

10/13/95

Jack D. Weiler Eulogy

A. Arba Minim

1. JW--passed away during Sukkot
2. *Arba Minim*--Rabbis: their physical forms suggest four organs human body: Etrog=heart; Lulav=spine; hadassim=lips; aravot=tongue. And--must be all together.
3. These = apt symbols for the rich, colorful, eventful, creative life of JW
4. Jewish heart, sensitive to pains & joys his people all over world (UJA...); Jewish spine, proud of his people's traditions and sacred values (J ed, Rabbis, YU); Jewish lips, symbol of kissing, of love for Torah & Israel--but also all humanity (AECOM); tongue--and what a capacity for persuasion his speech had!

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B. Kohelet {recited the Shabbat between his death and his interment)

1. "Kohelet"--2 interpretations by Rashi--both from word *k-h-l*:

a) *she'kihel chokhmot harbeh* -- i.e., amassed variety of talents, abilities, potencies & focussed them on his worthiest enterprise

b) *she'haya omer kol devarav be'hakhel* -- i.e., was in touch with the masses, i.e., community; all his work & words directed to their welfare

2. **Or:** This morning (of funeral) recited *Hoshanot*--and prayed *kehillot Yaakov hoshana*--for help and salvation on behalf of the "assemblages of Jacob." The term *kehillot* means gatherings, assemblages... in two senses: to marshal all talents etc. and focus them appropriately; and the community or communities of Jacob.

2. Both were true of JW--this remarkable man, small in frame, who was vast in his abilities and so capacious in the embrace of his loves and commitments. He possessed an amazing combination of talents & propensities, all of which went into the mix that constituted his unique personality...

3. And--all this formidable personal dynamism & power was directed at fellow Jews and fellow humans-- society at large, but especially the Jewish community especially.

His life was largely coterminous with this wild, fabulous, tortured, magnificent, dreadful century, and he had a profound influence on his times, and especially this community which nurtured him and which he, in turn, led with full devotion of heart and mind.

C. His Qualities

1. deep love & respect for his people & faith--probably reflection of his deep feelings for his father--who was teacher of Talmud, great *talmid chakham*
2. early on--became an indisputable leader American Jewish community
3. inexhaustible energy; went from cause to cause without interruption & without losing energy or conviction...
4. generosity... philanthropist...a remarkable man, small in frame, who was vast in his abilities and so capacious in the embrace of his loves and commitments
5. raised, not only gave, many millions: *gadol ha-me'aseh yoter min ha-oseh* a veritable wizard at fund-raising
6. a great, persuasive speaker; He possessed a charm bordering on charisma, so that he managed to pressure for charity--yet retained "victim's" respect and love. Called cards, but his real calling-card was the genuineness of his commitment and the sweetness of his authenticity as Jew & human being.
7. Smart--but, more important, also wise...
8. His phenomenal success in real estate (he often said) was result his initial insight which led him to buy up corner properties on Park Ave. Well, he applied same intuition to his Jewish leadership: he wasn't single issue man; instead, looked for corners, conjunctions--thus: American Jewry & Israel; career (real estate associations) & religion (own *syngagogues* --I first met him via TJC--NY Board of Rabbis)...That is what attracted him so to YU--medicine (AE) and Torah, Jewish education
9. *Pater familias* of YU, especially AECOM....
10. Personal touch. Too often, community leaders sacrifice personal relations on altar of the communal good. JW never thought that necessary... My personal guide and counsellor on more than one occasion...
11. Hence, we shall each of us miss him on two counts--as irreplaceable Jewish leader of 20th century, and as personal friend to hundreds--each of whom thought he was very special in his eyes...

Conclude (1): Sukkot was his Yom Tov..."Sukkah in the Sky".....Now his mission done, Jack ascends to the divine Sukkah in Heaven, reunited with his familial father and with his Father in Heaven... And we pray for him, as did King David in his Psalms, *ki yitzpeneni be'sukko be'yom raah, yastireni be'seter ohalo*--may the Almighty shelter him in His sukkah in the day of distress, and protect him in His divine tent....

Conclude (2): (Eccl.7:1): "A good name is more precious than the most expensive oils, & the day of death than the day of birth." Who could have foretold, at his birth, what this child would achieve?

Now, as we bid him farewell, we all affirm: he was most precious and dear, and a reputation and good name second to none.

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