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EVA DAVIS

IN JUST A FEW SHORT DAYS, OUR COLLECTIVE PEOPLE WILL GATHER TOGETHER  
TO CELEBRATE ROSH HASHANA.

IT WILL BE A TIME TO SPEAK OF BEGINNINGS - BEGINNING OF A NEW YEAR -  
BEGINNING OF A NEW LIFE.

IT IS A SEASON OF INTROSPECTION; OF REFLECTING ON THE PAST - AND  
BEGINNING ANEW.

IT IS ALSO A HOLY TIME WHEN FAMILIES GATHER TOGETHER - DIP THE CHALAH  
INTO THE HONEY AND WISH EACH OTHER A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

FOR THE FAMILY OF EVA DAVIS THIS ROSH HASHANA ALSO MARKS A SEASON OF  
ENDING.

THE BOOK OF HER LIFE HAS BEEN WRITTEN AND SEALED. THE HOLIDAY DINNER  
WILL HAVE AN EMPTY PLACE WHERE ONCE SAT THE FAMILY MATRIARCH.

AND TEN DAYS LATER - ON YOM KIPPUR - WHEN WE RECITE THE YIZKOR SERVICE  
IN MEMORY OF OUR DEARLY DEPARTED - EVA DAVIS WILL NOT BE IN SYNAGOGUE.  
INSTEAD SHE'LL WILL OCCUPY THE MEMORIES OF ALL WHO LOVED HER.

TODAY, TOO, IS A TIME OF MEMORIES AND BEGINNINGS AND BOOKS OF LIFE.

TODAY THE BOOK OF EVA DAVIS' LIFE LIES OPEN BEFORE US AND WE, DIMINISHED  
BY HER LOSS CAN BEGIN TO HEAL OURSELVES BY SPEAKING OF EVA'S BEGINNINGS  
AND HER ENDINGS - HER LOVE; HER LIFE; HER MEMORY.

HER ATTITUDE WAS, "IF THERE IS A PROBLEM - LET'S DEAL WITH IT." LYLA RECALLS HER AND IVOR'S BEGINNINGS AS COUPLE. "WE ELOPED - AND DAD WAS VERY ANGRY - THREATENING NOT TO COME TO THE JEWISH WEDDING. MOM DROVE US TO THE AIRPORT - THEN WENT TO PLACATE DAD, WHO EVENTUALLY RELENDED."

SHE WAS THERE FOR THEM, SOLVING THEIR PROBLEMS AND MAKING THEIR BEGINNING AS A COUPLE A LITTLE EASIER.

SHE WAS THE PROUD BUBBA - GRANDMOTHER OF IVOR AND LYLA'S THREE CHILDREN, MARCY, JODI AND MARK.

SHE WAS WELL LOVED BY HER GRANDCHILDREN - GENEROUS AND CARING - STRESSING TO HER GRANDCHILDREN THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD EDUCATION. MOST IMPORTANT WAS THE KNOWLEDGE THAT SHE WAS THERE TO BE SUPPORTIVE AND TO CARE. SHE ENCOURAGED HER GRANDCHILDREN TO BE INDEPENDENT, STRESSING THAT IN THE WORK LAND THERE ARE NO BARRIERS TO BECOMING ANYTHING THEY WANTED. WHEN MARCY WAS UNMARRIED IT WAS EVA WHO REMINDED HER, "YOU'RE A CAREER WOMAN LIKE ME - THE OTHER STUFF (MARRIAGE) WILL COME LATER" - AS INDEED IT DID.

MARCY RECALLS THAT BUBE EVA LOVED THE FINE THINGS IN LIFE - WHATEVER IT WAS - FOOD - CLOTHING - SHE HAD THE BEST AND WANTED THE BEST - NOT ONLY FOR HERSELF BUT FOR HER FAMILY AS WELL.

MARK HAS VERY DIFFERENT MEMORIES OF HIS BUBBA. "I WAS HER MATCH" HE RECALLS PROUDLY - ALMOST IMPISHLY HE REMEMBERED WHEN HE WAS 7, SKIPPING TALMUD TORAH AND HIDING BENEATH THE DESK IN HIS HOME.

IT IS SAD THAT WHEN ONE SUFFERS A LONG ILLNESS, THE FAMILY SOMETIMES HAS DIFFICULTY REMEMBERING BEYOND THE RECENT PAST. - SOMETIMES IT IS ONLY THE LAST PICTURE OF AN ILL - SOMETIMES IRRATIONAL, LOVED ONE THAT THREATEN ALL THE GOOD MEMORIES - VIBRANT, LOVING AND SHARING LIFE.

EVA HAD ALZHEIMERS THESE PAST THREE YEARS - AND WE ALL KNOW HOW THAT DISEASE ROBS THE MIND AND DIGNITY OF THOSE WHO SUFFER.

BUT EVEN DURING HER ILLNESS, EVA HAD LONG PERIODS OF LUCIDITY UNUSUALLY LONG ACCORDING TO HER DOCTOR. AND IT SEEMS THAT RECENTLY EVA DAVIS HAD THE GREAT BLESSING OF BEING ABLE TO PREPARE FOR HER OWN DEATH.

IT ALMOST SEEMS AS IF THERE IS MEANING TO HER DEATH AT THIS TIME - DAYS BEFORE THE HIGH HOLIDAYS.

IT IS AS IF SHE HERSELF - NOT GOD - OPENED HER OWN BOOK OF LIFE AND MADE PEACE WITH HER FAMILY AND WITH GOD.

TO LYLA: "WAS I A GOOD MOTHER? YOU WERE A GOOD DAUGHTER. I LOVE YOU. KISS ME AGAIN."

LYLA RECALLS A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO - HER MOTHER, HANDS IN A GESTURE OF PRAYER, HER BODY TREMBLING - FACING THE WALL AND MOUTHING WORDS TO GOD. "I BELIEVE I WAS BLESSED WITH AN INSIGHT"- LYLA SAYS "THAT SHE REALLY DID THE BEST THAT SHE COULD - THAT SHE CARED."