

Letter from Harry Gunsberg written to Emily Rhodes and Robert Gunsberg dated October 15, 1984 (a year and a half after Belle's death and 4 years before his death).

Beloved Emily and Robert,

The enclosed letter was written in the hopes that it would ease your pain and sorrow. Tears flooded my eyes as I typed and at times I could not see the keys. Children, I have no fear of death. I just hope that my end will be swift so that I will not be a burden upon you and our family. I have had a damn good life marked by what I call good health. I thank Dr. Al-Sarraf whose wise counsel and thoughtful care has been greatly appreciated...

The void in my life caused by your mother's death could never be filled. There were many lonely hours and plenty of tears. Thank God, I managed to get by and I tried to keep busy. I have tried to get all my papers and affairs in order and I know that you two will work together as brother and sister in all things relating to the little I have left to you. God, I wish that it could have been an enormous sum of money. It was not to be. Believe me, dear ones, that I loved you more than life itself. I ask that you pick out just a plain coffin for it will go into the ground and return to dust...

Farewell, my loved and cherished children.
Poppy

Farewell
To
Emily Diane Rhodes & Robert Morris Gunsberg

My Beloved Children,

When you read this farewell message my twilight years will be ended and my heart whose every beat was filled with love for you both, now lies quiet and stilled. The Almighty has summoned me to leave this earthly life – and I have answered His call without fear or complaint – because it is to God to whom my soul returns. “To everything there is a Season and a time for every purpose under the heavens. There is time to be born, a time to live, and a time to die.” My time has come and though I shall never again see your smiling faces – nor hear your beloved voices – nor ever again sit face to face with you across your family tables – nor feel your loving kisses which once evoked my deepest fatherly response – yet – I go to my eternal life. And I go to Him with an unfaltering faith in the life that lies beyond. Beloved Emily and Robert, as I write my farewell to you, tears fill my eyes because I do not have the words to ease your grief and your days of mourning. For many years I have prayed to your Heavenly Father that when my breath of life ceases, that He in His mercy and compassion will bestow upon you and upon all whom I have loved and cherished, His healing, comfort, solace, and consolation. Be comforted and do not grieve unduly. This is the 15th of October, 1984 and on this day exactly one month ago, I observed with you the occasion of my seventy-fifth birthday. By the grace of God I am enjoying good health marked by vigor, mental alertness, and I am filled with a zest for living. I live each day with a feeling of serenity and I face the future with confidence. I am at peace with my God and the glow of His light illumines my footsteps as I walk slowly westward towards the setting

sun and to my God ordained destiny. When I enter the valley of the shadow of death I will have no fear because I know that my Lord will be with me.

Beloved Bobby and Emily, I want you to know that during my twilight years I was always bolstered by your enduring love and by the poignant memories of the life we have shared. I am filled with gratitude to the Lord who so richly blessed the marriage of Belle Rose Baron to Harry Joseph Gunsberg. Your beloved mother and I shared our lives and our dreams for forty-six years. We had a good life and the crowning gift from our Lord was you, a wonderful daughter and a loyal son. Emily, you lit up my life with your radiance, beauty, love, and your concern for me. You were our first-born and through you was forged a golden link which has bound the generations of the Gunsberg's and the Barons's, and all the branches that have accrued to our Family Trees. With sadness I bid you Shalom and Farewell beloved Emily. Robert, your love, loyalty, and concern for me, made me proud to have you as my son. Your daily phone calls to make sure that all was well with Poppy and your ready response to my calls for help during mother's last illness – and the countless hours that we sat together in the emergency rooms, were appreciated and they bound you very close to me. With sadness I bid you Shalom and farewell my beloved Robert. Your mother and I tried our best to create for you both a warm, caring, and loving home. My keenest memories are those of events that we four shared as a family unit. Words can only suggest but can never adequately convey the great love that I have had for you, Emily and Robert – and as I know join mother in eternal sleep – remember that our love remains everlasting, indestructible, and immortal. Robert, take care of your sister. Emily, take care of your brother. Be concerned for each other and your families. Be concerned, too, for our other family members and for our friends. And, Beloved, know that by so doing, your mother and I will rest in eternal peace.

