

Eulogy for Dina Orit Marcus

Dina Orit ben Mordechai Marcus and Avinoam ben Mordechai Marcus. We were more than the best of friends. We grew to love each other deeply over nearly 15 years of marriage, with most of those years living in and under the daily stresses of life in Eretz Israel. I have a genetic condition called ADHD, which is an important element to understand this, my eulogy for Dina. I admit, my condition made my behaviors difficult to understand at times and yet, Dina remained firm and faithful as a Proverbs 31 *Eshet Chayil* – a spiritual soldier and militant woman for the establishing of all truth. She was no softy; no pushover, and indeed, this is one of many reasons why this man – Avinoam Marcus -- loved her so profoundly. Dina often challenged me to the same kind of tenacity that she had to seek out truth in all things, even if it hurt and she challenged me to accept nothing less. Even though my ADHD impulsivities and emotional challenges sometimes created difficult situations in our relationship, Dina and I, nonetheless, came to understand each other very well. **Indeed, she was nothing short of one who was beautifully complicated in so many ways; I cannot even begin to describe her beautiful eccentricities.** With all good and despite some of the not-so-good that we faced in our husband/wife relationship, I honestly admit, in a very real and felt way, we always tried to understand each other and share in the pains and in the joys of life, together.

I fondly remember the early months of the year 1999 leading into 2000 when I was first introduced to Dana Wilson. I was the host of a religious radio talk show on Judaism and Dana wanted a bit of commercial airtime to promote her new Hebrew language study program that she developed. She sent me the audio recording for a review and I was amazed with her handling of Hebrew. It was nearly perfect Hebrew with an attached cute Alef-Beit song to learn all the letters. I wanted to meet this woman. So, I came to Los Angeles for a business meeting and she said that she was planning on being there. I said, **“How will I know who you are?”** “Well,” she jokingly said, “I’ll put a paper bag over my head.” Oh, yes, she did exactly that; she showed up and sat down in the audience with a paper bag over her head and that was the beginning of the next 15 years of our life together.

Fast forwarding about 7 months, Dana moved from Orange County (Southern California) to Colorado to join me in my journey of life at 46 years old. She went through a Jewish conversion under Rabbi Avraham Raich who was totally amazed at her astonishing gift for reading and speaking biblical and Israeli Hebrew with near perfect fluency. And her knowledge of Jewish history was nothing short of remarkable. She later went into the *mikveh* as **Dana Wilson** and came out as **Dina Orit bat Avraham**. Fast forward another 8 months: We got married in Colorado under the chupah with Rabbi Avraham Raich officiating. Indeed, it was a beautiful moment never to be forgotten.

Nearly two years later on March 30, 2003, we shipped our belongings to Eretz Israel and made an official Aliyah, settling into the Jerusalem city center. Our only mode of transportation was in bringing to Israel my big motorcycle – a Yamaha 1200. For Israelis, they called it, “the autobus” because this was a monster bike; and Dina and I loved it. We used it all the time for sightseeing, grocery shopping, going to Torah studies and getting to and from our daily Hebrew language classes (Ulpan) on time. We rode together in strong wind, driving rain, bitter cold, and in the hot, hot Israeli summers. What great fantastic memories!

Within a few years after making Aliyah, I was in full-time tour-guide school studying for my State guiding license. Dina did almost all the transcriptions for my class audio-recorded field trips. She was a tenacious hard worker and all of this was given to me as her labor of love. We were guiding tour groups together and she was so gifted with language and logistics. She had such a sharp mind for organizing and planning. I honestly, couldn’t have done it without her. My dearest Dina, you were such an unbelievable blessing!

But then, as the days turned into years in Eretz Israel, Dina and I both went through some emotional hard times. It started in early September of 2009 when my 24-year-old son, Commander Yonatan Benjamin Marcus (Yoni), an IDF soldier of the Tzanchanim (paratroopers) unit 101, fell /due to PTSD from a number of intense Lebanon and Gaza war-related burdens that he carried. Dina loved him and often considered him to be a son; because some twenty years prior, she had given birth to her own little Benjamin that she affectionately was going to birth as her own son, a baby that she loved more than life itself, even though he was birthed into this world still-born at nearly 9 months into her pregnancy. That one event shook her to the core and she was never the same again. Much later, after meeting Dina and learning of all these things and so much more from her emotionally challenged life, I helped her through the pain and she helped me through my pain. Together, we got through all of the interesting and unique “curve-balls” of life, especially in Eretz Israel.

