

February 13, 2024

Eulogy for Ima Sheli

Many years ago, almost 16 to be exact, Ima made me promise her that I would write her Eulogy before she died. It all started following the many eulogies at Aba's funeral, where a variety of people spoke very highly, elegantly, beautifully and full of praise about him. She said at the time, "what's the point, he can't hear any of this!" She wanted to hear what I was going to say about her, so that she could give her approval. I am so sorry for procrastinating all this time and did not start writing this Eulogy until 3 hours after getting the sad news.

So, sixteen years ago, at the funeral of Aba, I represented my brothers, my sister and his grandchildren giving the Eulogy in English and accompanied by the Manchester United anthem. Apparently, that was a bit too much for some people, and others criticized me for not doing it in Hebrew. Of course, I took no notice at the time. However, years later I came to understand that in retrospect they may have had a valid point. After all, he was the epitome of a Zionist and a Kibbutznik, and though the family always spoke English at home, when he spoke of Kibbutz business, as Gizbar, Mazkir, and so on, or even Israeli politics, it was always in Hebrew. However, with Ima it is entirely different. She always insisted speaking and being spoken to in English. Infact, the past few years in Beit Yonatan she forced the Metaplot and other staff to only converse with her in English. Why you may ask, well I am here to tell you. SHE HATED HEBREW!! Therefore Ima, I will continue in English.

From day one in Mansura, in March 1949, she wanted nothing to do with it all and asked to go home to the comfy life in Liverpool. But, as she often reminded us, GOD, Aba insisted they stay and complete the mission, building the Kibbutz and Israel. And so, she valiantly soldiered on for the next 75 years.



Ima was known and revered for her acting prowess, especially those famous Kfar Hanassi Zigs. She had a special sharp wit and British sense of humor that was second to none. She had this knack of making friends very easily using that sense of humor. I remember a notable example of that when Chris and I visited Mount Beatitudes with her some years ago and a bus full of Nigerian Pilgrims arrived and unloaded. Somehow, she managed to befriend many of them. Using that wit and sense of humor she soon was telling them stories of the early days of the Kibbutz and the state of Israel. They absolutely loved her. She was "on stage" and commanding the attention of many of those Pilgrims. It was a sight to behold.

Other than GOD (Aba), I, Aviva, Natan and Yossi, the loves of her life, she had one more absolute love and devotion – Frank Sinatra, Old Blue Eyes tunes will be playing later. Aviva told me that in her last days of sleep, the only thing that got a reaction from her, was when she played songs of Frank on the phone that she placed next to her ear.

Finally, I don't know this for a fact, I just know it is true, that in the Jewish tradition, it is a well-known that God reserves the Shabbat for recalling back only the very special people. Ima went to heaven last Shabbat, because, as we all know in our hearts and minds that she indeed was A VERY, VERY SPECIAL PERSON!! We all love you Ima very much and wish that you rest in peace together with Aba.

