

In Memory Of Granny Razel

Doron Katz



I wanted to begin by taking a moment - from the bottom of my heart – to thank Barbara & Aubrey, Lany, Jay and all their children, and Evelyn and Erlinda for caring for Granny over the last many years. We will forever be in your debt for the tireless and unrelenting devotion and love you showered upon Granny.

Granny loved her family, she loved Shabbos – lighting Shabbos candles and making challah, scones and milchika and other delicacies. She was an elegant woman. She was an anthropophile, a flower enthusiast who knew the name of every flower and plant at the tip of her tongue, and she was an incredibly devoted and loving spouse.

In Parshat Vayakhel Moshe gathers the people, educates them first about the Shabbat and then about the Mishkan, the tabernacle, and its various components. I found a beautiful idea written by a Jenine Sherr, a member of the Lincoln Square Synagogue. She asks how do we - thousands of years after the Mishkan is no longer - still relate to the message and importance of the mishkan? She answers with the well known medrash quoted by Rashi on Bereishit 24:67...

...where Yitzchak brings home his new wife, Rivka. The Pasuk states “And Yitzchak brought her into the tent of Sara his mother.” Rashi quotes the Midrash “As long as Sarah was alive, a lamp burned in her tent one shabbat eve to the next, her dough was blessed and a cloud, signifying the Shechinah hung over her tent. When Sara died these blessings ceased but when Rivka entered the tent, they resumed.” The Medrash is portraying Sarah’s tent to which Rivka now entered as a mini mishkan, a mikdash me’at complete with a lamp, in place of the Menorrha, blessed dough in place of the Shulchan and a cloud, reminiscent of the “annanei hakavod” which covered the mishkan.

Today each of our homes can be our own personal mini Mishkans. Granny Rayzel did not have a formal Jewish education yet she transformed her home into a mikdash meat. It was a home filled with mitzvot, with Hashems schinah and with a tremendous love of Shabbat and everything Jewish. Granny loved to light Shabbat candles, she loved to bake and entertain and cook and most importantly she made sure there was shalom bayit and a fantastic...

...relationship with her husband Natie, our Oompie. She cared and loved Oompie with every fiber of her being and always expressed her support for him and gratitude to him for giving her the life that she had. I always enjoyed watching Granny bench. While she could not understand the Hebrew words, she concentrated fully on the English words with the utmost kavanah and always appreciated the bounty that Hashem had blessed her with.

This week’s parshah begins Vaykhel Moshe, and Moshe gathered all of Klal Yisrael. The word kahal means a community. Granny loved her family, her community. Family meant the world to Granny as evident by the large family gathering with us today for her shloshim. Granny loved receiving phone calls and visits from her children, grandchildren and great children and was truly the matriarch of our family.

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Finally, in reference to the menorah the Torah states “of pure gold; of beaten work he made the menorah. Its foot, its shaft, its branches, its goblets, its bulbs and its flowers were of the same piece.” Flowers are colorful, they represent life, vitality and continuity. Granny has left a lasting legacy, one that includes three children, seven grandchildren and twenty three great grandchildren. Most importantly all of her descendants are close and on good terms, something which many other families are not lucky enough to enjoy. Granny’s neshoma should have an Aliyah and her kids should continue to live vibrant and fulfilling lives, lives that are dedicated to Yiddishkeit and to improving the lots of those around them. Dad, Aunty Barb and Uncle Mike – u should each know that each of us watch the close relationship you have with each other. You speak regularly, help each other out in every way possible, you travel the world to be with each other for chagim, for simchas and when life is less easy. Granny’s neshama should have an Aliyah - I am sure she is right now sitting in shamayim and holding Oompies hand again and watching her family with happy tears rolling down her beautiful cheeks.

