

Yizkor Memorial Service

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יזכור

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Sagel Bloomfield Danzansky Goldberg



# MEMORIAL SERVICE

## יזכור קבר אבות ואמהות

### For Funerals and *Kever Avot v'Imahot*

The grass withers, the flower fades;  
but the word of our God  
endures forever.

יֵבֶשׁ חֲצִיר, נָבֵל צִיץ,  
וְדִבַּר אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
יָקִים לְעוֹלָם.

Isaiah 40:8

Memory is the key to redemption.  
Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer  
The Baal Shem Tov

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## Preface

Four things are beautiful beyond belief:  
The pleasant weakness that comes after pain,  
The radiant greenness that comes after rain,  
The deepened faith that follows after grief,  
and the re-awakening to love again.

Author unknown

Jewish tradition assigns the *mitzvah* of burial as the greatest of all the commandments in Judaism because when performing it we know that we'll receive nothing in return from the deceased. Our thoughts, therefore, must be purely selfless, loving and focused on our religious duty to honor the dead by caring for the physical remains of our dear ones.

The elaborate burial and mourning rituals developed over 3,500 years of Jewish history, since the time of Abraham and Sarah, serve not only to assist mourners in this difficult life passage, but also to honor and bring dignity to the dead. These twin purposes (*kavod la-chayeem* - the dignity of the living, and *kavod la-meit* - the dignity of the dead) are held in gentle balance. They characterize the unique way in which Jews bid farewell to their loved ones while maintaining their hold on life itself.

May these prayers offer comfort, meaning and hope. *Amen.*

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## Psalm 16

*Shi-vee-tee Adonai l'neg'dee ta-meed  
kee mee-mee-nee bal e-mot.  
La-chein sa-mach li-bee  
va-ya-gel k'vo-dee,  
af b'sa-ree yish'kon la-ve-tach.  
Kee lo ta-a-zov naf'shee lish'ol,  
lo ti-tein cha-seed'cha lir'ot  
sha-chat.  
To-dee-ei-nee o-rach cha-yeem,  
so-va s'ma-chot et pa-ne-cha  
n'i-mot bee-meen'cha ne-tzach.*

שׁוֹנֵיתִי יְיָ לְנִגְדֵי תָמִיד  
כִּי מִימִינִי בַּל אָמוּט.  
לִבִּי שָׂמַח לְבִי  
וַיִּגַּל כְּבוֹדִי  
אֲפֹ בְשָׂרִי יִשְׁכֵּן לִבְטֶח.  
כִּי לֹא תַעֲזֹב נַפְשִׁי לְשֹׂאֵל  
לֹא תִתֵּן חֲסִידְךָ לְרֹאֹת  
שָׁחַת.  
תּוֹדִיעֵנִי אֲרַח חַיִּים  
שִׁבַּע שְׂמֵחוֹת אֶת־פְּנֶיךָ  
נִעְמֹת בְּיַמִּינְךָ נָצַח.

I have set the Eternal always before me;  
God is at my side, I shall not be moved.  
Therefore does my heart exult and my soul rejoice;  
my being is secure.  
For You will not abandon me to death  
nor let Your faithful ones see destruction.  
You show me the path of life;  
Your presence brings fullness of joy;  
enduring happiness is Your gift.

\* \*

Our days are like grass.  
We shoot up like flowers that fade  
and die as the chill wind passes  
over them, yet Your love for those  
who revere You is everlasting.  
God, Your righteousness  
extends to all generations.

אֲנוֹשׁ כַּחֲצִיר יָמָיו,  
כְּצִיץ הַשָּׂדֶה בֵּן יָצִין.  
כִּי רוּחַ עֲבָרָה בּוֹ וַאֲיָנָנוּ,  
וְלֹא יִפְרֹנוּ עוֹד מְקוֹמוֹ.  
וַחֲסֵד יְיָ מֵעוֹלָם וְעַד עוֹלָם  
עַל יִרְאָיו וְצִדְקָתוֹ לְבְנֵי בָנִים.

Psalm 103:15-17

We turn our thoughts to yesterday...  
to a world that lives only in our memory.  
As we recall the days gone by,  
we know the past is irretrievable.  
Yet, through the gift of memory,  
we recapture treasured moments and images.  
We are thankful for the happiness we knew  
with those no longer here,  
with whom we lived and laughed and loved.

