

אם סליחה לדוברי עברית

I am Ilana Kelman the eldest child of Barbara and Aubrey Abrams and the eldest grandchild of our beloved grandmother, Rona Hilda Katz.

Granny Razel was born on February 27, 1925 in Johannesburg, South Africa to Tillie nee Beare and Barnes Leibenson. Granny's mom, granny Tillie, who I remember fondly, was also born in Johannesburg and her father moved there as a very young child. Each of them were from families who came from Lithuania around the turn of the 20th century. Granny lost her father at the tender age of 16, which was a difficult time for the family. She had to go to work as a pharmacist, something she gladly gave up when she met and married our grandfather at the age of 18. Granny married Joshua Nathan Katz in 1944. It was a legend in the family of how they spent their courting days on the tennis court. Granny and Oompie were beloved sweethearts through out their lives and as long as Oompie was happy granny was happy too. Although they were not privileged to have much formal Jewish education, Oompie came from a family steeped in Jewish knowledge and it was a condition of their marriage that they keep a kosher, shabbat observing home something granny committed herself to throughout her life. I hope that in my brief and inadequate words I will convey some of granny's legacy.

I will focus my comments on things I learned from Granny Razel.

First on the list would be איזהו הוא העשיר השמח בחלקו. I can't ever remember a time that granny wished for something she did not have. Except perhaps for Oompie after he passed away. She was always grateful for what she had, and never asked much from us. Whenever we asked granny said I feel fine, and I don't need anything. The material possessions she had she took care of and valued, but it was never about material acquisition, it was about using beautiful things to make beautiful meals and to be there for her family and friends. Granny was always

content and present in the moment, she was never distracted by computers or technology. If you spoke to her she listened with her full attention and gave you her full and best advice and thoughts in return. Granny knew each of her children and grandchildren and even the personalities of many of her great grandchildren. She really knew them, what mattered to them, and she had wonderful insight.

Granny loved English Literature and fostered that love in her friends and family. She used to have weekly meetings with her friends when they would listen to Shakespeare plays on records. I remember when she decided to sign up for university once she was already a grandmother, to catch up on the education, she never had when she was younger. She completed a bachelors in English Literature at the Correspondence university in South Africa, with mail in assignments. Granny taught us to love the classics and any book given to us by granny was always a specially chosen treasure with love for us in mind. Many of you know and have read some of her selections. She regularly quoted Shakespeare, and it was on us to know the source and meaning of the quotes.

Granny was a role model of creativity. In her patient and meticulous way granny was a master at sewing, at embroidery, and knitting. None of this because she had to, all of it because she loved too. Granny's commitment to perfection was ever present, she made it look easy. Gran, as I picked up your knitting needles these past few months, and wished I had you by my side to make them do something useful, I felt like you as I made them click in just the same way you did. I will keep working on this though, you taught me by example, and I will keep trying until I figure this out.

Gran, your cooking and baking were also memorable. We all try to recreate your special delicacies. I am so grateful you took the time to spend with me to figure out teiglach. I know

that they do not come out perfectly every time. But every time they are successful, we taste them and think of you and feel your love. This also applies to so many recipes, and even the beautiful way you served everything. I am so happy when my kids ask for your recipes. We remain inspired.

Gran, you taught us the love and the value of living things. How I long to walk with you again so that you can point out the horsechestnut trees, how did you recognize them, even without their flowers. You knew every flowering plant by their botanical name. You loved animals from the days you rode on horseback, through the days you took care of our dogs when we left South Africa, through the days you fed the birds in your back yard -because you loved to watch them. Your wonder, every year when spring came was soul touching, every year you were amazed to see the forsythia emerge from the sticks outside, and how all the buds came out, and then the lilacs and the rhododendrons and the roses. You instilled this love in all your descendants who now pride themselves on their gardens.

You taught us by how to take care of yourself in the best and most healthy way. It was always about looking and feeling your best because that was the respect you showed for yourself. It was never to impress others. Your elegance and classy demeanor were well known.

