

For Ruth Bader Ginsburg

There is a beautiful midrash that I planned to include in my sermon today but in the end I didn't. I know now it wasn't meant for my sermon. It was meant to be shared with you now.

Midrashes shemot raba 5:9 says:

אמר רבי לוי שלשה קולות הולכות מסוף העולם ועד סופו והבריות ביניהן ואינן שומעות כלום ואלו הן היום והגשמים והנפש בשעה שיוצאת מן הגוף. ואין הנפש יוצאה מן הגוף אלא עד שתראה את השכינה

“Three sounds reach from one end of the world [all the way] to its other end and move through and among people but we hear nothing. And they are these: the day (the sound made by the passage of time), and the rains (the sound of the ground telling the clouds how much rain it needs) and the [sound of the] soul at the time that it leaves the body. And the soul does not leave the body until it sees the Shechinah.”

Last night Ruth Bader Ginsburg's soul left her body. I'd like to believe the shechina was revealed to her in that moment. Though the sound of the soul departing the body is something the human ear cannot hear, I know in my heart that the sound reached from one end of the world all the way to its other end, and came before God's Throne of Judgement this Rosh Hashanah. And I believe that Ruth Bader Ginsburg's soul had a thing or two to share with God about Justice. And Judgement. And Dissent. And really bad timing.

תהא מנוחתה עדן – May she rest in Eden. RBG did not do much resting on this plain. She worked devotedly on our behalf until the very last minute. May she know some genuine rest on high. She has been a true beacon of hope to so many of us, and though she is with us no longer, that beacon still shines and will get us through November. And through January. And beyond.

זכר צדיקה לברכה – זצ"ל (the memory of the righteous is for a blessing).