

The Patriarch's Farewell

The dictionary says that a prophet is a person who foretells the future and events
Someone who has a vision that is divinely sent
Similarly, patriarchs and matriarchs are tribal leaders who dispense judgment from a tent
Great leaders, whether from our time, or eras long ago
Are people who show
A unique combination of wisdom, combined with the capacity to know
Where knowledge is planted, wisdom grows
We understand that Moses, Abraham and Sarah died, but even so
Today they are still teaching us things that we must know

The Old Testament tells stories of things that happened in an ancient world of desert and sand
But even today there are still special people here in our modern land
Perhaps they are sent here to show us things that we don't understand
But need to know
One of these people left our world just a few short days ago

A patriarch is a wise leader, a teacher, a guide
And whether this wisdom is heaven sent or comes from inside
It is certainly true
It is also a fitting description of the man that we knew
Yet Ron was a very human figure too
Who could resist somebody who
Loved jokes, pranks, dogs and kids?
No shrinking violet, Ron never hid
We all understood his need for release from the work that he did

A man of many gifts who used his talent and intuition to do good
His wife is very much like him
And shoulder-to-shoulder they stood
For equality, mitzvot and tzedakah.
Motivated more by tikun olam than by money or praise
Very much like our ancestors in ancient days

So now today we also stand
Grieving with his family
Bound by a tragedy hard to understand
Each with our own memories of a man
Who welcomed people into his tent
For many of us, the first time we went
To this place
Ron Shlensky's was the first friendly face
That said that first hello
Making this a welcoming place for a new member to go

A hero shows his goodness in both great and little ways
Greeting strangers is a small thing to do
Yet it meant so much if you were that someone who
Came to this synagogue all alone
And because of this man,
Left feeling perhaps you'd found a home

As we say goodbye to Ron there is so much to cry about
But at the same time, one blessed memory stands out
A wonderful example of L'Dor L'Dor
And a night many years ago when Ron and Evely opened a door
To carry their new born grandson to another floor

For on the same night their daughter gave birth
It was also time for the baby's great grandmother to leave this earth
They could have waited for the morning light
But something told Ron to go right away that night
What gave this wise man such insight
To know that by the break of day
A beloved mother would pass away?

Ron gave so much during his time on earth
He was a man who knew what life was really worth
He always saved time for family and fun
While I'm sorry to say the patriarch's life is done
And even more so that a wonderful family man is gone
I am thankful that we are blessed
By the legacy that lives on.

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