

עלי לבי דוי With the prophet Jeremiah, I say “ My heart is sick within me.” Standing here, saying good-bye to my long-time friend is difficult, yet at the same time, at this moment, I want to sing out in joy for Harold’s remarkable accomplishments and for a life well-lived. May the good memories we share bring comfort to Ariel, Carl, Chila, the Kushner Family and all who mourn his passing.

Harold and Suzette, and my wife, Sandy, and I were friends for more than fifty years. Our families arrived in the Boston area during the summer of 1966, the Kushners to Natick and the Meyers to Norwood and then to Lexington. Through the years we became friends, going to dinner together, the movies, and once a month gathering with as few other rabbinic couples for an evening of relaxation. Harold was always spot on with pithy observations and with his famous wit. And, he and I occasionally filled in for each other for a wedding or funeral when one of us was away from our community.

When, in later years, we were separated by distance we kept in touch by phone and in visits. We would visit when we came North and the Kushners would give us a heads up when they were coming to New York. Our last visit was with Harold this past summer. We chatted about our families, reminisced about people and places, and Harold spoke of how much he missed Suzette.

As a colleague, Harold was a “rabbi’s rabbi,” always willing to be helpful to his colleagues. We all knew we could count on Harold for wise advice or for help with a project. Everyone was in awe of the depth and breadth of his learning and insights. Thus, when it came time to write a

commentary for a Conservative Movement Humash, it was only natural to turn to Harold and ask him to be the commentary author. We should bear in mind that whenever we open the text of the Humash we continue to study with him.

When we rabbis would gather and discuss religious matters, study texts, grapple with theological ideas, Harold would be adamant that he was not a theologian. He would describe his theology “as less about who God is or what God does and more about who we are and what we do because of what God means to us,” a teaching he imparted to all of us in everything he wrote and taught.

Harold’s search for the answer to what leads to a fulfilled and contented life began early in his rabbinic service, but it was the death of their son, Aaron, z”l, which propelled his search for meaning, the answer to why bad things happen to good people, which led to book after book, and Harold sought after as a speaker, teacher and lecturer around the world.

And what are we to learn in the end? In Harold’s words: “...to see life not as the using up of a limited resource but as the accumulation of treasures. Every new friend we made, every new truth we learned or experience we underwent would make us richer than before. There is more to my life today than there was five or ten years ago because of all the ways I have grown and been enriched in that time.”

My friend Harold never lost a sense of balance in life. He remained humble despite the TV programs, Interfaith awards, book tours, radio programs. Natick and this Synagogue were home; he was ever delighted to be back home. He loved his family; always spoke of how much Ariel meant to both he and Suzette. And we know how Ariel lovingly cared for them these past years.

Harold's love for Suzette was always obvious. They cared deeply for each other, and a picture indelibly in my memory is that of Harold and Suzette walking hand in hand on 54th St. in Manhattan as Sandy and I went to meet them for dinner.

In his volume on the 23rd Psalm, Harold wrote: "When my time comes, I will feel less alone because I will know that God is not only grieving for me but is with me at that moment."

We are certain God was because my friend, Harold Kushner's life was a blessing and the legacy he left us will continue to be a blessing.

יהי זכרו ברוך