

Remarks by Guest of Honor Reva Borgen

Sharsheret Benefit Luncheon

May 7, 2006

From the bottom of my heart I would like to thank you all for coming. I'd like to say a quick thank you to the chair- people of this event- Nikki, Terri and Naomi. Thanks you so much for your time and energy that went into making this luncheon as successful as it. I would also like to extend special thanks you to Elana Silber and Rebecca Schwartz who worked so hard in the planning of today's luncheon.

I would like to wish a mazel tov to Sharon Herenstein on being presented with the Lisa Altman Award. It is an honor to share this day with someone as well respected and revered in the community. Your acts of *chessed* and countless hours spent in the Sharsheret office are an inspiration to everyone around you. I knew Lisa Altman personally. Her infectious smile and unwavering strength was certainly something to behold. Lisa lived her life with dignity and grace. Everyone that came in contact with Lisa was uplifted. As the recipient of the Lisa Altman Award, you Sharon, personify

these same traits. There is no greater honor that can be bestowed upon a person than to continue to pay tribute to Lisa's name with all your *medot tovot*.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Reva Borgen. I live in Cedarhurst with my husband, Yumi, and our four children. Those of you who do know me know that I am a private person. You must be asking yourselves, "What in the world is she doing up there?!?" as I found myself asking that same question.

The answer is three- fold.

Firstly, for those of you who know Rochie Shoretz know that it is virtually impossible to say no to her. Rochie, your enthusiasm, dedication, hard work and commitment to Sharsheret is an inspiration to all of us. I hope and pray that we all see the day when an organization such as Sharsheret isn't needed. But until that day, the women of Sharsheret are lucky to have you as our leader.

Secondly, I am standing up here to pay tribute and to honor the memory of my hero, my mother. Judith Pinter, ז"ל , was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer 23 years ago. She battled it with tenacity. Her

unwavering belief in Hashem and her positive outlook added years to her life. This unique quality allowed my mother to enjoy every moment and live life to the fullest. My mother lived with dignity and died with dignity. When I had the daunting task of telling my mother that I had just been diagnosed with breast cancer, she took my hands in her and said, “Rivka, you’re going to be OK.” That was the first time that I heard these words. My mother is sorely missed by her family and friends.

And finally, the last reason that I am standing up here is to teach my children that when you feel so passionately about an organization or a cause, it is your obligation to go outside your comfort zone. You might find yourself behind a podium, in front of hundreds of people, even though public speaking is not your forte. So I am here behind this podium in front of all of you today to express my *HaKarat HaTov* to Sharsheret.

Four years ago, I found myself emailing a desperate message in the middle of night. I wasn’t sure who was going to read it or answer it. That is probably what attracted me to Sharsheret in the first place- being anonymous. Well, the person on the other side of the computer was Rochie. She asked if I would like to speak to someone who had been in the same

situation that I now found myself in. My link listened to me, reassured me and said those magic words “You’re going to be OK.” I actually started to believe that mantra. I knew when I hung up the phone that one day I would be a link, and that I would say those words to someone else. I knew that I wanted to be part of this chain gang!

Sharsheret is the Hebrew word for chain. We encounter this word, Sharsheret, in the description of the priestly garments. Amidst the description of the rich embroidered clothing and solid gold and gems, it is written

AND TWO CHAINS OF PURE GOLD, AT THE EDGE YOU WILL
MAKE THEM A CABLEWORK

This brief description of the chains seems a bit puzzling. The placement of these chains within the text seems to be a bit random and out of context.

Rashi explains that at this point the Torah briefly explains what the chains are needed for. Only later we are able to fully understand the function and purpose of these golden chains within the greater context of the priestly garment. We learn that these chains that seemed so random, and almost trivial, in reality are of great structural importance. The text later reveals that

these chains harness the choshen - the breastplate to the eiphod
- the apron. Without these chains, the holiest aspect of the priestly garments,
the breastplate, would have no anchor.

Sometimes in our lives we are faced with challenges, which just like
the golden chains may seem bewildering. It is only in hindsight that we are
able to recognize that these obstacles make us stronger. The very purpose of
the golden chains is to connect the choshen to the eiphod. I find it
interesting that the Torah does not reveal the function or the purpose of these
chains. Only a little bit of information is given in the pasuk at first. When we
find ourselves in difficult situations, we feel the need to have ALL the
information that we can gather. We want the answers to our questions- Why
me? How am I ever going to get through this? The answers are not given-
they are not revealed. It is up to each individual to try to figure out how to
deal with and how to get through an adverse situation. But I can tell you that
it helps to surround yourself with people who care and with people who love
you. The women of Sharsheret are like these gold chains. They offer
strength and support to those in need.

When I think of the makeup of a chain, the tightly bound links, I think of family. Members of a family that link themselves together. When you look to the right or to the left, there is someone there. You are never alone. When you feel yourself slipping, all the links in the chain tighten the grip so that you don't fall. So in closing I would like to thank my families:

To my family that I was fortunate enough to be born into.

To my family that I was lucky enough to marry into.

To my Cedarhurst/ Woodmere/ Long Island family, who not only came to support me today, but have always been there for me.

To my Teaneck and all of New Jersey family.

To my Camp Neshar family.

To my Goldspeed.com family.

To my Sharsheret family.

And finally, to the family that I was *zocheh* to have- to my children who are truly amazing. You guys make it easy for me to disappear, phone in hand, for hours at a time to help someone during a difficult time. I love you and I am very proud of each of you.

And to Yumi, my husband. What do you say about a man who whispers the same thing to his wife every night? No... it's not what you're thinking. What do you say about a man who every night says, "Reev, did you thank Hashem today for what we have?"

Yes, Yumi. I thank Hashem for you and for all He's given to us. I couldn't have gotten through the tough stuff without you in my corner. Thank You.

May Hashem grant all of us good health so that we can continue to do maasim tovim..