AN IDEAL GRANDMA.

FIONA "WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT GRANDPARENTS AND WHEN WE WOULD TALK ABOUT EDNA AND JULIUS, IT SOUNDED ALMOST TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE. BUT THEY WERE PERFECT. I ALWAYS WONDERED ABOUT HOW I WOULD BE A GRANDPARENT AND IF YOU HAD TO BE SMALL AND KIND OF ROUND TO MAKE A GOOD JOB OF IT.

DANNY HAD A VERY SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH EDNA. HE WOULD COME EVERY SUMMER AND SHARE WITH HER HIS PROBLEMS WITH ADOLESCENCE. KNOWING THAT SHE CARED -- KNOWING SHE WAS THERE FOR HIM.

AND TREVOR WROTE LETTERS THAT CHEERED HER DURING HER ILLNESS. SHE HAD THE BLESSING OF LIVING TO SEE THE BIRTH OF 2 GREAT GRANDCHILDREN -- ERIN AND JOEL.

JULIUS AND EDNA BOTH HAD A LOVE FOR THEIR ADOPTED HOME IN CANADA, AND EVEN LAST WEEK SHE MADE SURE SHE COULD VOTE. SHE WAS VERY INTERESTED IN POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT AND EVEN WORKED FOR POLITICIANS BACK HOME IN ENGLAND.

WHEN SHE WAS HEALTHY, SHE WAS INVOLVED IN HER COMMUNITY. IN HER NATIVE LAND SHE BUILT A FRIENDSHIP WITH RABBI KAY AND DEDICATED MANY HOURS TO WORKING FOR HER SHUL. SHE WAS A REGULAR SHUL GOER AND MUCH OF HER KNOWLEDGE OF OUR HERITAGE CAME FROM HER CHILDHOOD ATTENDANCE AT A JEWISH DAY SCHOOL.

ELAINE REMEMBERS THAT SHE ALSO WORKED FOR YEARS WITH DIFFERENTLY ABLED CHILDREN IN A CATHOLIC HOSPITAL AND IN A HOME FOR THE BLIND. SHE TRULY UNDERSTOOD THE
** OF HELPING OTHERS.

ONCE A SEAMSTRESS WHO SUPPORTED HER FAMILY, EDNA WAS INTERESTED IN DRESS AND STYLE -- EVEN IF AT THE SAME TIME HER SENSE OF ADVENTURE CAUSED HER TO COLOR HER HAIR EVERY COLOR IN THE RAINBOW. TO HER EVERYTHING HAD TO BE JUST SO. SHE CARED ABOUT HER APPEARANCE AND HER HOME.

OF ABRAHAM, IT WAS SAID THAT HE WAS OLD AND CAME WITH ALL HIS DAYS. OF SARAH, IT WAS RECORDED NOT THAT SHE DIED AT AGE 127, BUT THAT THE YEARS OF HER LIFE WERE 100 YEARS AND 20 YEARS AND 7 YEARS.

MUCH COULD BE LEARNED FROM EDNA'S COURAGE DURING THESE PAST YEARS OF ILLNESS; THE YEARS WHEN SHE OFTEN HAD TO FIGHT FOR EVERY BREATH. BUT MORE CAN BE LEARNED FROM ALL HER DAYS -- AND FROM ALL THE YEARS OF A PERSON WHO LIVED LIVE TO ITS FULLEST. A STRONG INDEPENDENT LOVING WOMAN WHO GAVE SO MUCH TO HER FAMILY AND FRIENDS. A WOMAN OF WHOM IT CAN TRULY BE SAID, THAT LIKE ABRAHAM, EDNA WAS BLESSED IN SO MANY WAYS.
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*** 2/11/77 167 173 ~~27773~~ 77774* -- TRANSLATED: "ABRAHAM ^{in our Bibles}

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SIMILARLY, IT IS SAID OF SARAH THAT SHE LIVED A HUNDRED YEARS AND TWENTY AND SEVEN YEARS. → WITH THE WORD "YEARS" REPEATED BETWEEN EACH NUMBER, TO INDICATE THAT THE AGING YEARS AND THE YEARS OF YOUTH WERE EQUALLY PRODUCTIVE. THAT SHE RETAINED HER PURITY AND HER INNER BEAUTY AND HER WISDOM THROUGH THE ENTIRE SPAN OF HER LIFETIME, ^{Sarah} ~~THAT SHE~~ LIVED ALL HER YEARS WITH A TRUE ZEST FOR LIFE AND ITS NEXT ADVENTURE.

