

Rose Kauffman      Rachel bat Yechiel      Passed away August 24, 2000

There is a fascinating connection between the time that Rose chose to leave this world, and the portion of Torah that we read in synagogue tomorrow.

In the last chapters of the Torah we find the people of Israel, standing ready to enter the promised land after nearly 40 years of wandering through the wilderness. Moses speaks to the people, reminding them what God has done for them, and the promises that God has made should they obey his commandments.

We read in Parsha Re'eh Moshe's words, " See, this day I set before you blessing and curse."

What did he mean by this?

In day-to-day life, the difference between blessing and curse is not always apparent. Often, it is only with the passage of time that we are able to identify the key junctures of our lives that move us toward the good. In fact when we read further in to the portion we realize that it is the ability to hear and comprehend purpose in our existence that fills our lives with meaning.

To follow the commandments and live a life of blessing helps us to be an '*am segulah*', a treasured people. To take the responsibility of passing these beliefs through the generations is a special blessing unto itself.

I'm sure Rose would agree that the paths her life took were not always ones she would have chosen. I believe there is a purpose for everything and just as Moshe was disappointed that he was not allowed to enter the promised land , he still had the satisfaction of knowing that he prepared others to enter, and so too, as a guide and aide to others, we can say goodbye to Rose and remember her as a woman who made a difference in our lives.

Rose was born in Odessa, in Imperial Russia in 1902. She was only four years old when her father was able to take the family to England, and then Canada to escape the discrimination and limited opportunities that Jews faced.

In Toronto her parents were able to establish a traditional Jewish home for Rose and her two older brothers. Her mother kept a kosher kitchen, preparing Shabbat and holiday meals while her father became a prayer leader in a small Russian synagogue at Bathurst and College, then the heart of Jewish Toronto.

He worked for a company that added colour tinting to photographs and later for a

wholesale hardware company but was unable to provide all the economic needs for his family. As soon as she could Rose left public school to enroll in a business college that gave her the skills necessary to find work as a bookkeeper for a fabric importing company.

She met Sidney in Toronto and they were married in 1933. With the depression at its peak, he also had trouble finding work, and took a job across the border in Buffalo at a munitions factory. Unfortunately he developed lung disease and had to move to Los Angeles where the milder weather helped him cope with his affliction. Rose chose not to go at that time and stayed in Toronto to raise their only child, Dan. She worked hard to ensure that he would not lack for anything. She nurtured his early interest in radio, helping him grow from a shy child in to a confident young man. When Dan chose to attend a broadcasting school in Los Angeles in 1953, Rose joined him, and the family was together again. When Dan returned to Canada after a year, Rose stayed with Sidney in Los Angeles, at his side until he passed away in 1967.

Los Angeles gave Rose the opportunity to become involved in the artistic world that she had an aptitude for and she found herself spending some exciting years working with the curator of the Los Angeles Museum of Art.

After Sidney's passing she returned to Toronto to be with friends and family. She cared for her widowed father who lived until he was 96 years old. Rose was able to participate in the activities of the Jewish community that she loved so much. She chose not to lead but honoured her heritage through memberships in Hadassah-WIZO and Pioneer Women. Despite the lack of an advanced education Rose was admired for her intelligence, her interest in current affairs and an appreciation for the arts.

In 1991 Rose moved to Edmonton to begin a new phase of her life. Here she could be close to Dan and Esther, and her grandson David and his family. She moved to Canterbury Court where she made new friends and participated in the Shabbat services and the other Jewish activities offered to residents there. After a life where she helped her family establish themselves in Canada, and found herself caring for an ailing husband and an elderly father, she finally was able to be receive the care and attention that she deserved. Rose renewed her interest in the arts and Dan and Esther took her to the symphony and Citadel. She loved to create too, and one of her sculptures is on display in Canterbury Court.

Her final years gave both her and Dan the chance to become much closer. She was able to see how success in his chosen field made the early struggles on his behalf all worthwhile. Dan and Esther appreciated her help and guidance and in fact it was Rose who encouraged them to make the move to their new condo, saying that they should do it while they were still young enough to appreciate it.

The last time we talked she told me that no one could have asked for a better son than Dan.

As David has said she was a treasure to her great grandchildren.

The stroke Rose suffered in June was a harsh blow to a woman for whom the connection with the outside world was so important. When I visited her I could see the frustration she suffered through her inability to communicate with others as she had in the past. She wondered if I recognized her as the Rose Kauffman that I knew from earlier years, and I assured her that her wit, intelligence and concern for others still shone through the pain she suffered.

We all study and revere the life of Moshe Rabbeinu, our greatest leader, who led our people from slavery to redemption and passed on the laws that we still follow today. Despite his frustration at knowing that he would not reach his goal he continued to offer advice to the next generation. Those of us who knew and loved Rose will also remember her for overcoming her struggles, to appreciate the good times that she had, and her determination to leave the world a better place. Rose has left us with the blessing of tradition and it is our responsibility to choose to accept this gift. This will be the legacy that we will honour through continued mitzvot and dedication to our heritage in her memory.

*Tehi nishmata tzroorah beetzror hachaim*

May her soul be bound up in the bonds of life