

NOVEMBER 2007

THIS MONTH MARKS THE COMPLETION OF THE 19 MONTH MOURNING CYCLE FOR THE LOSS OF BOTH MY PARENTS AND TODAY'S THEME IS HAKAROT HATOV.

WHEN I WAS A YOUNG BOY, MY PARENTS DECIDED TO MOVE FROM UPSTATE NEW YORK, THE LOCATION OF THE FAMILY HOTEL, TO MANHATTAN, SO THAT THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION WOULD MOVE FROM A ONE ROOM COUNTRY SCHOOLHOUSE TO A JEWISH DAY SCHOOL, RAMAZ. THIS WAS A GREAT HARDSHIP BECAUSE OF THE DISTANCE FROM THEIR BUSINESS LOCATION AND MY FATHER SPENT MUCH TIME AWAY FROM OUR HOME IN MANHATTAN. BUT THEY MADE THIS SACRIFICE TO BENEFIT THEIR CHILDREN.

THEIR SACRIFICE WAS NOT IN VAIN.

FIRSTLY, RAMAZ WAS WHERE BARBARA AND I MET AND MY PARENTS WERE ALWAYS PROUD OF OUR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY. WHILE MY PARENTS OWN MARRIAGE WAS A ROLE MODEL THAT BARBARA & I ALWAYS ADMIRERD & STROVE TO FOLLOW IN THEIR PATH. MY PARENTS GREAT LOVE FOR EACH OTHER & THEIR VITALITY THAT LASTED DEEP INTO OLD AGE WERE AN INSPIRATION TO ALL OF US.

SECONDLY, I'D LIKE TO SHARE THIS MISHNA THAT I LEARNED IN FIFTH GRADE AND WHICH HAS ILLUMINATED THE REST OF MY LIFE.

IN THE MISHNAH IN SANHEDRIN, AND FOR THE SAKE OF TIME, I'LL ONLY READ THE TRANSLATION: "WHOEVER SAVES A SINGLE HUMAN LIFE, IT IS AS IF HE SAVED AN ENTIRE WORLD"

THE REST OF MY LIFE WAS INSPIRED BY THIS MISHNAH. WHENEVER I COULD, I TRIED TO VALUE AND RESPECT EVERY INDIVIDUAL HUMAN BEING AND TRIED TO ACT FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE HUMAN RACE, WHETHER AS A SCIENTIST, AS A BUSINESSMAN, OR AS A CONCERNED CITIZEN.

THIS TEACHING WAS REINFORCED BY OBSERVING MY PARENTS' PRIDE IN THEIR OWN YIDDISHKEIT, WHICH WAS COMBINED WITH A LIFELONG BEHAVIOR OF RESPECTING INDIVIDUAL HUMAN BEINGS OF WHATEVER RACE, CULTURE OR RELIGION.

AND I ALSO WANT TO ADD A HAKAROT HATOV TO THE MAIMONIDES COMMUNITY ON THIS ISSUE:

AFTER WE MOVED TO BOSTON, I LEARNED THAT THE TALMUD BAVLI, BUT NOT THE YERUSHALMI, PARTICULARIZED THIS WONDERFUL MISHNAH TO ONLY SAVING A JEWISH LIFE. AND WE ALL KNOW THE GENERAL RULE

THAT IF THE BAVLI & YERUSHALMI DISAGREE, THE BAVLI IS CONSIDERED CORRECT. FORTUNATELY, AT A MAIMONIDES SOCIAL OCCASION I FOUND OUT THAT WHEN THE RAV ZATZAL REVIEWED A MANUSCRIPT ON THIS SUBJECT HE TOOK THE UNIVERSALIST POSITION AND PERSONALLY CROSSED OUT “MI-YISRAEL”.

SO TODAY I WANTED TO GIVE PUBLIC THANKS TO MY PARENTS FOR SOME OF THEIR MANY POSITIVE INFLUENCES.
T’HEY NAFSHAM TZRUROS BI-TZROR HA’CHAIM.

THANK YOU.