

MUM

Feb 2019

Shaare Zedek Hospital, Jerusalem

Lying in grace on hospital bed

Her face upward to heaven in this crazy holy city

Eyes closed the weight of the eyelids now too heavy to bear

Yet fully alert

She remains fully lucid!!! Despite all this..

Infection, inflammation, collapse of lung, pleural effusion, wasting, destruction of the body, tubes out of every orifice, beeping machines, alarm chimes,

Her skeletal frame breathes under duress,

Each breath an exertion,

Each inspiration using all she has to muster.

I help turn her and am shocked by her skeletal frame

Her hands however, have not changed,

The beauty of her slender fingers that played that Mendelsohn Violin concerto that enthralled and bewitched Dad (1946) remains,

They feed her via a Gastro tube (*zonda*) so she no longer eats..

she no longer drinks either (due to possible aspiration)

and has no desire (*taava*) for either.

She no longer speaks due to her voice box destroyed by the incessant coughing, yet she whispers and understands everything.

She cannot sleep due to the incessant hospital noise. Alarms, nurses walking in and out, a change of patient in the next bed, the phlebotomist, X-ray tech etc etc.

With no earthly bodily functions under her control, nor desire for human needs..

**she has now become angelic.**

So, she blesses everyone who comes into her eyesight (which has failed due to macular degeneration)

she kisses everyone's hand,

and blesses them, like a Rebbetzin, (the most unlikely description and one she would immediately disown.)

unbelievable...

I sit in vigil during the sleepless nights and am powerless to change the medical situation, the prognosis, *the current state of things*.

I have had to learn through her, endurance and patience and acceptance in all of this. But my medical training was just the opposite!  
“never give up!. fight the *malach hamaves*” the angel of death,

So, tell me,

*How am I expected to allow him in and watch the grim reaper approach silently without resistance?*

She beckons me and holds my hand and kisses it.  
A wave of agony overcomes me like I have never experienced before. It is located deep in the belly and behind the sternum, a pain that defies medical description.

*(Saying goodbye to mum? Really? ...flooded in tears....all I ever did was to make her proud... I'm still that little boy)*

By her bedside...she cradles my head....and all the childhood resentment and pain are forgotten...I have received unconditional love finally after so long here...I am at peace.

If I was pessimistic today and broken, my emotion mixes/interferes with my medical judgment and clinical prognosis...

*In this moment, in this pain I suddenly became unselfaware, totally lost in the anticipatory grief of her loss, drowning in tears*

And at this moment despite the pain,  
I was so fully absorbed..Knowing I was in pain yet overwhelmed by the sense of loss, of this towering personality in my life....

*(I think I get what the Sanzer said to his chosid after burying his son on the way out of the beis olam...He had a shmeichel on his face...and the chosid could not understand it...The Rebbe said:” I felt a searing pain in my back as if someone had plunged a knife into my heart from the rear(on losing my son)  
then when I tried to see behind me, where it was coming from I looked back and saw.. it was the Heilige Bashefer”)*

I think I get it...Not in the sense of the heilige bashefer as “out there” in the Buberian sense of I/Thou, but in the Degel sense of being so absorbed IN THE FEELING without thinking it for a second and totally at one with the feeling the experience (the DAAS of the pain...) **so this is dveykus!**

Then somehow you are in this space of genuine experience with no thought beyond or outside of it so that this pain and anguish (like making love?) (jussance) to the extent

you fully experience it with nothing beyond IT.

*As if you have returned to the Eitz HaChayim before the split, even in this agony.*

She paradoxically has taught me just this!

She whose body bore me into this world  
Whose body I was totally connected to.  
Whose demanding spirit drove me for decades,  
Whose love was dependent upon my performance,

Who now blesses me with no strings attached.

A strange different planet

I hold her hand and stroke it in the middle of the darkness and another day passes.

She does not leave this world but suffers for another day  
Aliza and Sasha fly in to see her before they marry in a month  
She knows  
She knows  
That I must walk her down the aisle  
That I cannot be in mourning

So she holds on  
Even now  
At the ending  
She resists  
And will leave this world on her own terms.

An Aristocrat.  
A Sargon woman.