We praise the Eternal wellspring of life  
Who links yesterday to tomorrow.  
We affirm that despite all the tragedy bound up with living,  
it is still good to be alive.  
We understand that there can be  
no love without loss, no joy without sorrow.  
May we have the courage to accept the all of life,  
the love and the loss - the joy and the sorrow,  
as we remember.

Evelyn Mehlman

\* \*

Eternal One, how insignificant we are in Your sight,  
and how minute in Your presence!  
You are Creator of a universe so vast  
that our effort to conceive it overwhelms the mind.  
The keenest eye scans but a corner of it;  
the rays of light we see today  
began their journey long before we came to be.  
Counted from first creation,  
the earth we live on was born but yesterday,  
and we made our appearance on it only a moment ago.

---

**All That Lives Must Die:** "Thou know'st 'its common. All that lives must die, passing through nature to eternity." (William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*)

**Suffering and the Soul:** "All suffering prepares the soul for vision." (Martin Buber)

**Visiting Graves:** It has become a cherished tradition that between *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* Jews return to the graves of their loved ones to remember and commune with the departed souls. It is also

customary for Jews to visit graves on the *yahrzeit* (death anniversary) and whenever the individual feels so moved.

**This World and the World to Come:** There is a fine line separating this world from the world to come. Judaism affirms the separate reality of the soul, and that upon death the soul (*n'shamah*) returns to God. Jewish liturgy affirms as well that God remembers all souls.

When we consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers;  
the moon and the stars that You have established;  
what are we, that You are mindful of us?  
What are we mortals that You consider us?

The eye is never satisfied with seeing;  
endless are the desires of the heart.  
We die with half our desires satisfied.  
Like Moses on Mount Nebo,  
we behold the promised land from afar but may not enter it.  
Like children falling asleep over their toys,  
we relinquish our grasp on earthly possessions  
only when death overtakes us.  
The wealthy and poor, the strong and the feeble,  
the known and the unknown, the wise and the simple,  
The grave levels all distinctions,  
all of us are equal in death.

Author unknown

\* \*

## Psalm 144

יְי, מָה אָדָם וַתַּדְעֶהוּ, בֶּן אָנוֹשׁ וַתִּחַשְׁבֶּהוּ.

*Adonai, mah a-dam va-tei-da-ei-hu, ben e-nosh va-t'chash'vei-hu.*

אָדָם לַהֶבֶל דָּמָה, יָמָיו כְּצֵל עוֹבֵר.

*A-dam la-he-vel da-mah, ya-mav k'tzeil o-veir.*

בְּפִקֹּר יִצְיִן וְחִלָּף, לָעֶרֶב יִמּוֹלֵל וַיִּבֶשׁ.

*Ba-bo-ker ya-tzeetz v'cha-laf, la-e-rev y'mo-leil v'ya-veish*

לְמִנּוֹת יָמֵינוּ בֶּן הוֹדָע, וְנִבְא לְבָב חֲכָמָה.

*Lim'not ya-mei-nu kein ho-dah, v'na-vi l'av choch'mah.*

**Remembering:** Inscribed on the entrance to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Museum in Jerusalem we find the words of the Baal Shem Tov: "Redemption lies in remembering."

**Only God:** "There is nothing besides the presence of God...and the presence of the Creator remains in each created thing." (Rabbi Menachem Nahum of Chernobyl)

שֶׁמֶר תָּם וּרְאָה יִשְׂרָאֵל, כ

כִּי יִקְחֵנִי סֵלָה.

ס.

רוּחַ תָּשׁוּב אֵלַי

פֹּדֶה יְיָ נֶפֶשׁ עַבְדּוֹ, וְלֹא יֵאָשְׁמוּ כָּל הַחֹסִים בּוֹ.

*Po-deh Adonai ne-fesh a-va-dav, v'lo ye'sh'mu kol ha-cho-seem bo.*

A human being is like a momentary breeze,

We come and go like grass  
which in the morning shoots up, renewed,

You turn us to contrition saying,  
*Do t'shuvah*  
Would that we were wise,  
and understood what awaits us in the end!  
For when we die we carry nothing away,  
Our glory will not descend along with us.

\* \*



O Sovereign One, You have been our refuge in all generations.

Before the mountains were born,  
or earth and the universe brought forth,  
from eternity You are God.

For a thousand years in Your sight  
are but as yesterday when it is past,  
or as a watch in the night.