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IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT FOR SOME, HUMAN NATURE WILL EMPHASIZE THE MEMORIES THAT ARE MOST RECENT, ~~THE~~ EDNA DAVIS WILL BE REMEMBERED *by some* PRIMARILY FOR HER COURAGE IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY: FOR HER STRENGTH DURING HER LONG PROTRACTED ILLNESS. SHE FOUGHT HARD -- SHE SUFFERED MUCH -- BUT THERE WAS A STRONG WILL TO LIVE -- TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT. THESE ARE ADMIRABLE QUALITIES. THEY REFLECT A CONTINUUM OF LIFE FILLED WITH ZEST THAT FOLLOWED HER EVEN TO HER SICK BED. THESE PAST YEARS OF PAIN HAVE SHOWN HER AS A BRAVE WOMAN OF CHARACTER.

BUT IT IS WRONG TO DEFINE HER LIFE BY THE ~~SICK YEARS~~. ^{years of frail health} LIKE

ABRAHAM, EDNA DAVIS LIVED A LIFE THAT WAS ** ^{PNP KP} A LIFE THAT WAS AN ADVENTURE. A LIFE FILLED WITH ZEST AND VIGOR AND FUN. EDNA HAD THE TRUE GIFT OF ENJOYING LIFE. OF MAKING EACH DAY COUNT. THE TORA RECORDS AT THE END OF ABRAHAM'S LIFE THAT

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(5)

DECIDED THAT THE TIME WAS NOT YET RIPE, THAT MAYBE THEY SHOULD WAIT A WHILE.

SINCE THAT TIME THEY DID EVERYTHING TOGETHER. CHILDHOOD SWEETHEARTS EVOLVED INTO HIGH SCHOOL ROMANCE. AND THAT EVOLVED INTO A DEEP FRIENDSHIP, AND WHEN LATER SOME LAWYER WOODED EDNA BUT STOOD FIRM AND SAID SHE WOULD HAVE TO GIVE UP HER FRIENDSHIP TO JULIUS, EDNA REALIZED HOW IMPORTANT JULIUS WAS. AND THEIR FAIRY TALE ROMANCE BECAME WEDDED BLISS

THEY ENJOYED MANY THINGS TOGETHER. DANCING, TRAVELLING, WORKING. THEY WORKED TOGETHER AND PLAYED TOGETHER. LATER, THEY ENJOYED WINTERS TO HAWAII TOGETHER. THEY ENJOYED SMALL INTIMACIES TOGETHER. ELAINE REMEMBERS THAT THERE WASN'T A DAY THAT JULIUS DIDN'T BRING EDNA COFFEE IN BED, ~~AND~~ ^{recalls} FIONA ~~REMEMBERS~~ SHOPPING TRIPS WHEN THE 70 YEAR OLD COUPLE WOULD WALK TOGETHER HAND IN HAND LIKE NEWLY WEDS. THERE WAS NOTHING, NOT EVEN SICKNESS THAT COULD COME BETWEEN EDNA AND JULIUS. THE TWO OF THEM HAD A GREAT ABILITY TO LOVE LIFE. ELAINE RECALLS THAT EVEN WHEN SHE WAS ^{sick} SICK, THEY WOULD DANCE AT WEDDINGS, JULIUS DANCING WITH EDNA IN HER WHEEL CHAIR.

ELAINE TELLS OF HOW THEY WENT ON ^a RECENT CRUISE. ^{was a year ago} EDNA THOUGHT IT A GREAT TRIUMPH THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE DAY THAT SHE NEEDED HOSPITAL CARE. SOMEHOW THEY KNEW THEY NEEDED THIS LAST FUN TIME TOGETHER. AND THEY WERE NOT PREPARED TO ALLOW ANYTHING TO GET IN THEIR WAY.

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FIONA AND MIRIAM RECALL THE EXCITEMENT THEY WOULD HAVE WHEN SHE CAME TO VISIT. IT WASN'T THE GIFTS THAT ^{Grandmas} ~~GRANDMA~~ ALWAYS BRINGS. IT

WAS THE FUN THEY WOULD HAVE TOGETHER.

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GRANDCHILDREN -- SHARING HER SENSE OF ADVENTURE -- HER CAPACITY TO LIVE TO

~~THE~~ ^{the} FULLEST.

THEY REMEMBER LONG STORIES FILLED WITH WONDERMENT --

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MIRIAM RECALLS HOW GRANDMA WAS ABLE TO RELATE TO HER

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* perhaps an interpreter of mother Sarah's - was 4 at age 12
she could relate to anyone - whether 20 years old or 7

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