

EULOGY - MARCEL MAURER/Mordechai Ben Avraham - November 6, 1991

IN LAST WEEK'S TORAH PORTION, WE READ OF THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM THE FIRST PATRIARCH OF OUR PEOPLE, CONCERNING ABRAHAM, THE TORAH TELLS US....., TRANSLATED IN OUR ENGLISH BIBLE AS "ABRAHAM WAS OLD, ADVANCED IN YEARS". A MORE LITERAL TRANSLATION WOULD READ "AND ABRAHAM WAS OLD HE "CAME WITH HIS DAYS". THE TORAH ALSO TELLS US JUST BEFORE RECORDING HIS DEATH AND THE LORD BLESSED ABRAHAM WITH EVERYTHING.

ABRAHAM WAS OLD, HE CAME WITH HIS DAYS - WHAT A STRANGE PHRASE. BUT THE MEANING IS PROFOUND. ABRAHAM REACHED HIS ADVANCED YEARS BRINGING WITH HIM NOT A FRAGMENTED LIFE OF WASTED DAYS, BUT HE BROUGHT WITH HIM INTO OLD AGE ALL HIS DAYS. HIS LIFE WAS A CONTINUUM THAT FLOWED FROM YOUTH THROUGH THE PROCESS OF AGING - A CONTINUUM OF AN ACTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE LIFE.

SOME OF US REACH OLD AGE EMPTY HANDED. THEY ARE NOT

THEIR DAYS ARE NOT WITH THEM. THEIR DAYS AND YEARS WERE SQUANDERED AND WASTED AND THEN OLD AGE IS IMPOVERISHED - OF OUR SAGE ABRAHAM, HOWEVER IT COULD BE SAID THAT.....

(TRANSLATED) HIS OLD AGE WAS A BLESSING.

WE CANNOT SAY OF MARCEL THAT HE WAS BLESSED WITH OLD AGE. HIS WAS ONLY AN AVERAGE LIFE SPAN, BUT IN MANY WAYS WE CAN SAY THAT HE WAS THAT HE CAME WITH HIS DAYS - THAT HIS DAYS COUNTED AND THAT GOD BLESSED HIM WITH EVERYTHING IMPORTANT.

IT IS PERHAPS NOT A COINCIDENCE THAT MARCEL & RAIJA WERE MARRIED EXACTLY 50 YEARS - THOSE 50 YEARS WERE..... - EACH DAY COUNTED, EACH WEEK, EACH MONTH - UNTIL 50 YEARS OF BLESSINGS WERE COMPLETED AND ROUNDED OFF.

THEIR'S WAS A MARRIAGE MADE IN HEAVEN. FOR 50 YEARS MARCEL & RAIJA WOULD DO EVERYTHING TOGETHER. THEY WORKED TOGETHER IN THE STORE, TOGETHER THEY RAISED THEIR CHILDREN, TOGETHER THEY WENT PLACES AND SOCIALIZED, ALWAYS AS ONE.

MARCEL TOOK THE NOTION OF TOGETHERNESS TO A ROMANTIC EXTREME RARELY FOUND.

RAIJA TELLS THIS WONDERFUL STORY.
WHEN TRUDY WAS BORN - RAIJA LOST ALL HER HAIR DUE TO SOME HORMONAL CONDITION. SHE WAS 19 YEARS OLD, YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL, AND SHE WAS UPSET, NOT TRUSTING THE DOCTOR'S REASSURANCE THAT HER HAIR WOULD EVENTUALLY GROW BACK.

ONE DAY MARCEL CAME HOME WITH HIS HAT AROUND HIS EYES; HIS HEAD OF BLACK HAIR THAT ANYONE WOULD ENVY WAS SHAVED COMPLETELY OFF. THEY WOULD GROW THEIR HAIR TOGETHER - EACH DAY MEASURING THE PROGRESS TOGETHER. WITH SUCH A HUSBAND, RAIJA, YOU COULD SPEND EVERY MOMENT OF EVERY DAY- BOTH AT WORK AND AT PLAY - WITH SUCH A HUSBAND IT CAN BE SAID YOU AND MARCEL WERE....., YOU MADE EACH DAY COUNT - AND

AND THE BLESSINGS CONTINUED UNTIL LAST WEEK. IT WAS ONLY RECENTLY THAT THE SECRETARY OF MARCEL'S DOCTOR TOLD TOBY "I'VE NEVER SEEN A COUPLE SO CLOSE, I HOPE TO ACHIEVE THAT SOMEDAY".

