

Sheet 28, 5454  
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Eulogy for Louis Polson

THE SAGES OF OLD HAD A UNIQUE WAY OF WARNING US NOT TO JUDGE A PERSON BY OUTWARD APPEARANCE:

"DO NOT LOOK AT THE BOTTLE", THEY SAID, "RATHER LOOK AT THE INSIDE."  
SOMETIMES AN OLD AND SEASONED WINE MAY BE POURED INTO A NEW BOTTLE,  
SOMETIMES NEW WINE, NOT YET PROPERLY AGED, CAN BE PUT INTO AN OLD BOTTLE.

WE KNOW THIS FROM OUR OWN EXPERIENCE. I'M SURE EACH OF US KNOWS SOMEONE -- BIG AND STRONG OF BODY, CONFIDENT IN NATURE, YET SENSITIVE AND CARING, OR MAYBE INSECURE IN PERSONALITY. WE ARE A COMPLEX LOT, <sup>WE</sup> US HUMANS, CONTAINED IN OUR BOTTLE -- IN THIS SHELL-BODY THAT HOUSES OUR SOULS -- ~~ARE~~ <sup>ARE</sup> EMOTIONS, FEELINGS, INSECURITIES, HISTORIES AND BAGGAGE THAT MAKES US EACH UNIQUELY WONDERFUL AND UNIQUELY DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND.

PHYSICALLY, LOU POLSON WAS NOT AN IMPOSING MAN, AT LEAST NOT WHEN I KNEW HIM. HE WAS CHARMING, SOFT SPOKEN AND INTELLECTUALLY CURIOUS. YET THOSE WHO KNEW AND LOVED HIM, SPEAK OF A MAN WHO WAS DRIVEN. HE WAS DRIVEN TO SUCCEED, TO LEARN, TO ACCOMPLISH AND SOMETIMES TO CONTROL EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE HE LOVED.

HAVING BEEN BROUGHT UP IN POVERTY, HE WAS DRIVEN BY AMBITION TO SUCCEED IN THE WORLD OF BUSINESS, AND SUCCEED HE DID. HIS GRANDSON, GARY, TELLS A STORY OF LOUIS' YOUTH THAT CAN SERVE PERHAPS AS A METAPHOR FOR HIS LIFE.

LOU LEFT HOME AT A YOUNG AGE WITH A GRADE 12 EDUCATION AND SET OUT TO FIND EMPLOYMENT. HE WAS OFFERED A JOB AS A CHAUFFEUR FOR THE PRESIDENT OF A COMPANY. THE CAR HE WAS TO DRIVE WAS ONE OF THOSE CRANK-UP MODELS -- AN OLD T-FORD. HIS EMPLOYER GOT INTO THE CAR, AND PERHAPS GAVE THE YOUNG LOU DIRECTIONS FOR THEIR FIRST DESTINATION TOGETHER. "DRIVE!" HE MAY HAVE SAID. THERE WAS ONLY ONE PROBLEM. LOU HAD NEVER DRIVEN A CAR BEFORE! BUT DRIVE IT HE DID, AND LOU POLSON HAS BEEN IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT CONTROLLING THE TRAFFIC EVER SINCE.

LOU SUFFERED MANY TRAGEDIES IN LIFE, BUT HE HAD THE ABILITY TO FIGHT THROUGH HIS LOSSES AND CONTINUE WITH HIS LIFE, NEVER PARALYZED BY PAIN. MARRIED FOR 37 YEARS TO HIS BELOVED SUZIE, HE OFTEN EXPRESSED TO ME HIS LOVE FOR HER. SHE WAS THE NICEST OF WOMEN. BUT SHE WAS SICK AT AN EARLY AGE. THROUGH HER ILLNESS, THERE WAS NOTHING LOU WOULD NOT DO FOR HER. HE TOOK CARE OF EVERYTHING TO MAKE SURE SHE WAS COMFORTABLE AND THAT ALL HER NEEDS WERE MET. SOMETIMES HE WAS STIFLING, AFRAID TO LET HER DO THINGS FOR HERSELF, BUT HE ACTED FROM A DEEP SENSE OF CARING AND LOVING. HER DEATH 20 YEARS AGO LEFT A GAPING HOLE IN HIS LIFE AND THE LIFE OF THE FAMILY.

BLESSED WITH 2 DAUGHTERS AND 4 GRANDCHILDREN, LOU WAS TO SUFFER THE ULTIMATE TRAGEDY OF BURYING HIS DAUGHTER, BRENDA. HE WAS HEART-BROKEN BY HIS LOSS. BUT PERHAPS HIS NEED TO CONTROL, APPLIED TO HIS

OWN EMOTIONS AS WELL, AND HE WAS ABLE TO STOICALLY ACCEPT THE LOT IN LIFE HE WAS GIVEN -- ABLE TO PUSH HIMSELF UP FROM HIS GREAT TRAGEDY AND GO ON WITH HIS LIFE.

