

Tribute delivered by Joy's brother-in-law Laurence Berkowitz at a Yahrzeit observance at MaTaN, Jerusalem, June 7, 2005

Michelle and I have returned from Poland, where this past Sunday the Warsaw community held an Azkara for Joy.

A little over 48 hours ago, after the Azkara, the shul in Poland which Joy did most of her work was filled with over 500 Israeli soldiers from all different units, secular and religious. A prominent secular Israeli lawyer addressing these soldiers said "that over 1000 years of Jewish values were developed in this city and you the soldiers have to continue to live your life based on these values." Then a Rav of Tzahal started to sing and most of the soldiers, religious and secular, started to dance and sing Am Yisrael Chai. I took my 2-year-old son to dance with the *chayalim*. I could only imagine Joy's smile on seeing this site – all things important to her – Israel (Tzahal), her family, and her work in Poland all coming together.

Before I get to my own words, I would like to read the words of Miriam, who spoke at that Azakara. She is a young woman living in Warsaw who was influenced by Joy and actually spent two years studying at MaTaN.

Yahrzeit is the time when we close most intensive time of mourning. It is the time when we learn how to go back to our regular lives. Our lives aren't going to look the same. Not only because the sense of such loss is going to accompany us, also because that year changed us. Joy was teaching most of her life, she also taught us after her disappearance. We had chanced to hear and learn from stories of others, see her through other people's eyes. We saw how special and unique an individual she was and meet her in new amazing ways, thanks to the stories we wouldn't ever hear otherwise.

I also have such story. It was conversation with Joy on Polish train. We were going to small Jewish communities out of Warsaw. I said to her that our situation reminds me of pre-war Tzaddikim traveling with their students to visit small places and to teach faraway communities. It took till now to fully understand why she didn't like what I said. From all the stories that I hear and interactions with other people – now I understood she was too humble to think about her self as Rav or Tzaddik. She didn't look at her work as a charismatic leader. She simply cared so much for each individual Jew left alone. She wouldn't let any Jew to be cut off from possibility of studying the Torah. Wherever that person was she would find them and try to be with them to teach them. It wasn't ambition based – it was the need of the heart.

I said what I said because I felt that those trips were bringing back Jewish life. With each word of Torah, that land and its lost Jewry is receiving back the life. Saving last to be safe from the terrible disaster of the Shoah – that cut millions from life filled with Torah and Mitzvot is everything can be done in our generation. Without Joy it is going to be even more difficult. This is why I believe it is so essentially important to continue that effort that she started to bring pride of Torah and light of mitzvot to those from whom it was taken away. To bring back to those that was taken away "that precious object" of awareness of G-d's presence in the Universe.

We could view Yahrzeit as mystical time, spot when good deeds of a Tzaddik in the mystical fashion will open new spiritual horizons for all of the followers. I don't think that Joy would enjoy that way of looking at her impact on the world. There is other way of looking at Yahrzeit it is the time when we move from passive pain to action. From remembering to active doing. Her life was an amazing example of how much one person can achieve and gave. She thought to us that in order to make things done we need to work in systematic, dedicated way. We need honest commitment and self-discipline. The most important that love to other Jew and Torah aren't just words and must be taken into action. But also that every action must be led by love to people and G-d. I feel personal responsibility and obligation to continue her commitment. To bring Torah to trusty souls of lost Jewry. I hope that others will help those in my community who try to continue building and advancing Jewish education. I also hope that one day we will look at each other with deeper understanding, respect, and mutual appreciation – different but related parts of the Jewish world with equal need to be giving, responsible, and dedicated.

In this week's Parsha, Bemidbar, there is used a word – Kadosh – not regarding G-d, but people. We can't say that Jew is holy, but Torah is using that expression regarding Kahal Israel at the time when that Kahal is about to serve G-d for first time in the history free and one. When we try to help each other to achieve spiritual, religious, moral uplifting that is when we contribute to holiness of our community, Joy showed to us communal way of growth in Torah and with it. For many among Polish Jews, Joy by virtue of her teaching and friendship thought us how to grow towards communal holiness. Now we need to grow and give on our own, we also have new family to adopt. We are very thankful for your visit in Poland to know that not everything is over for us. It is amazing to see new generation growing and being able close to others for whom Joy was such significant part of life. I hope we will help each other to continue that amazing heritage of Joy.

Now for my thoughts.

It has been a long year but many thanks to friends who have helped us get through this period. We know that Joy's loss to many of her friends was as hard as losing a family member.

I have thought over the year which Biblical figure Joy Z"l could be identified with the most. The answer I came up with was Yosef Hatzadik. Yosef, the cholem, the leader, the family person as he brings his family back together, Yosef who alters the course of Jewish history, Yosef who helps the world in the time of famine, Yosef who never loses his connection to Eretz Yisrael.

