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Naomi Rudman Klein  
*Naomi Rut bat Yisrael v'Channah*  
October 7, 1925 - February 16, 2019

Naomi passed away this past Shabbat, when Jews all around the world were reading from *Parashat Tetzaveh* from the concluding chapters of the Book of Exodus. This is significant for two reasons. First of all, our rabbis of blessed memory, said that only the most righteous of our people pass away on the holy Sabbath. Second, in the *parasha*, right before we read the details about the clothing worn by the High Priest and his boys, the Torah portion deals with the kindling of the Eternal Light, the *Ner Tamid*, fueled by beaten olive oil. I found the subject of kindling and maintaining light so appropriate for Naomi. She was a strong proponent of enlightenment, in the form of higher education, for herself, and for the generations to follow – especially for women. Every academic success achieved by her children and grandchildren filled her soul with special *naches*. And by sharing Naomi's story this morning, we spread her light to all who have gathered to remember and celebrate her.

Naomi Ruth Rudman was born on October 7, 1925 to Anna and Israel Rudman, in Bangor, Maine – how appropriate that snow was in the forecast this morning. She was the first-born child. Three years later, she would become an older sister to Peter, now of blessed memory. She only spent the first couple of years in Bangor when her parents relocated the family to the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia, where she grew up. She attended Germantown High School, where she graduated in 1943. Naomi went on to Syracuse University where she majored in American History. Naomi came from a highly educated family where it was not unusual for young women to go on to university. Starting from the early age of seven, Naomi's best friend growing up was Roberta – who ended up being her maid of honor many years later. With a name like Naomi Ruth, you would expect a very Jewishly educated child. Ironically, her dad, due to a falling out with the rabbi at the time, prevented her from getting a thorough Jewish education. Many years later, Naomi rectified this lack of Jewish learning by pursuing Hebrew at Congregation Beth Shalom – proving it's never too late. What I'd like to focus on is Naomi's early twenties.

Naomi met Charlie Klein in 1947 at a Blue Mountain Summer Camp in the Poconos. I will note that this was a Jewish summer camp, and studies show that one of the best ways to keep your kids Jewish is to send them to Jewish summer camp, as this story will prove. Naomi and Charlie were both counselors. It was after getting the kids to sleep, early on in the summer, that these two 21 year-olds met in the camp social hall. Naomi was working on a New York Times crossword puzzle and Charlie came up to offer assistance. Smooth move Charlie. Naomi found him to be cute, with brown eyes, and black hair. Naomi also had black hair, a TON of black and she was very statuesque. Naomi was very sure of herself and had a sophisticated Main Line air about her.

In April 1948, not even one year after meeting, Naomi and Charlie were married in Naomi's parents' home by the rabbi of the German Town Jewish Center. Naomi said that through their 58 years of marriage, Charlie was the best companion one could ever hope for. They did everything together. They liked the same plays, the same movies, the same musical performances.

They had the same taste which made things so enjoyable for the two of them. I asked Naomi if she had every worked with Charlie in his practice. She said, no, that was the boundary line.

She let other family members, from Charlie's sister, Elva, on down, take their turns working with Charlie in the clinic. Her job was to feed the family members dinner after they were done at the clinic – this was their form of payment, which speaks well of Naomi's cooking.

After their marriage, Naomi and Charlie traveled to Norfolk, Virginia, where Charlie served in the Navy. It was the Navy that helped put Charlie through dental school and in return Charlie served on the navy base in Norfolk. Naomi said those were golden times. Life on the base was fun.

In 1950 they moved back to Wilmington and Charlie opened up his dental practice on Philadelphia Pike in the Penny Hill neighborhood, where he would serve Wilmingtonians for the next 40 years. Naomi and Charlie's social life revolved around the Jewish Federation, including Federation dinners, the Young Adults division, and support of Israel. Naomi vividly remembered her and Charlie's first of four trips to Israel. It was back in 1967, just two weeks after the Six Day War. There were places where even the tour guide had never visited before because they had been in Jordanian hands and they had to be careful of unexploded mines.

Throughout their lives, support of Israel had always been central in Naomi and Charlie's life. Much of their fundraising and support was done with fellow friends from Beth Shalom.

In later years, Naomi and Charlie traveled further afield, including Paris, Rome, South America, even Iceland. And there were even places where Naomi went alone without Charlie. For example, as part of her educators group, Naomi journeyed to the People's Republic of China.

Nowhere else gave Charlie and Naomi greater joy than Long Beach Island, New Jersey, where they would return to year after year. The only destinations which rivaled Long Beach Island, were the trips Naomi and Charlie would make to attend family simchas. Nothing gave the couple greater joy than witnessing these life cycle celebrations.

Naomi and Charlie had four children, who Naomi would take great pains to tell you are extraordinary. The first to be born was Debbie in 1949. Growing up, she was particularly close to Naomi's mother, who she called Nanna. A favorite family tradition was Sunday Dinner's at Nanna's back in Philadelphia.