HE WAS A MAN OF HIS TIMES, A MAN WHO HAD DIFFICULTY EXPRESSING FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS, YET HE DEEPLY LOVED AND CARED FOR HIS FAMILY. ON HIS SICK BED, HE SAID TO ME WITH GREAT EMPHASIS: "I HAVE THE GREATEST OF FAMILIES". IT IS ONE OF THE TRAGEDIES OF LIFE THAT HE WAS UNABLE TO SHOW THAT SIDE ~~OF HIM~~ TO THOSE HE LOVED. BUT HE FELT IT, AND FELT IT DEEPLY.

NAOMI DOESN'T DOUBT HIS LOVE, "HE DID THE BEST HE COULD", SHE SAYS AND NOTHING MORE SHOULD BE EXPECTED FROM ANYONE.

ONLY 2 WEEKS AGO, LOU WAS VISIBLY MOVED BY A CEREMONIOUS GOOD-BYE GIVEN HIM BY HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS IN HOSPITAL. IF HE HAD DIFFICULTY EXPRESSING HIS LOVE, THOSE WHO LOVED HIM HAD NO SUCH DIFFICULTIES. THERE WAS AN OUTPOURING OF LOVE AND CARING FOR THAT MAN, A SHARING OF LIFE AND DEATH THAT COULD COME ONLY TO ONE WHO WAS LOVED, ADMIRER AND RESPECTED. AND DURING THESE LAST MONTHS, NAOMI AND RON AND HIS GRANDCHILDREN WERE THERE WITH HIM ALWAYS: -- HELPING HIM WITH HIS <sup>SP.</sup> FINAL ARRANGEMENTS.

EVEN IN DEATH, LOU WAS IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT. HE WENT TO HIS DEATH AS AN EXTREMELY BRAVE MAN, NEVER COMPLAINING, SPEAKING OF LIFE WELL LIVED, OF A FAMILY THAT HE LOVED, OF HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND SUCCESS.

HIS ONE REGRET WAS THAT, ALTHOUGH A SCHOOL VALEDICTORIAN AND AN EXCELLENT STUDENT, HE NEVER ATTENDED UNIVERSITY. THIS LED HIM TO A GREAT RESPECT FOR LEARNING. HE WAS VERY PROUD OF THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF NAOMI AND HIS GRAND CHILDREN.

HE HAD A DESIRE TO ~~LEARN HIMSELF~~ <sup>FURTHER HIS OWN EDUCATION,</sup> DOUG RECALLS THAT HE WAS A MAN WHO, IN CONVERSATION, SEEMED TO KNOW A LOT ABOUT EVERYTHING. HE NEVER FELT <sup>AS IF</sup> ~~THAT~~ IN THE RABBINICAL METAPHOR, THAT IT WAS TOO LATE TO FILL HIS OLD WINE BOTTLE -- HIS MIND -- WITH NEW KNOWLEDGE.

IN HIS LAST YEARS, HE BEGAN TO STUDY HEBREW. BEGINNING WITH ALEPH 'BAYT, THE HEBREW ALPHABET. IN HIS 70'S HE BEGAN TO STUDY THE HEBREW LANGUAGE. EACH WEEK, WE WOULD GET TOGETHER, HE WOULD SHOW ME HIS WRITTEN HOMEWORK AND WE WOULD SPEAK SIMPLE HEBREW. EVEN AT HIS AGE, HE WAS DRIVEN TO LEARN THE LANGUAGE FOR <sup>51?</sup> HIS PLANNED TRIP TO ISRAEL, A TRIP THAT HIS ILLNESS ROBBED HIM OF. HE BECAME A REGULAR SHUL GOER, HELPING US OUT WITH OUR DAILY MINYAN AND ATTENDING

\*\* MORNING. ONCE AGAIN IN THIS AREA OF LIFE, HE WAS DRIVEN, DRIVEN TO LEARN, TO QUESTION AND TO UNDERSTAND.

HE WAS A CHARITABLE MAN, CONTRIBUTING TO CAUSES PRIMARILY IN ISRAEL. AND IN HIS LAST YEAR, HE BECAME A COMMITTED JEW. HE WAS A MAN WHO LIKED TO HELP OTHERS. GARY RECALLS HOW HE WOULD VOLUNTEER TO DRIVE CANCER PATIENTS TO HOSPITALS.

DAVID SPOKE LAST NIGHT OF A VERBAL LETTER TO LOU, OF SAYING GOOD-BYE,  
MAKING PEACE, EXPRESSING HIS REGRET AND LOVE.

NAOMI, YOU SPOKE OF KISSING AND HUGGING HIM ON SUNDAY NIGHT.  
YOU WERE THERE FOR HIM ALWAYS, TRYING TO WIN HIS APPROVAL, DOING FOR HIM.  
BELIEVE ME, HE KNEW THAT YOU LOVED HIM AND IT GAVE HIM GREAT COMFORT.

HE WAS A COMPLEX MAN

HE WORKED HARD AND HE ACHIEVED

AND IN HIS OWN WAY HE TRULY LOVED

AND HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS RECIPROCATED THAT LOVE ON THIS DAY AS WE  
PAY HIM OUR LAST RESPECTS.

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