

EULOGY FOR RUEBEN KARP

Nov. 27, 1978

*Rabbi Jacob Friedman*

DEAR FRIENDS -

I AM HERE NOT BECAUSE I AM A RABBI. I AM HERE AS A FRIEND -- AS ONE OF THE MOURNERS. FOR LIKE YOU, I HAVE LOST A VERY DEAR AND BELOVED FRIEND.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE AND COMPREHEND LIFE CONTINUING IN ITS NORMAL PATTERN WITHOUT THE PRESENCE OF OUR BELOVED RUBY. WORDS OF CONSOLATION AND COMFORT DO NOT COME EASY, FOR I LIKE MANY OF YOU AM INCONSOLABLE AND BEYOND COMFORT.

IN HIS DEATH, WE THE LIVING HAVE LOST SOMEONE DEAR AND PRECIOUS.

FOR HIS FAMILY, THE CORNERSTONE OF ITS VERY FOUNDATION AND STRUCTURE HAS BEEN REMOVED. RUBY WAS THE STRENGTH, THE WISDOM AND THE GUIDE FOR THE FAMILY. FROM THE TIME THAT HIS FATHER PASSED AWAY, HE BECAME THE PATRIARCH -- HELPING, CARING, AND COUNSELLING HIS MOTHER, HIS SISTER AND HIS BROTHERS.

RUBY WAS THE BELOVED HEAD OF HIS HOUSEHOLD, WHO TOGETHER WITH FLORENCE RAISED A BEAUTIFUL, CLOSE, LOVING AND WARM FAMILY. ELISSA, DANNI AND NORMAN, YOUR LIVES WERE GREATLY ENRICHED BECAUSE YOU HAD A

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FATHER WHO TAUGHT YOU AND SHOWED BY HIS OWN LIFE, LOVE; WHO GAVE YOU THE GIFT OF THINKING FOR YOURSELVES; WHO INSTILLED IN YOU THE VALUES OF HONESTY, FAIRNESS AND SELF-RESPECT. HE MADE SURE YOU HAD THE QUALITIES AND ABILITIES TO BUILD FOR YOURSELVES MEANINGFUL AND PURPOSEFUL LIVES. HE ENCOURAGED YOU, SUPPORTED YOU AND INSPIRED YOU.

YOU, DEAR FLORENCE -- NO WORDS COULD EVER EXPRESS THE GREAT PAIN YOU NOW SUFFER. SUCH PAIN CAN COME ONLY FROM THE GREAT LOVE AND SHARING THAT YOU HAD TOGETHER. RUBY RESPECTED YOUR INDIVIDUALITY AS YOU RESPECTED HIS - AND YET, THERE WAS SO MUCH THAT YOU HELD IN COMMON. YOUR LOVE FOR MUSIC, FOR DRAMA, FOR LECTURES, FOR INTELLECTUAL EXPLORING, FOR TRAVELLING. YOUR LIVES WERE INSEPARABLE -- YOU, COMFORTED EACH OTHER, YOU STRENGTHENED EACH OTHER, YOU, YOU GAVE SO MUCH TO EACH OTHER, YOU SHARED SORROWS AND DELIGHTED IN JOYS. TO ME, YOU WERE THE LOFTY EXAMPLE OF A COUPLE TRULY MADE FOR EACH OTHER.

RUBY WAS A LOVING, PROUD AND CONCERNED GRANDFATHER. I KNOW THAT MANY TIMES HE SHOWED YOU, HIS GRAND-

OF RELIGION. HE DID NOT ATTEND THE SYNAGOGUE ON A REGULAR BASIS. HE DID NOT OBSERVE RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS, CEREMONIES OR RITUALS PIOUSLY, ALTHOUGH HE HAD A TREMENDOUS RESPECT FOR THOSE WHO PIOUSLY DID OBSERVE. AND YET, HE 'AND I WOULD ARGUE ENDLESSLY BECAUSE I WOULD OFTEN CALL HIM A RELIGIOUS MAN. FOR YOU SEE, HIS RELIGION WAS LIFE AND PEOPLE. HIS RELIGION WAS UNIVERSAL. HIS RELIGION WAS THE ETHICAL AND MORAL PRINCIPLES OF HUMANITY.