But then, with the passing of a few more years and with so much trouble going on in the Land of Israel, we were trying hard to deal with more and more of the stresses of Israeli daily life. Our world was getting markedly more difficult, and yes, not just for us; even for the whole country with endless homicide and bus bombings and the unceasing threat of the beating Arab war drums. My *Eshet Chayil* (a woman of valor) was anxious about what was happening and she expressed that she needed some time off. I took upon myself her admirable trait of tenacity in the midst of all the predicaments of Israel. Dina removed herself to North Carolina to get away for a while to set up her life. Fast-forward seven years: Dina Orit had now settled in and found some quiet in North Carolina whilst I stayed-on in Israel with the notion of holding the fort down for both of us and patiently waiting for her return. Sadly, it never happened. Perhaps the whole story can best be described from the lyrics of the song, “Taxi” by Harry Chapin, only in this rendition of his lyrics, I’ve taken the liberty to change a few of the words and the roles in the song to more accurately reflect the strained realities between Dina and myself.

<p>"Oh, where you going to, my lady blue It's a shame you ruined your gown in the rain" She just looked out the window She said, "501 Lester Lane."</p> <p>Something about her was familiar I could swear I'd seen her face before But she said, "I'm sure you're mistaken" And she didn't say anything more</p> <p>It took a while, but she looked in the mirror And she glanced at the tour-guide license for my name A smile seemed to come to her slowly It was a sad smile, just the same</p> <p>And she said, "How are you Avi?" I said, "How are you Dina?" Through the too many miles and the too little smiles I still remember you.</p> <p>You see I was gonna be a tour guide And she was gonna learn to fly I took off to find the Land And she took off to find the sky</p>	<p>Oh, we've both got something inside To drive anyone blind But there we were the two of us with ADHD Acting out so much of the time.</p> <p>There was not much more for us to talk about Whatever we had once was gone So we turned and went our separate ways The princess to her castle and the king to his khan</p> <p>And I said we must get together But I knew it'd never be arranged And she threw me a smile and some cash for the fare She said, "Avi, keep the change."</p> <p>And she walked away in silence It's strange how you never know But we'd both gotten what we'd asked for Seems like such a long, long time ago</p> <p>You see I was gonna be a tour guide And she was gonna learn to fly I took off to find the Land And she took off to find the sky</p>
--	---

But, even in the midst of all this, I find that I’m going to get through this profound sadness to be found here in my soul. Indeed, I feel the pain of the loss but I know HaShem is good. Yes, Dina was a brilliant woman, a beautiful complicated soul, smart as a whip, and sometimes, rather guarded. And, in our lives, together, we made good memories, enough for many lifetimes. Still, there is one thing that surpasses all of this: the Tanakh promise of *Techiyat HaMaytim* (the great resurrection from the dead).

This, my eulogy for Dina Orit, cannot be complete until we remember the words of the *Rambam* (Moshe ben Maimon) who taught the thirteen principles of the Jewish faith, saying: ***“I believe with complete faith that there will be a Resurrection of the Dead, at the time when the Creator, may He be Blessed, wills it to happen...”***

And Yes, even the second blessing of the Amidah (the ancient 18 standing prayers of Judaism) is equally just as true:

“You are eternally mighty, my Master, the Resuscitator of the dead are You. You are abundantly able to save. He sustains the living with kindness. He resuscitates the dead with abundant mercy. He supports the fallen, heals the sick, releases the confined, and maintains His faith to those who sleep in the dust. Who is like You, Master of mighty deeds, and who is similar to You? A King Who causes death and resurrection, and Who causes salvation to sprout. And You are faithful to resurrect the dead. Blessed are You, G-d, who resurrects the dead.”

And so are the words of Yeshua:

John 11:25-27. I am the resurrection and the life. **He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live.** And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Master, I believe that You are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

So, with this promise of the great resurrection and the World to Come, I am prepared to now join all the faithful of all Israel in reciting these great words of hope:

My G-d, the soul which You have placed within me is pure. You created it ... and You preserve it within me. You will eventually take it from me, and restore it to me in the future. As long as the soul is within me, I offer thanks to You ... Great Master of all works, Master of all souls. Blessed are You, G-d, who restores souls to dead bodies.

I shall always remember you and cherish our memories Dina Orit bat Avraham; and I happily look forward to that yet-future day when I believe that we meet again, when Moshiach comes with his promised blessing of the Great Resurrection. Until then, I say to you Dina, fret not! Rest in shalom!

For me and all of us who knew you well, this is not a “Goodbye.” No. It’s merely L’hitra’ot, my friend.

For me, I shall always remember you and I believe that I shall see you again; but next time, I shall see you in all your glorious resurrection light. I know and I believe because it’s a promise from our Master Yehovah and our Master Yehovah does not lie. Again, Dina, I say, ***L’hitra’ot.***

Avinoam ben Mordechai Marcus
December 9, 2020