

A Harmonica At The Philharmonic

By Debbie Garfinkel Diament

It was June, 2020, and our children were planning a 70th birthday party for my husband, Yakov.

Due to the Coronavirus's spread, we decided to hold his party in our backyard. We further made a decision that each of our children and their families would hold a separate celebration for Yakov. Each family chose a day, and arrived with dinner prepared, a birthday cake and candles, balloons and, of course, gifts.



Our son Rafi and his family catered the first party. Our young grandson proudly presented his gift.

It was a harmonica, which none of us knew how to play, but Rafi had a wonderful idea. Prior to the party, he searched the internet, hoping to find a harmonica performance. He found just what he wanted. It was a video of a performance in Carnegie Hall. At the end of the performance, there was a standing ovation and loud applause. Just when the evening seemed to be coming to a close, a young man came out to stand in front of the orchestra. He was introduced as a well-known harmonica player. The audience had not expected this, and curiously waited to see what would happen.

Out of this unobtrusive instrument, came the sounds of classical music, beautifully played. Our son had set his cell phone to begin playing this part, but what he really wanted was played closer to the finish. Rafi told his father to start playing the harmonica, but he had no idea what was in store for him.

Suddenly, the tempo changed and the William Tell Overture was played with gusto. The audience went wild. Yakov was known for his wonderful sense of humor, and got right into the part. My husband's performance was flawless.

But, the story doesn't end here….

Within a few months, with no prior warning, my formerly strong, healthy husband started to slow down. It didn't take long for him to find himself in a hospice in Yerushalayim. He was weak and couldn't eat or drink. It was hard for him to talk. Now, his jokes were hard to come by.

One day, he asked me to do him a favor. I loved watching what became known as the harmonica video. He knew it had a place of pride on my cell phone. He asked me to call over a few of the very busy nurses, and show them the clip. I knew this was important to him. Three nurses stopped and gathered around me. I started the clip, and they all laughed and thanked me. They needed to see their patients as more than just people who were very sick. My husband didn't last much longer, but long enough to give them this gift of laughter.

It now holds a place of honor on my desk – a reminder for me to remember him the way he had been.

CLIP AND SAVE

Good reason to go through your closets now

CHASDEI MIRIAM
CLOTHING DRIVE
FOR HERE AND ERETZ YISROEL
(A Division of N'shei Ahavas Chesed)
Will א"ה take place at
BETH JACOB HIGH SCHOOL
4420 15th Avenue
Sunday, October 30, '22
from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.

Please Take Note Of This Years Date

As usual, clothing **must** be in **excellent** condition (not torn or stained). Ask yourself whether you would wear this item if you were expecting company.
♦ *Please do not send outdated clothing.*
♦ *No bulky winter clothing*
No ladies' denim clothing
♦ *No big boys' or men's shorts*
♦ *Women's clothing should not be short or red in color*
♦ *No polo shirts or tops with letters, slogans or pictures.*

In order to defray the cost of shipping, we would appreciate if everyone would cover the cost of their own shipping. **At present, the cost of shipping is $1.25 per pound.**

AS IN PREVIOUS DRIVES, ALL CHILDREN CLOTHING UP TO SIZE 12 WILL BE ACCEPTED FREE OF CHARGE

VOLUNTEERS ARE URGENTLY NEEDED TO HELP SORT AND PACK CLOTHING AT THE DRIVE. PLEASE CALL EVENINGS: 718-851-1812

THE CLOTHING IS NOT SOLD,
IT IS GIVEN TO VERY NEEDY FAMILIES

Silent Wound: A Time to Heal Jewish Hearts

Leaders and laypersons across Jewish circles assert differences on "the Jewish view" on abortion. Some argue that state-level restrictions limit the broad nuance with which Rabbis can judge a woman's situation to permit abortion beyond life-threatening risk; others contend that a woman's bodily autonomy gives her license to terminate a pregnancy. Many contemporary rabbis permit abortion due to mental or emotional strain resulting from financial hardship, professional conflict, or concerning prenatal diagnoses. This has led to a dangerous but common misperception that Judaism champions abortion.

By "abortion," we mean a medical and/or surgical procedure intended to end the life of a pre-bom human child in the womb. Many Torah sources and opinions in Jewish law explicitly forbid abortion, except when pregnancy directly threatens a mother's life. They affirm the pre-bom's humanity and our responsibility to protect both mother and child.

At the Jewish Pro-Life Foundation (JPLF), we understand the difficulties and fears that pregnant women face, while disagreeing that abortion has a moral place in Judaism. Abortion is a significant human experience that often goes unspoken amid the political debate. It has inflicted a silent wound on the people and land of Israel. Hurting families and communities deserve compassionate, restorative healing.

Thousands of parents attest to trauma and grief after abortion. Stories in the online forum "I Regret My Abortion" describe abortion as hazardous and life-changing. Emotional wounds run deep and last a lifetime. A meta-analysis by *Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences* suggests a notable correlation between abortion and heightened risk of depression, anxiety and substance abuse disorders. While not all persons involved in an abortion regret it, the lived experience of those who do deserves consideration. Their trauma should be acknowledged in a space where they can share their story free of shame or judgment through healing programs such as Tikvat Rachel at the JPLF.

Tikvat Rachel offers a "pathway for Jews who seek a confidential, safe, accepting, and compassionate program to address the deeply personal issues that arise after abortion...based on the Jewish concept of Teshuvah and the promise of healing in Judaism." We consider life a sacred gift from G-d. Embracing life to fulfill our purpose through His Torah and commandments binds us eternally to our Source of life. Destroying life fractures this essential connection. Our Divine souls always seek their Source, and through Teshuvah, we reject spiritually destructive practices and recommit our faithfulness to our life-giving relationship with G-d.

A lack of discernment and a rise in secularism has led many to uncritically accept abortion with slight regard for its risks and our pertinent Jewish traditions. According to current "U.S. Abortion Statistics: facts and figures relating to the frequency of abortion in the United States" published by *Aborl73.com*, reported legal abortions alone exceed 60 million since 1973. As reported by *Haaretz* in May 2019, legal abortions in Israel number 40,000 annually, or approximately 1,800,000 total since 1977, leaving a silent void where babies' souls linger among us.

Grieving parents need a space to be honest about their experience, says JPLF Founder Cecily Routman, who urges a return to "our cultural roots of compassion, kindness, and ministering to the wounded." At Tikvat Rachel, biblically-based guided reflection, group support and conversation allow grieving parents to own the past, express feelings, forgive themselves and others, and even bond with their lost children. The program name invokes our matriarch Rachel buried on a roadside, who tearfully prayed for her descendants on their exile to Babylon, arousing G-d's mercy as He swore to fulfill her hope for their redemption. In our difficult current exile, Rachel still cries for us and for many Jewish parents who mourn their children lost to abortion.

Learn more about Tikvat Rachel healing opportunities at JewishProLifeFoundation.org