AND WHILE RUBY WAS NOT A RELIGIOUS MAN IN THE FORMAL SENSE OF RELIGION, HE WAS COMMITTED TO HIS JEWISHNESS. HE SAW JEWS, JEWISH HISTORY AND JEWISH CULTURE IN ITS BROAD RELATIONSHIP TO THE WORLD AT LARGE. HE SAW JEWISH LIFE BEING BOTH AN INFLUENCE AS WELL AS BEING INFLUNCED IN AN EVOLVING WORLD. AND ALTHOUGH RUBY DID NOT ATTEND THE SYNAGOGUE REGULARLY, HE ACTIVELY SUPPORTED IT. HE WISELY SAW ITS NEED FOR THE JEWISH COMMUNITY. IN FACT, BEFORE THE PRESENT BUILDING WAS BUILT, RUBY APPROACHED THREE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AND SAID HE WOULD MATCH THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS IN ORDER TO GET THE NEW SYNAGOGUE UNDERWAY. HE WAS AN INTELLECTUAL WHOSE CURIOSITY WAS ALWAYS

CHILDREN, HIS LOVE; HE TOLD YOU MANY TIMES HOW PROUD HE WAS OF YOU. THIS PAST SUMMER, I SAW, PERHAPS EVEN MORE THAN HE EVER SHOWED YOU, HIS GREAT DEPTHS OF FEELINGS HE HAD FOR YOU. FOR HE SPOKE TO ME GLOWINGLY ABOUT EACH OF YOU. AND NOW, EACH OF YOU, IN A WAY, BECOME HIS IMMORTALITY -- AND YOU WILL EACH LIVE AND ACHIEVE IN LIFE GOALS FOR YOURSELVES THAT WILL JUSTIFY HIS LOVE AND HIS PRIDE OF YOU.

HIS CHILDREN-IN-LAW WERE NOT IN-LAWS. HE REGARDED YOU AS HIS OWN CHILDREN, GIVING YOU HIS LOVE, HIS CONCERN AND HIS GUIDANCE. HE GAVE INTO YOUR HANDS THAT WHICH WAS MOST PRECIOUS TO HIM -- HIS CHILDREN, YOUR WIVES AND YOUR HUSBAND.

RUBY WAS A REMARKABLE PERSON. HE WAS HONEST, TRUE, FAIR AND WISE. THERE WAS NO PRETENSE ABOUT HIM. THERE WAS NO SHAM TO MAR HIS LIFE. HE WAS FAR MORE THAN WHAT MANY OF US MAY HAVE IMAGINED HIM TO BE. HE WAS NOT WHAT WE WOULD CALL AN ORGANIZATION MAN. HE WAS NOT A JOINER. AND YET, IN HIS OWN WAY, HE INFLUENCED THE LIVES OF MANY PEOPLE AND EVEN THE COMMUNITY.

RUBY WAS NOT A RELIGIOUS MAN IN THE FORMAL SENSE

AROUSED, AND HIS INTERESTS WERE AS DEEP AS THEY WERE VARIED - THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF VARIOUS CIVILIZATIONS, MOVEMENTS AND COUNTRIES.

AND YET HIS MOST NOBLE AND COMMENDABLE TRAIT WAS HIS HUMILITY. HE WAS A DEEPLY HUMBLE MAN, WHO DID NOT OVERWHELM, EXCEPT BY THE WARMTH OF HIS PERSONALITY; WHO DID NOT OVERPOWER, EXCEPT BY HIS FRIENDSHIP AND HIS SINCERITY. AND IN HIS HUMILITY HE MADE A DEEP AND LASTING IMPRESSION ON ALL OF US.

THE TALMUD TEACHES: CHAVAL AL DE-AVDIN, V'LA MISHKADIN, WOE TO THOSE WHO ARE LOST AND CANNOT BE REPLACED.

WE ALL HAVE LOST IN THE DEATH OF OUR BELOVED RUBY KARP, AND THE TRAGEDY OF OUR LIVES IS THAT HE CANNOT BE REPLACED. MAY EACH OF US, IN OUR MEMORIES OF HOW HIS LIFE TOUCHED OURS, FIND COMFORT AND STRENGTH DURING OUR GRIEF.

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