Emily, you brought into my life, Kenneth Rhodes. Robert, you brought into my life, Eileen Klein. Let them know that I always love and cherished them as my own. I could always sense their affection, love, and concern for Poppy. Emily and Kenneth – Robert and Eileen – your greatest gifts to me were my beloved grandchildren: Steven, Karen, David, Marcie, Paul and Vicki. May the Lord's blessing ever encompass your. O Lord, it was an awe inspiring experience for me to watch my grandchildren grow from infancy to maturity. I am thankful. My happiness knew no bounds when I had the privilege and honor of taking part in the wedding ceremonies of Karen and Paul, and Steven and Vicki. And I recall the nights that I spend on my knees praying to the Almighty, when my David, as a preemie fought for life. I am grateful Heavenly Father, and how thrilling it has been to see my David grow up to be a wonderful and capable young man. And, my Marcie, whose scholastic records both secular and religious, and her achievements in music and athletics, filled my heart with pride. Tell my Paul and Vicki that I loved them as my own. My grandchildren were the crown jewels of my life. With sadness I bid Shalom and Farewell to them all. Tell my grandchildren that through God's gift of resurrecting memory – each time that they recall in their memories, grandma and Poppy, they will be endowing us with a sense of immortality. We will continue to live through y our memories. And for Grandma and Poppy I want to thank my grandchildren for making our lives so very happy.

There were so many people who made my live meaningful. There were my beloved parents whose imprint of love and devotion was never diminished by the passing years. There were my

brothers: Alfred, Edward, Andrew and Bobby. We enjoyed our companionship, love, and brotherly concern for each other. There is my beloved sister, Rose, whom I cherished and loved. And, to her and my nephew, Paul, I owe much gratitude for taking me into their hearts and home in Florida, when Belle's illness and my nursing tasks began to wear me down at times. They sent me home renewed and refreshed and mentally calmed. Shalom and Farewell. God bless them all. No man ever had a greater and wonderful group of in-laws, nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends. They were all loving, caring, and gracious, to your father.

I was proud to have had the honor of serving B'nai Moshe as its president for five terms. With Rabbi Lehrman, our dedicated membership, I was happy to play a small part in the erection of our Oak Park Sanctuary. We kept our pledge to the Lord our God. Beloved Emily and Bobby, I cherished my close friendship with Rabbi Fischer and with Rabbi Lehrman. Their spiritual guidance, teaching, and good counsel, brought me close to my God. I was proud of the close rapport that I had with cantor Katzman and with Cantor Klein. Their beautiful and moving chanting at services caused me to experience some of the most sacred moments of my lifetime. I was glad to be counted among the many friends of Mr. Shalom Ralph. His wisdom and humor helped ease the pangs of sorrow in my hour of need. I am grateful to them all.

Your Aunts: Anne, Mettie, and Dorothy, were special people in my life. Their wise counsel, love, and compassion, helped me greatly during mother's illness. It is truly wonderful to know that their love continues. Aunt Marion, Uncle Bob, Uncle Herman and Aunt Sally visited with mother many times and I know she appreciated their thoughtfulness. As did Poppy.

Emily and Bob do not grieve unduly. Your father had a great life. I was blessed with a wonderful wife; loving grandchildren, great relatives and friend, and I had you, beloved son and daughter. Above all, I am thankful to my god who during my lifetime gave me blessings far beyond my merit. He has blessed me with a long life. There were many times when His presence filled my life with His glory. And, as it must to all men, when my appointed time comes, I will answer His call and go to Him with a prayer of praise to Him on my lips.

And now I bid Shalom and Farewell. To my grandchildren, to the Gunsberg Family, all seven generations, to the Baron Family, to my friends, and with fatherly love to you Emily and Robert. And for all I pray to the Almighty:

May the Lord bless you and guard you.

May the Lord cause His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

May the Lord lift up His countenance unto you and give you peace.

Heavenly Father, Let my prayer come before Thee and in Thy mercy forgive m sins. In Thy compassion, protect my beloved kindred, with whose souls my soul is bound up. Into thy hands I commit my spirit. Thou hast redeemed me, Lord God of truth. Shalom and Farewell beloved Emily and Robert. Hear O Israel the Lord our God, the Lord is One.

As always, and as ever, with all my love,
Poppy