TRUDY RECALLS A INCIDENT RECENTLY - HOSPITALIZED FOR 4 WEEKS OF HIS RECENT ILLNESS BOTH TRUDY & TOBY WERE THERE WITH PAPA ALL THE TIME TO COMFORT HIM. ONE EVENING - OUT OF SHEER EXHAUSTION GITTEL LAID DOWN ON THE HOSPITAL BED WITH HER FATHER. MARCEL WAS WORRIED THAT RAIA MIGHT FEEL LEFT OUT OR SLIGHTED. HE PUT HIS ARM AROUND HIS BELOVED WIFE AND SAID "I LOVE YOU" WHAT HURT MY HEART IS WHAT YOU HAVE TO SUFFER.

PAUSE!!

TO MANY OF US, EVEN IF WE ARE BLESSED WITH A PERFECT MARRIAGE, ARE UNHAPPY IN OUR WORK. MARCEL WAS BLESSED IN THAT HE LOVED HIS WORK. NOT ONLY DID HE HAVE THE PRIVILEGED OF WORKING TOGETHER WITH HIS WIFE FOR 32 YEARS IN HIS STORE, BUT HE WAS ALSO BLESSED IN THAT HE WORKED AT A PROFESSION THAT HE DESIRED EVER SINCE THE AGE OF 10.

AT THAT YOUNG AGE MARCEL ALREADY WANTED TO BE A WATCHMAKER. HIS FATHER WAS UNHAPPY, THINKING THAT WORKING WITH THE SMALL MACHINERY OF PRE-QUARTZ WATCHES WOULD RUIN HIS EYES. FATHER AND SON DID WHAT PEOPLE DID IN THOSE DAYS WHEN THERE WAS A DISPUTE; THEY WENT TO THE RABBI WHO ADVISED THAT MARCEL SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO DO WHAT HE WANTED. MARCEL LOVED MAKING BEAUTIFUL THINGS, AND HIS EXPERIENCE IN HIS INDUSTRY GAVE HIM A GREAT RESPECT FOR ALL TRADES AND PROFESSIONS. HE MADE A NICE LIVING, IN AN HONEST WAY, OFTEN BECOMING FRIENDS WITH HIS CUSTOMERS. AS IN ALL THINGS, HE WAS A GENTLEMAN WITH HIS CUSTOMERS. TREATING ALL PEOPLE, RICH AND POOR, ALIKE.

HE HAD A GREAT PROPENSITY FOR CREATING FRIENDSHIPS.

TOBY RECALLS HOW, WHEN THEY WERE IN FRANCE TOGETHER HE WAS OPEN ENOUGH TO BEFRIEND A STRANGERS ON A PARK BENCH TRANSCENDING EVEN LANGUAGE BARRIERS.

TRUDY REMEMBERS THAT HE WOULD NEVER HURT ANYONE. INDEED IF HE FELT SOMEONE WAS BEING HURT HE WOULD BE THE FIRST PERSON TO COME TO THEIR DEFENCE.

IF THERE WERE 10 PEOPLE IN A ROOM HE WOULD SEE TO IT THAT EVERYONE WAS INCLUDED. IN THE WORDS OF THE PRAYER HE MADE EVERYONE LOOK GOOD. TO MARCEL FRIENDSHIP WAS SACRED, AND IT DIDN'T MATTER WHETHER YOU WERE A PROFESSIONAL OR A MANUEL LABORER EVERYONE WAS THE SAME.

DANNY SPEAKS OF HIS GRANDFATHER AS A VERY HONORABLE MAN -

"HE HAD THE BEST MANNERS - HE WAS THE BIGGEST GENTLEMAN HE HAD EVER SEEN" INDEED THIS DESCRIPTION OF MARCEL CORRESPONDS TO MY OWN EXPERIENCE WITH HIM. HE ALWAYS HAD A KIND WORD FOR ME. WAS ALWAYS COMPLIMENTARY.

HE WAS A VERY CARING PERSON, ALWAYS PUTTING THE OTHERS AHEAD OF HIMSELF - WHEN I VISITED HIM IN HOSPITAL, OR SAW HIM WHEN HE WAS UNDERGOING DIALYSIS. IT WAS AS IF WHAT WAS MOST IMPORTANT WAS MAKING ME COMFORTABLE INSTEAD OF THE OTHER WAY AROUND. MY EXPERIENCE IS THAT MARCEL HAD THE GYST OF MAKING HIS FRIENDS FEEL AS THOUGH THEY WERE A REAL IMPORTANT PART OF HIS LIFE.

IN HIS BUSINESS AND IN HIS FRIENDSHIPS, MARCEL WAS
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A MAN WHO MADE EVERY MOMENT AND EVERYDAY COUNT, A MAN WHO MADE EVERY
PERSON COUNT. IN HIS BUSINESS AND IN HIS FRIENDSHIPS HE WAS
.....

HE WAS BLESSED IN ALL THINGS.