You sweep us away;  
we are like a dream at daybreak;  
we come and go like grass  
which in the morning shoots up, renewed,  
and in the evening fades and withers.

The number of our years may be many or few;  
yet vain toil fills their span,  
for it is soon ended, and we fly away.  
So teach us to number our days that we may grow wise in heart.

Let Your servants understand Your ways,  
and Your children see Your glory.

Let the beauty of our Eternal God be with us,  
and may our work have lasting value.

O let the work of our hands be enduring!

O God, Author of life and death,  
our wisdom is small, our vision short.  
One by one our companions and dear ones,  
passing along the road of life,  
disappear from our view.  
We know that each of us  
will walk the same path  
to the doorway of the grave.  
We strain to see beyond the gate,  
but all is darkness to our mortal sight.

Yet even the darkness is not too dark for You, O God.  
The night shines as bright as the day.

You have created us in Your image  
and enabled us to share in Your enduring righteousness.  
You have placed eternity into our hearts,  
have implanted within our souls a vision of eternal life.

This hope we cherish in humility and faith,  
trusting in Your endless goodness and Your wondrous love.

Into Your hands we commit the spirits of our dear ones,  
for You keep faith with Your children in death as in life.

Sustain us, O God, that we may meet with calm serenity  
the dark mysteries that lie ahead,  
knowing that when we walk  
through the valley of the shadow of death,  
You are with us, a loving Friend  
in Whom we put our trust;

You are the light of our life,  
our hope in eternity.

Gates of Repentance

\* \*

## Psalm 121

*E-sa ei-nai el he-ha-reem,  
mei-a-yin ya-vo ez'ree?  
Ez'ree mei-eem Adonai  
o-seh sha-ma-yeem va-a-retz.  
Al yi-tein la-mot rag'le-cha,  
al ya-num shom're-cha.  
Hi-neh lo ya-num v'lo yi-shan*

אֲשָׁא עֵינַי אֶל הַהָרִים  
מֵאֵין יבֹא עֲזָרִי?  
עֲזָרִי מֵעַם יי  
עֹשֶׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ.  
אֵל יִתֵּן לַמּוֹט רַגְלִיךָ  
אֵל יִנּוּם שֹׁמְרֶךָ.  
הִנֵּה לֹא יִנּוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן

*sho-meir Yis'ra-eil.*

*Adonai shom're-cha, Adonai tzil'cha*

*al yad y'mee-ne-cha.*

*Yo-mam ha-she-mesh lo ya-ke-kah*

*v'ya-rei-ach ba-lai-lah.*

*Adonai yish'mor'cha mi-kol ra,*

*Yish'mor et naf'she-cha.*

*Adonai yish'mor tzeit'cha*

*u-vo-e-cha mei-a-tah*

*v'ad o-lam.*

שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל.

יִי שְׁמֹרְךָ יִי עֲלֶיךָ

עַל יַד יְמִינְךָ.

יוֹמָם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לֹא יַפְכֶּה

וְיָרֵחַ בַּלַּיְלָה.

יִי שְׁמֹרְךָ מִכָּל רָע

יִשְׁמֹר אֶת נַפְשְׁךָ.

יִי שְׁמֹר צֵאתְךָ

וּבֹאֲךָ מֵעַתָּה

וְעַד עוֹלָם.

I raise my eyes to the mountains:

What is the source of my help?

My help will come from the Eternal, Maker of heaven and earth.

God will not allow your foot to slip;

Your Guardian will not slumber.

Behold the Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps.

The Eternal is your Keeper,

God is your shade at your right hand.

The sun shall not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.

God will guard you from all harm.

God will protect your being.

The Eternal will guard you, coming and going,

from this time forth, and forever.

\* \*

O God of life, bless the memories we cherish.

On this day may the sorrows we know and have known

be softened by our sense of Your infinite wisdom,

by Your unending love,

and Your eternal presence.

---

"The best minister is the human heart; the best teacher is time; the best book is the world; the best friend is God." (Yiddish folk saying)

"Never succumb to feelings of loneliness. No matter where you are, God is close by." (Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav)

May the pains of our bereavement grow more gentle;  
 let them be transformed into gratitude  
 to our dear ones who have died  
 and tenderness to those who are with us.

