

This past Shabbat I observed Yahrzeit for my father z'l.

As many of you may know I am a member of both the RA and the CCAR. This past Shabbat, Jim Prosnit, the Rabbi of Congregation B'nai Israel here in Bridgeport asked me to inaugurate something new at the B'nai Israel Shabbat morning service. He asked me to prepare something brief to be read/spoken at the end of the service, immediately preceding and perhaps leading into my kaddish.

What I said follows;

### **My Father Wanted Me To Be A Rabbi.**

**I was named Jacob Hirsch, for Dad's maternal grandfather, Yaakov Hirsch Cohn/Catz, whose tombstone records his having been a "Hacham", which was what rabbis were called in the Turkish empire, which at times dominated parts of Romania. That was an omen!**

**Youngest son of a youngest son, I was my father's unabashed and absolute favorite. His darling Jacob! He heaped mounds of nurturing love upon me-coming into my bed in the morning reading Black Beauty and Uncle Toms cabin to me. He was Domineering, and strong willed, never once touched me in anger One did what he wanted you to do. I only rebelled if I thought I might get away with it. So I would sneak hot dogs and hamburgers on the way home from Ramaz, if I were sure no one was watching.**

**Single minded, nothing was beyond his ken. A loyal Jew. A patriotic American- self educated he arrived in the US in 1914 19 years old, By the time I was aware, he had read Shakespeare, became a fan of classical music and sang operatic arias. He learned fluent Italian... to be able to speak to the largely Italian patrons of Bloom's Bargain Floor Covering, Go where the thrifty go to save. in West New York New Jersey**

**A Hitler Jew, he returned with a vengeance to religious observance as Adolph ascended to power in Germany**

**He wanted me to be a loyal American patriot.**

**He wanted me to be a cellist.  
Mostly he wanted me to be a rabbi.**

**He heard of a Jewish Day School, that did not have school on Sunday. For him Sunday was family day and the day we crossed the Hudson for Cello lessons. So at age 8 in third grade He taught me to take the bus from our new home in Palisade NJ to the 125 ferry, cross the Hudson to Manhattan, take the subway down to 86th Street and the cross-town bus to recently founded Ramaz School. At age 8!**

**In 5th grade he sent me to Camp Massad, which a monomaniac had founded the year before and where everything took place in Hebrew. When I broke out crying, wondering if they played Baseball there, I was told that they had a dictionary that had Hebrew words for every baseball situation.**

**Dad would have preferred that I be Modern Orthodox. I partially fulfilled Dad's dream, becoming a rabbi, albeit a Conservative rabbi.**

**He could not have imagined that I would later be a rabbi in both the Conservative and Reform movements. And a shrink to boot.**

**I couldn't be the cellist my father wanted me to be.  
I couldn't be the rabbi my father wanted me to be!**

**I have had to be the Jew I am!  
I have had to be the rabbi I am!**

**" God's recalcitrant servant.  
An Athletic Coach for Rabbis."**

**On your Yahrzeit saying Kaddish, I Thank you Dad for nourishing the growth of this Bloom.**

**I was moved to tears up as I read the last line.**