

Kol Ha-Rav February 2016

The feelings and emotions of a parent both during and after the marriage of a child are utterly indescribable. As Julie and I walked our daughter down the aisle to begin a new stage of life, I thought of her opening day of kindergarten so many years ago, letting go of our child's hand for the first of life's many transitions. And how can we not be grateful to the snow gods for leaving us be?

In addition to the personal words I shared with Rebecca and Mike under the chupah, I reminded them that the human being is not meant to be alone. The isolated life, the alienated life, the lonely life is not fully human, not fully developed in the Jewish mind. To live apart without friends, without mentors, without love is not to live at all. Adulthood is found in deep friendships; in intimacy, in love, in marriage, in accepting teachers and mentors, in sharing oneself and rooting oneself in community and ultimately in parenting and mentoring others. The more we are claimed, the more human we become. I am confident they have and will continue to follow this advice.

And as happy as Julie and I were and are, there is great poignancy in letting go, as all parents feel at auspicious moments like these.

A poet wrote:

*You spend a lifetime trying to get them off the ground*

*You run with them until you're both breathless*

*They crash, they hit the rooftop; you patch them up and*

*help them find comfort*

*Finally, they are airborne*

*They need more string, and you keep letting it out*

*But with each twist of the ball of twine*

*There is sadness that goes with joy.*

*The kite becomes more distant*

*And you know that it won't be long before*

*The beautiful creature will snap the lifeline that binds*

*you together,*

*and will soar as it is meant to soar..free and alone.*

*Don't stop them, help them*

*Only then will you know that you have done your job.*