

Sid Goldenberg

Zalman ben Pinchas

Died January 17, 2001

Tomorrow in synagogue we begin reading from the second of the Five Books of Moses, commonly known as Exodus. In Hebrew the book and tomorrow's portion are known as Shemot, or names, taking the title from the first words – "*V'eyleh shmot b'nai Israel habayim Mitrayimah et Yaakov eesh uvaito ba-u.*" These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each coming with his household."

While the portion begins with the names of Jacob's family it is really Moses who dominates this story and every portion we will read each week until we complete the annual cycle. Also significant is that in tomorrow's reading we will cover the first 80 years of Moses' life, while it will take the next 40 weeks to cover the next 40 years.

Is there a lesson we can find in the disproportionate amount of attention paid to the latter third of Moses' life? Certainly a person's early years are critical in shaping his vision of the world. In the case of Moses the circumstances of his birth, his disconnection from his real and adopted families, and the episode of the burning bush should merit more than a few lines in each case. Some rabbinic commentators have suggested that by speeding through the description of Moses' early and middle years, the Torah is making a statement that beginnings are less important than endings in life. In other words, a human being's worth is not determined by where that individual came from but rather by what that person ultimately accomplished.

As we gather to remember Sid Goldenberg, a man loved by family and friends, our sorrow over his loss is tempered by the knowledge that his accomplishments have left a lasting mark on all who had the fortune to know him. In the time spent with his family last night and in the words already spoken on his behalf today I realize that this was a man who like Moses came forward to play a dominant role in the lives of many.

It would be a daunting task for anyone to try to eulogize Sid's life in the time we have left before sundown and the onset of Shabbat. I'm sure most of you in this room could step forward and recall a time when Sid touched your life through his generosity and friendship. I am always fascinated when I hear of the lives of the individuals who have contributed to the formation and growth of institutions that those of us in later generations take for granted. Sid is one of those people who deserve to be remembered.

I know that Sid will be remembered as a man with immense talent. In his native Calgary and later in Edmonton, Sid gave selflessly of his time and his energy in producing variety shows that raised funds for Hebrew schools and synagogues. His organizational skills and talent for sales saw him run a Cadillac draw for B'nai Brith for 18 years. His ability to play the piano, despite an inability to read music brought him closer to his first wife Evelyn who shared his passion for performing.

Sid will be remembered as a man who cared for others. When he was stationed in St. Thomas, Ontario during World War II, he arranged for Evelyn and Ron to move to Winnipeg so he could visit them as often as possible. He was so successful learning airplane technology from instructors in the R.C.A.F. that they insisted that he teach new recruits, therefore playing a valuable role in the war effort without going overseas.

He was such a valued member of Waterman's, a wholesale hardware firm, that when he finally retired after 52 years service, he was asked to stay on as a consultant. He was a salesman who cared about his customers. Both his employers and his customers became life long friends as we have seen today.

He was a man who cared about his profession. He drove millions of miles throughout Alberta and he was given an honorary membership in the Alberta Motor Association for the years of accident and infraction free driving. He was meticulous in his record keeping as his granddaughter Beth knows from the drawer full of receipts he stored from his first days on the road. He cared about his home province and although he spent winters in Palm Springs in his later years he was always anxious to return to his home and friends in Edmonton.

He loved to have good times too. Sid's success in business allowed him to spend time not only in Palm Springs but also in Mexico City where Evelyn had cousins.

Las Vegas was another favorite destination and copies of a well-known picture of Sid and Evelyn enjoying a drink with Elvis Presley is treasured by family members. Less well known is the favor Sid did for Elvis by picking up a young lady arriving at the Las Vegas airport so that Elvis could avoid the crowds and photographers.

Sid cared for two very important women in his life. Ron will never forget the love songs that his father wrote for his mother and he will never forget how he looked after her when she became ill. Sid hated to be alone and so it was no surprise to anyone that less than a year after Evelyn died he met and married Blossom. Together they enjoyed nearly 6 wonderful years of golf and travel before she too passed away.

Perhaps it was because he took such good care of others that he was hesitant to accept the help of those who wanted to make him more comfortable in his later years. The decisions to end the Palm Springs winters, to move from his Valhalla condo to Canterbury Court and to accept help from family and friends were hard for a man who spent a life of independence, helping others while never asking for help for himself.

The last three years especially were frustrating and at times painful. We can still take comfort that he left us peacefully with the knowledge that he was loved and respected.

His presence enriched our lives and we will all be poorer with his absence. He was able to make a mark in the world that will remain long after this day. Through his son, granddaughter and extended family his legacy will continue through the values of generosity and concern for others that he taught them.

May we all be inspired to fashion deeds of kindness in his memory so that his spirit remains a part of our lives.

Tehi Nishmato tzroorah beetzror haChaim

May his soul be bound up in the bond of life