TOBELE & GITTEL, DANNY AND ANGIE, EACH OF YOU WAS THE
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THE BEAUTIFUL TREASURE OF YOUR FATHER AND GRANDFATHER.

AS A FATHER HE ENCOURAGED YOU TO DO WHATEVER YOU WANTED.

AS TOBY PUT IT - HE WAS VERY SUPPORTIVE OF EVERYTHING WE DID,
WHAT WAS GOOD FOR US IS WHAT HE STOOD BEHIND.

TRUDY RECALLS THAT HE "NEVER DISCOURAGED EVEN OUR WILD IDEAS"
YET HE TREATED US LIKE PRINCESSES. TOBY RECALLS THAT WHILE OTHER CHILDREN
WERE OFTEN ASHAMED OF BEING SEEN WITH THEIR PARENTS (A TEENAGE MALADY)
THEY WERE ALWAYS PROUD OF MANUEL & RAIA.

HE WAS VERY AFFECTIONATE, ALWAYS THERE WITH A BIG HUG OR WITH
A PET NAME. WORSHIPPING HIS DAUGHTERS.

HE HAD A UNIQUE COMBINATION OF OLD WORLD MANNERS AND NEW WORLD
IDEAS.

HE WOULD OPEN DOORS FOR WOMEN, BUT BELIEVED THAT WOMAN COULD
ACHIEVE ANYTHING THEY WANTED.

HE WAS SO PROUD OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF HIS GITTEL AND TOBBLE AND THEIR PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS AS A MEDICAL ECONOMIST AND A DOCTOR.

THERE WAS NO WAY WE COULD FAIL, SAY HIS DAUGHTERS, OUR PARENTS ALWAYS TOLD US WE WERE TERRIFIC - AND WE HAD NO CHOICE OTHER THAN LIVING UP TO THEIR EXPECTATIONS.

DAN & ANGIE SPEAK OF THEIR GRANDFATHER AS AN INSPIRER RATHER THAN A PUSHER - AND I PRAY THAT YOU TOO, WILL GROW UP WITH THE SAME SELF CONFIDENCE AS YOUR MOTHER AND AVNT.

WITH HIS DAUGHTERS - AND WITH HIS GRANDCHILDREN, ANGIE & DAN, IT CAN BE SAID OF MARCEL; AS OF FATHER ABRAHAM; THAT HE MADE EVERY MOMENT PRECIOUS. THAT HE WAS BLESSED IN ALL THINGS.

MARCEL WAS A WELL ROUNDED INDIVIDUAL WITH MANY INTERESTS OUTSIDE THE FAMILY. HE LOVED POLITICS AND ALWAYS KEPT HIMSELF AWARE OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN THE WORLD. CONSISTENT WITH HIS NATURE HIS POLITICS WERE THAT OF ONE WHO STOOD UP FOR THE UNDERDOG.

HE WAS ALSO A MAN WHO HAD GREAT RESPECT FOR LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE.

AND A LOVE FOR MUSIC - NOT ONLY IN LISTENING BUT ALSO IN PLAYING VARIOUS INSTRUMENTS.

HE WAS A MAN WHO WAS INVOLVED IN HIS FAITH. HE SERVED UNDER RABBI SACHS AS A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AT BETH SHALOM. HE GAVE TO VARIOUS CHARITIES - PRIVATELY WITH NO FANFARE. HE HAD A LOVE FOR ISRAEL, HIS 2 BROTHERS AND 2 SISTERS LIVE THERE, AND HE HAS VISITED THERE ON MANY OCCASIONS.

THERE ARE SO MANY WHO WILL MISS MARCEL. WE'LL MISS THE KIND WORDS HE HAD FOR ALL, WE WILL MISS HIS GENTLENESS, HIS HONESTY, AND HIS COMPASSION.

RAIA, TOBELE AND GITTEL - YOU'LL MISS THE MAN WHO SHARED SO MUCH WITH YOU.

BUT THERE IS COMFORT IN THIS.

HERE WAS A MAN BLESSED IN ALL THINGS - WHO BROUGHT BLESSINGS TO ALL WHO KNEW HIM.

HERE WAS A MAN WHO MADE EVERY MOMENT AND EVERY PERSON COUNT.

THOSE OF US WHO KNEW AND LOVED HIM - WE CAN LEARN SO MUCH FROM HIS LIFE - SO MUCH ABOUT HOW TO LOVE OUR SPOUSES AND OUR CHILDREN - HOW TO CONDUCT OUR BUSINESS, HOW TO ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN FRIENDSHIPS AND IF WE TAKE THESE LESSONS TO HEART, THEN PERHAPS WE TOO, CAN ACHIEVE THE BLESSINGS FIRST TO FATHER ABRAHAM AND THEN TO MARCEL

OF MAKING EVERYTHING COUNT

OF BEING BLESS IN ALL WAYS