You loved your family like nothing else. Until the very end, that was the priority of your life. You always wanted us to know how loved we were, and how overjoyed you always made us feel to have our company. You loved every phone call from your children, grandchildren and great grandchildren and were so proud to tell us that Mikey and Brian called you every day. You made the effort to be at every simcha even when travelling became difficult. It was just always about being together with the family. Your friends loved you too, they could always count on a good cup of tea and beautiful fresh scones in your house. But even so, we felt so special to be in

your inner circle and to get the extra scones and other delicacies. I want to acknowledge the loss of our close extended family as everyone moved away from South Africa. We still remember the Sunday lunches for the entire extended family -every week, and the parties by the pool. It is so sad that we have family on the four corners of the earth and new generations who do not know each other. Dear Aunts, Uncles, cousins, second cousins, third cousins twice removed -I know you are listening, because you loved and were loved by granny and oompie too. Please reach out, we want to hear from you and to see you when you find yourselves nearby. If you were in granny's circle you matter to us and we want to hear more from you.

Gran, with all I have learned from you, the most valuable lesson I think has been the one that sank in for me over the past year. Really you taught me how to grow older. Somehow I never thought much about the kids getting big and moving away, I was so busy with the daily tasks of their growing up, but as everybody suddenly got big and went away for school I suddenly began to remember all the things you told me about the years of feeling needed when your kids are home. You made me aware that there was a time after that, and I learn daily from your example and how you filled your time and made your priorities. You carried yourself with dignity and exuded contentment every day until the very last day. I think of your lessons all the time, they inform my daily existence.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my extended family for the love and support you have shown to us and to granny over the years. We miss living close by to you all, but are grateful for the times we have been together. It was especially meaningful as we had to quickly get our acts together to arrange to be here in Israel with granny and oompie (aleihem hashalom), to have the embrace of the family from the minute granny was gone, there was an international team who jumped into action to make all the arrangements for us to be here and together during

this difficult time. We hope that even with the passing of granny and oompie we will still be priorities in each others lives, and we will continue to see each other as much as we can and certainly for special occasions. Auntie Ev, I know granny loved the opportunities to see you and to speak to you even as recently as your conversation last week. Although you and granny are different in so many ways, there was always a great resemblance in some deep inner traits. We hope you will have health and strength for many years.

I especially want to thank Jay and our kids Ariel, Elisha and Aliza, Atara and Noah, Rachel, Azaria and Elnatan for really being there for granny for years of love, helping her come to us for shabbat and yom tov meals that she treasured so much, and for the years she preferred to stay at home, you made sure to be with her every single shabbat for kiddush and how she loved the Rosh Hashana and Yom kippur davening and singing we all did together around granny the past yamim noraim. I hope you will treasure the memories and know how special each of these moments were for us and for granny.

I want to thank Evelyn, Erlinda and Sonia and the team of caregivers who made it possible for granny to be at home where she always wanted to be. You ensured she lived with elegance and dignity until her last day. Dr. Berman, Mariam, and the medical team thank you for your kinds words, patience and good medicine. Johnny, you were always more a grandson than granny's doctor, you always made sure granny had what she wanted and what she needed. We could trust your instincts and clinical judgement delivered always with good sense and an enormous abundance of love. Thank you to Rabbi Spitz for being with us in granny's last hours and thanks to the Chevra Kadisha in Toronto and in Israel. I am grateful for my sister Taly and her husband Jason, to have a sister who is there for me to share the challenges and joys of life,

especially the reality checks these days, and Tova and Allan who are a source of strength, support and wisdom at all times.

Acharon, acharon Chaviv, I want to thank my parents and especially my mom, who did most of the effort of making sure granny was well taken care of and in the manor she wanted every single day, every single week, and every single year that she needed it. Granny lived until the end exactly in the manor that she wanted to and you mommy really made this possible. The clarity of purpose you had for this will serve as a wonderful model to all of us on taking care of our parents when they need it. PG we should all be strong and healthy for many more years.

Granny, we know how much you loved us all. We hope that you knew how much you were loved by us. We will treasure your memory. We are so grateful to have had you in our lives. We will miss you. יהי זכרה ברוך