Bs”D

Ruthie Boker Tov –

The following is a collection of thoughts that have been accompanying me for several months now. They are for you. You can share what you want with others – your decision.

They are written in the first person singular, but in large measure they reflect what both Bracha and I feel.

Jeff has been a symbol for me all my life, and a “light-house” of sorts guiding me at critical moments when I needed it, and letting me sail where I wanted at other times. When we were both young, he was the one who tried to get me interested in going to shul – he didn’t usually succeed… But it was obvious that Yiddishkeit was important to him in both a private manner as well as a public one. Even as he took a temporary “leave” from religious observance, he re-embraced it with enthusiasm and with a desire to share it with those around him. He not only showed us, his fellow family members, how comfortable he was with this, he shared his love for things Jewish with his non-Jewish friends as well. And as we know in the case of Gary and Sheila (perhaps there were others as well of whom I am not aware), some of these became life-long friendships.

His love for others did not exclude you – punkt verkert – you and he were as one in your care for and reaching out to each other as well as to others. I don’t think it is possible to distinguish who was more responsible for this. What does seem clear is that you each chose the other because you saw in each other a real soul-mate, a fulfilling by the other of the desires and values in life that you each thought were so important.

> **"Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them."** *Malvolio in Shakespeare’s “Twelfth Night”*

It is difficult to know at what point Jeff – with you – achieved greatness. In Jeff’s case, he was the first-born to a first-born (Mom), and this filled him with a sense of mission from a very young age. After Mom and Dad were

gone, it was obvious on whom the mantle of responsibility for family continuation would be placed.

In any case, your heroic stand – both of you – that this accursed illness would be fought with the best tools possible, revealed a greatness that perhaps was thrust upon you. You didn't ask for it. But you faced it head-on – with courage, with determination … and with no small degree of humour! We will be forever grateful for the lesson in life that you taught us throughout these last few years. Obviously others played a vital role, but it was you and Jeff who set the tone, who provided the leadership and who said we're here till we're not, we're here for as long as HaShem says we're here.

We are, and will be, forever grateful to you both for what you did for each other, and for how you "lit the way" for the rest of us.

Thank you.

Two learning decisions have accompanied me this past year. One – to learn Parashat haShavua according to Shnayim Mikra v'Echad Targum. This was something that Jeff encouraged me years ago to start and I did so only fitfully. After Jeff was niftar, I asked Ya'acov if I could continue from where his star "pupil" left off, and we have been learning together ever since. In addition to the learning value of the Mitzvah, I cherish the time we spend together each day.

Secondly – as a result of receiving your Pesach's weekly Compendium, I am better versed in the Parashah than ever before. And it was from one of these (Par' Ki-Seesa) that I would like to share the following thought with you:

On the pasuk (Shemot 32, 15):

"Then Moses turned and went down from the Mount and the two Tablets of the Testimony in his hand, ***written on both their sides, from one side through to the other side were they written****."*

HaRav Shimshon Refael Hirsh explains how the Divine writing was bored all the way through from one side of the stone to the other, not the usual meaning of engraving, which is just cutting into the stone. And yet the letters and words were seen from both sides in their usual form and order and not a mirror image as one would expect for such a type of writing.

After explaining the miracles needed to produce such a phenomenon, HaRav Hirsh goes on to say:

"If a Law is to be promulgated and the tablet on which it is brought is written on one side only, the one who is to publish it is placed in a definitely dictatorial position towards the massed people to whom he proclaims it. He alone has the written Law in front of him, and the masses must accept from him what he reads out to them. He is the definitely indispensible intermediary between the people and the Law.

But if the same Law, and especially here where it came to the people in the same directness from G-d as it had come to Moses, is visible on both sides, if the Law presents itself all the time equally to Moses and the people, ***then the Law comes down directly to the nation and to every member of the nation, and Moses disappears entirely from this transmission, becomes simply one of the people, the people can read the Law to Moses as well as he can read it to them. So that even if "this man Moses" disappears, the people do not require a Moses; the Torah presents itself at all times directly from G-d to every individual.***

… this does away with the idea of there being any exclusive or excluding position of a Moses to the Torah."

This concept – that learning Torah was, and will forever be, the **responsibility** and the **privilege of every Jew** that ever lived – was a revolutionary one and remains so even today. And it is this self-effacing love that Jeff had for his learning that he is bequeathing to us. Yes, we do miss him and always will. But he has given us a gift that no one can take away from us – a fear and a love for HaShem, a love for learning Torah and a love for his fellow-man, no matter who he may be.

I was not privileged to know Jeff as a lawyer (except for one case in which he helped me many years ago) but I am sure that this attitude accompanied him in his dealings with his clients as well.

We love you and we always will. We miss Jeff and we always will. We thank HaShem for having given us Jeff for as much as He did.

May his memory be for a blessing, and may he be a melitz yosher for you, for his family and for Klal Yisrael.

Love,

Bracha & Macky