\* \*

## Psalm 23

*Miz'mor l'Da-vid:*

*Adonai ro-ee, lo ech'sar.*

*Bin'ot de-she yar'bee-tzei-nee,*

*al mei m'nu-chot*

*y'na-ha-lei-nee. Naf'shee y'sho-veiv.*

*Yan'chei-nee b'mag'lei tze-dek*

*l'ma-an sh'mo.*

*Gam kee e-lech b'gei tzal'ma-vet*

*lo ee-ra ra, kee A-tah i-ma-dee;*

*shiv't'cha u-mish'an'te-cha*

*hei-mah y'na-cha-mu-nee.*

*Ta-a-roch l'fa-nai*

*shul'chan ne-ged tzo-r'rai.*

*Di-shan'ta va-she-men ro-shee,*

*ko-see r'va-yah.*

*Ach tov va-che-sed yir'd'fu-nee*

*kol y'mei cha-yai,*

*v'shav'tee b'veit Adonai*

*l'o-rech ya-meem.*

מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד

יְיָ רֹעִי לֹא אֶחָסֵר:

בְּנִאוֹת דֶּשָׁא יִרְבִּיצֵנִי

עַל מֵי מְנַחוֹת

יְנַהֲלֵנִי: נַפְשִׁי יִשׁוּבֵב

יִנְחֵנִי בְּמַעְגְלֵי צֶדֶק

לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ:

גַּם כִּי אֵלֶךְ בְּגִיא צַלְמוֹת

לֹא אִירָא רָע כִּי אֶתָּה עִמָּדִי

שִׁבְטְךָ וּמִשְׁעֶנְתְּךָ

יְהַמֶּה יִנְחֵמֵנִי:

תַּעֲרֹךְ לִפְנֵי

שְׁלַחַן נֶגֶד צָרָרִי

דִּשְׁנָת בִּשְׁמֵן רֹאשִׁי

כּוֹסֵי רוּיָה:

אֵךְ טוֹב וַחֲסֵד יִרְדְּפוּנִי

כָּל יְמֵי חַיִּי

וְשִׁבְתִּי בְּבֵית יְיָ

לְאַרְךָ יָמִים:

**Psalm 23** is a pastoral psalm of comfort in which God is seen as a Shepherd and Israel as the Shepherd's flock. The shepherd is never very far away and is seen as protector and defender. This psalm is often heard at funerals and at mourners' minyanee in the home during the shiva (seven days

of mourning). May this psalm bring each of us comfort as we remember our beloved whom we have lost. May the Divine Shepherd accompany us always as well as the souls of our loved ones as they continue on their eternal journeys.

Adonai is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
God makes me lie down in green pastures,  
leads me beside still waters, and restores my soul.  
You lead me in right paths for the sake of Your Name.  
Even when I walk in the valley of the shadow of death  
I shall fear no evil, for You are with me;  
Your rod and Your staff - they comfort me.  
You have set a table before me in the presence of my enemies;  
You have anointed my head with oil; my cup overflows.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,  
And I shall dwell in the house of God forever.

\* \*

### *Eshet Chayil* - A Woman of Valor

A woman of valor, who can find?  
She is more precious than fine pearls.  
Her husband trusts in her, and so he lacks nothing;  
She does him good, never harm, all the days of her life.  
She perceives that her labor is rewarding;  
her candle burns on into the night.  
She reaches out to those in need,  
and extends her hands to the poor.  
She is clothed in strength and dignity,  
and she faces the future cheerfully.  
She speaks with wisdom; the law of kindness is on her lips.  
Her children (and grandchildren) rise up and bless her;  
her husband sings her praises.  
Many daughters have done valiantly,  
but you excel them all.

After Proverbs 31

\* \*

God of life, one generation comes into the world to be blessed with days of peace and safety; another goes through the valley of the shadow enduring the cruelties of persecution and war. Heart-breaking have been the times that have fallen to our lot, O God.

We have lived through years of tyranny and destruction; we are schooled in sorrow and acquainted with grief. We have seen the just defeated, the innocent driven from their homes, and the righteous suffer a martyrdom as merciless as any ages have witnessed.

At this hour of memory we recall with grief all Your children who have perished through the cruelty of the oppressor, victims of demonic hate: the aged and young, the learned and unlettered - all driven in multitudes along the road of pain and pitiless death. Their very presence on earth was begrudged them, for they brought Your covenant of compassion and justice to the recollection of Your enemies; they perished because they were a symbol of Your eternal law; their death has brought darkness to the human soul.