Naomi was moved and honored when, as an adult, Debbie chose to wear Naomi's wedding dress when she and her husband, Jan, were married in her parents' backyard.

Lisa was born in 1951. Naomi would have wasted no time in telling you that Lisa had already earned her doctorate by the age of 25 at MIT, no less, and teaches engineering at Rutgers. Lisa brought her mom great joy in her marriage to Tim, and the birth of Naomi's granddaughter, Martha.

Martha adored her Grammy and Grammy adored her Martha.. Grammy would probably also tell you that her granddaughter Martha worked for the impressive Brennan Center for Justice – And Naomi would explain proudly that this was a very liberal public policy institute.

Wendy, Naomi and Charlie's third child, was born in 1955. She will address you in a just a moment, speaking for all her siblings. Of course Naomi was so proud of her accomplishments, including her graduating Phi Beta Kappa from Brown – and getting her Masters from the New England Conservatory of Music, playing flute.

Wendy continued to give her mother naches though her marriage to Alan, and by providing her with wonderful grandchildren Maggie, Saul, Noah and Jeremy.

Naomi particularly enjoyed attending Maggie's theatrical performances in Rhode Island.

David was the baby in the family, born in 1959 -- the first and only boy.

David and his mom shared a love of cooking. And through David, Grammy's Prokes, aka Cabbage Soup, continues to be a family favorite. For the last six or so years, David would bring his mother dinner. Naomi would tell David how much she liked his cooking and then he would have to tell his mother that they were all HER recipes. Together with Sue, David brought so much joy to his mother through their grandchildren Ricky and Hannah.

If Ricky was not enough, Grammy got a bonus in Ricky's wife, Kelly.

Naomi was an early investor in Ricky and Kelly's business – Groennfell Meadery in Vermont. If you haven't figured it out by the title – they brew meade. She was so proud of how well they were doing with the business. But Naomi was even MORE proud of the great-grandchild, Nora, which Ricky and Kelly blessed her with. You will be hearing from Ricky in just a moment, as he represents all the grandchildren in sharing memories of their Grammy.

Of all the things that Hannah made Naomi kvell was about was the fact that she was going for her PhD. in Criminal Justice at Temple. Now, as a rabbi, I always like to her when kids are attending Temple regularly. Grammy was overjoyed to attend Hannah's wedding to Nick in the fall of 2017.

Naomi spoke about all the grandchildren as if they were the most amazing people in the world. And in turn, all the grandchildren loved to visit their grandparents' home in North Hills.

Naomi said what joy it gave her and Charlie to pick up the grandchildren from day care on

Wednesday afternoons and have grandchildren's day at their home.

After her children were all in school, Naomi returned to the University of Delaware to earn her Master's Degree as a Reading Specialist. She worked for many years as a Title One Reading Teacher in Wilmington Public Schools. Even after retirement, she shared her love of teaching as an elementary school mentor and taught Russian Jewish emigres English, helping them to assimilate successfully into American society.

Following the death of her beloved Charlie almost thirteen years ago, Naomi found special comfort in the company of her women friends. It should come of no surprise that Naomi was a good friend.

Remember her full name was Naomi Ruth – and the rabbis said that in the Bible, there was no stronger friendship between two women than the friendship between Naomi and Ruth. Naomi's special women friends included included Yetta Chaiken, Barbara Yalisove, Cora Carlis, Ruth Siegel, Connie Kreshtool, Bernice Thomases, of blessed memory, and others. They were known as the Thursday Lunch Ladies. On one Thursday not all that long ago, I inadvertently encountered this group on a Thursday at the now defunct Bon Appetite, zichrona l'bracha. I must admit that I was quite intimidated by this group of super intelligent, capable women – all leaders of our community to whom we owe so much.

As mentioned earlier, Naomi came from a group of highly educated women, she herself was a highly educated woman, and she continued her higher education into her later years, reveling in the courses she took at the Osher Life Long Learning Institute. She particularly enjoyed the Current Events class, and its cast of fascinating speakers.

If I were going to summarize what gave Naomi the most joy, that I can answer in one word: *mishpucha*. It's not that she lived vicariously through their innumerable successes – but, rather, she took such joy in each of their unique successes.

Even in her six months at Forward Manor, her new home was filled with photos of family. When considering Naomi's life as a whole, we must return to the Torah portion which was read the day that she passed from this world to the next. The *sedra* opened with the kindling of an Eternal Light. All throughout her life, Naomi spread light through her dedication to education. She led through example, inspiring two generations which followed. I am quite sure that her great-grandchild, Nora, will be earning her own PhD, before you know it --- and I am sure Naomi will be rooting her on from On High. May we all do our best to keep Naomi's light kindled in our lives. Then we can truly say of Naomi, *zichrona l'bracha*, may her memory be for a blessing, and we can all answer, *amen*.