Yosef when he gets down to Mitzraim as an *eved*, the *pesukim* says ' ריהי ד' את יוסף ריהי איש מצליח ריהי בבית אדניו המצרי

מצליח בידו 'אתו רכל אשר הוא עושה ד' וירא אדניו כי ד' _____

The Midrash Rabbah on this *passuk* says: All places where Tzadikim walk, the *shechina* accompanies them. For 12 years he worked in Potiphar's house, and for 12 years he was *matzliach*.

As a dreamer

Joy was also truly a dreamer – her endeavors had no limits whether in Israel, New York, Poland, young kids, teenagers, or adults. The task never inhibited the effort and the task was always completed and the accomplishments exceeded the expectations.

As a leader

As a leader, in each role Joy was to lead and not be led. Her leadership qualities in Midreshet Moriah, as a Jerusalem Fellow, her work at Avi Chai. Like Yosef the *sholet*, Joy's shaped each institution in which she worked. מצליח בידו 'אשר הוא עושה ד. For whatever she did Hashem gave her success

As one who alters Jewish History and who never lost her connection to Eretz Yisrael.

As Yosef starts fulfilling the *brit ben habetarim*, he brings his family down to Mitzrayim, which begins the process of Yetziat Mitzrayim. Joy believed in Hashem's redemption of Am Yisrael to Eretz Yisrael, and the revitalization of advanced Jewish learning for women. She was the first member of our family to make aliyah. In all her positions, both Eretz Yisrael and Limud Torah were a focus. מצליח בידו 'אשר הוא עושה ד. For whatever she did, Hashem gave her success.

As a Family Member

After years of being apart, Yosef brings his family together in a manner that Hashem wished. For Joy, family events were central and nothing was more important. No matter what country she lived in, she made it to the event in time of sorrow and in time of happiness. When we had a miscarriage in 2001, she flew to Israel within 24 hours. In 2003, a month after she was married, she flew in for the day for our youngest son's bris. She was great daughter, sister, and sister-in-law, always offering up advice on any topic at hand. She was the craziest, happiest, funniest, most loving aunt for my kids and all her nieces and nephews, always with a present in hand. In her last 14 months, she was so proud to be married and her dedication and love to our brother-in-law Jerry was unlimited. As you all know, she could never stop talking about him.

Her work in Poland.

Until our visit this past Shabbat to Warsaw, we did not fully comprehend her accomplishments there and the number of people she touched. Pre-war Jewish life in Poland was comparable to a bright torch. Between 6 years of Nazism and 45 years of communism, this torch was reduced to a few flickering candles. Joy for 14 years went and searched for those flickering candles, that small remnant of Yahadut, because Joy would not limit herself based on number of Jews or the religiosity of each Jew. She was only bound to reach out to each flickering candle. To do this for 14 years, summer after summer, and then trips every two months in recent years is unimaginable. Many of us have done *kiruv* for a summer here or there but Joy raised money and committed herself to reaching each flickering candle for 14 continuous years. מצליח בידו 'אשר הוא עושה ד. For whatever she did, Hashem gave her success.

**May we merit to continue in her work by doing it with all the things she taught us.
Yehi Zichra Baruch.**

Since Joy's passing, there have been many things done or in process to perpetuate her name. My brother-in-law Geoffrey had a Sefer Torah from Europe restored and will be dedicated in Israel. We have continued to send scholars to Warsaw. A library was dedicated in her name in the Jewish Community Center of Warsaw. ATID published in Joy's memory a booklet on eating disorders, a topic that interested Joy. Jonathan Mishkin recently wrote an encyclopedia of every name in Tanach, which was in memory of Joy. Midreshet Moriah dedicated a Shana Bet scholarship. We are thinking of publishing some of Joy's translations to English of some passages from Rav Hutner's Pahad Yitzchak.

The family thought that one of the most fitting ways to perpetuate her name was to help create a scholarship fund for advanced Jewish Education for Jewish women. In order to become a "Yosef" or to achieve what Joy accomplished, one needs to have the highest quality education. With Jerry's leadership and Malke Bina's encouragement and assistance, we created the Joy Rochwarger Balsam Scholarship fund, which will provide stipends to women studying at MaTaNa who are committed to a career in Jewish education. We decided on MaTaNa because of its accomplishments, Malke Bina's leadership, its commitment to halacha, and its high standard of education. Joy not only taught at MaTaNa but some of her closest mentors/colleagues are members of MaTaNa's faculty, one of them being Dr. Bryna Levy. We know, Bryna, that Joy's passing for you was like losing a family member. We know you grieved with us. Your influence on Joy's career was immeasurable as you brought Joy to Midreshet Moriah. I am sure that your words of Torah tonight will be an *aliyah* for the *neshama* and will inspire us to continue in Joy's footsteps.