**R’ Mordechai Eliezer (Max) Goldgrab**

***Upon His Yhartzeit***

Written by a granddaughter

In honor of Mordechai Eliezer Goldgrab, lovingly known as “Max”, our dear beloved Zaidy’s fifteenth Yartzheit, we would like to remind everyone of a father, uncle, brother, and Zaidy we all love and miss. For the grandchildren and great grandchildren who’ve never had the great privilege to meet and spend time with “Zaidy Mordcha”, this is for you to read and learn about your special Zaidy.

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Zaidy passed away at the age of 76 after fighting cancer, like the strong warrior that he was. After hearing the news, the initial reaction of Zaidy’s children and grandchildren was of utter shock and disbelief. How could Zaidy, the strongest man in the world, who wasn’t scared of anyone, have succumbed to a mere disease? He was invincible. The name Zaidy Mordcha resounds in our heads as someone who would have stopped at nothing to help another being and stick up for the underdog.

Max Goldgrab was born in a small town in Poland called Stashiv. Although he only lived there until his early teens, Max surely left his mark. At that time it was unlike today where one can just walk across the street with ease to attend Shul. During that time it was a difficult task to attend Shul and Yeshiva due to the local Poles who tended to start up with the older and less physically capable Jewish men. Max was part of a voluntary group whose mission it was to protect these unfortunate men and boys and to ensure their safety on their way to and from Shul and Yeshiva.

Max arrived in America at the age of fourteen, along with his parents and two brothers. Although he attended school, which was no easy feat since he did not know English, he dropped out along with his brothers to help support his family who was struggling to put bread on the table. Max humbled himself and took on any job in order to ensure that his family would be able to have Kosher food. In addition to this, he worked at many difficult jobs and adamantly refused to work on Shabbos, something that was difficult to accomplish in America.

Zaidy married our grandmother, Miriam Noodleman, and settled down on the Lower East Side. They eventually moved to Brighton Beach where they raised a beautiful family of three boys and one girl. Money was not easy to come by and so Zaidy Mordcha worked long, grueling hours as a butcher. He was up at 4:00 a.m. and did not come home until 7:30 in the evening. This painstaking time consuming schedule did not allow Zaidy the luxury of setting aside time to learn daily and because of this, he looked forward immensely to the time he had during Shabbos meals to listen to his sons read out *Chumash* and *Mishnayos*. Zaidy’s biggest joy was sitting at his Shabbos table, (the only time a week he got to spend with his children) and singing Zemiros while listening to what his children learned in Yeshiva. Shabbos was the highlight of Zaidy’s week, his life.

When Zaidy was in his mid sixties, the United States Department of Agriculture opened up a new department known as the Kosher Law Division. Up until that time there was no “watchdog” for Kosher food and no way of knowing how legitimate or not the Kosher stores and sellers were. Max Goldgrab was the Head Kosher Inspector and was in charge of training other inspector as well. His keen sense for Kashrus was well known; he was able to know just by looking at a piece of meat if it was Kosher or not. Many a Jew back then owed Zaidy tremendous gratitude for preventing them from unknowingly buying and consuming non-Kosher meat. There were incidents in which our grandmother at home would receive threatening phone calls from meat distributors, warning that if our Zaidy does not cease to prevent them from selling their meat they will burn his house down. This was not enough to convince Zaidy to stop his work, which involved tremendous *Misiras Nefesh*. He put his heart and soul into his job and no one was intimidating enough to change his mind. One specific story in which Zaidy had extreme *Siyata Dishmaya* is etched out in our minds*.* One day in his butcher shop, Zaidy was tending to something in the display window, when suddenly he saw in the reflection of the glass a hand, raised with a knife, about to stab him. Luckily, there was an undercover cop outside of the store who shot the perpetrator and Zaidy was saved. It is clear to see that Hashem did not want Zaidy to leave this world yet; he was very much needed by those surrounded by him.

One of Zaidy’s favorite mottos was “Azeh Who Asher, Hasameach Bichelko”. A simple man he was, but one who was content with whatever Hashem gave him. He truly lived his life that way. Everyone knew that he also lived his life for his family. His love and devotion was shown through his self-made quotes such as “Whenever you need to talk, whatever you need, or if something is bothering you” then “Have no fear, Zaidy is here!” Whether it would be helping his grandchildren with their homework, giving them driving lessons, or picking them up from school to personally bring them to the Matzah factory, everyone knew they could count on Zaidy. One such example of this was in the summer months when he would travel upstate from the city, three hours there and three hours back, to bring his daughter-in-law from the country to the city for her doctor appointments when she was expecting.

Another one of Zaidy’s mantras was “If you see a Jew in trouble, don’t run or look the other way- Help him!” The personification of his honorable characteristic of *Ahavas Yisroel* was through the countless stories his children remember of him helping out helpless Jews in the street when they would be in trouble. Every Jew was special to Zaidy, it didn’t matter what sect of Judaism or what level of religiosity- the fact that the person was a Jew in need was enough. This attribute was something that was passed on as part of the Goldgrab legacy.

Although Zaidy was not able to sit and learn all day due to his responsibility of supporting his family, his level of *Frumkeit* and commitment to *Halacha* was genuine and righteous. He set an example, which can be seen in his later generations today, by never deviating from his dedication to *Minyan* three times a day. When he became the Kosher Inspector and his schedule became more flexible, he made sure to attend a daily *Shiur*.

Today we remember a man who was *Moser Nefesh* many times throughout his life to do the right thing. Zaidy was always so *Makpid* on giving *Tzedakah* and commemorating the *Yartzheit* of any member of the family lost in Europe, which is a practice that he passed down. His grandchildren all recall with delight the hours Zaidy spent telling us stories while tucking us in at night and being the comforting “superman” that he was. We love him and miss him dearly. May his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren continue in his footsteps and may the lessons he taught us remain at the forefronts of our minds forever.