They lie in nameless graves, in far-off forests and lonely fields. And the substance of many was scattered by the winds to the earth's four corners. Yet they shall not be forgotten. We take them into our hearts and give them a place beside the cherished memories of our own loved ones. They now are ours.

We pray to You, O Source of mercy, that Your Torah, to which these Your children bore witness in life and in death, may come to glow with a renewed light in the human soul; that, remembering them, we may sanctify Your name in all the world. Thus will their memory become an enduring blessing to all your children.

Author unknown

## **PRIVATE MEMORIALS**

### **In Memory of a Father**

Your memory, my dear father, fills my heart and soul at this hour. It revives in me thoughts of the love, tenderness, and kindness with which you always loved me. My thoughts of you continue to inspire me to live up to the best that is within me, to a life of similar love and goodness that I might give to others. I hope that I can always be worthy of you and your love. I am grateful for all my memories of you. May God bless your soul and grant you peace. Amen!

### **In Memory of a Mother**

I remember you at this hour, my dear mother. I recall the days when you dwelled on earth, and your tender love watched over me like a guardian angel. You have gone from me, and I miss your concern, your wisdom, and your kind, proud eyes in which I moved through life. The bond that unites our souls can never be severed. Your image lives on within me and the impress of your love and concern fills me with thoughts of tenderness and love. I am grateful for all my memories of you. May God lift up the divine light upon you and grant you peace. Amen!

### **In Memory of a Spouse or Life Companion**

I remember you now, dear companion of my life. How fortunate we were, two stars in an infinite sea of souls to find each other and drink from the cup of passion and love. I remember the happy days we lived together and shared life's joys and sorrows; I remember your loving eyes, your soothing embrace, the tender affection which wedded our hearts, the selflessness we knew while hand in hand we journeyed together through life, when your love and faithfulness were my comfort, and your counsel and friendship were my support. Though death has taken you from me, you live within every fiber of my being and you are an inspiration to me. I give thanks to God for the gift of our love and the inspiration of your memory. May God keep you and grant you peace. Amen!

### **In Memory of a Child**

I remember you always, my beloved child. For far too little time you were a precious jewel graced to me. I remember the days when I watched you grow and develop. I remember the joy I felt in your every breath, the sparkle in your inquisitive joyful eyes, the softness of your touch, the love we knew together, and all the hopes which I had for your future. Though death has taken you from me, you live on always within my heart and soul. You can never die. May the knowledge that you are sheltered in God's presence now afford me a small measure of comfort. You have taught me to cherish life, to love others as I loved you, and to give selflessly of myself. May God continue to embrace you with Divine love and grant you eternal peace. Amen!

### **In Memory of a Sister, Brother or Friend**

I remember you at this hour, my beloved (sister, brother, friend). I remember the days when we lived together as companions and your loving friendship was my delight and support. Though death has taken you from me, your image abides with me. When I think of you, gratitude for all of our years together fills my heart. I bless your memory for the friendship you once showed me. May God bless you and keep you and grant you peace. Amen!

### **In Memory of an Unfulfilled Relationship**

I remember you now with mixed feelings. Our lives together, sadly, were troubled. I recall all the times we shared and did not share, the comfort and joy I desired in our relationship that I did not find, the intimacy I yearned for that escaped us. We parted with words left unsaid, with no real reconciliation or healing. I think now of all the potential we had but did not reach. And so, in your memory, I pledge to live my life more honestly and lovingly, with more kindness towards others, using my words to build rather than tear down. I promise to give and receive with an open and full heart. May God bless you and grant you peace. Amen!

\* \*



## For a Male

אל מלא רחמים שוכן במרומים. המצא מנוחה נכונה  
תחת כנפי השכינה. עם קדושים וטהורים בזהר  
הרקיע מזהירים את נשמת \_\_\_\_\_ בן \_\_\_\_\_  
שהלך לעולמו. בעל הרחמים יסתירהו בסתר כנפיו  
לעולמים. ויצרור בצרור החיים את נשמתו. יי הוא  
נחלתו. וינח בשלום על משכבו, ונאמר: אמן.

Eil ma-lei ra-cha-meem sho-chein bam'ro-meem. Ham'tzei m'nu-chah  
n'cho-nah ta-chat kan'fei hash'chee-nah. Im k'do-sheem u-t'ho-reem  
k'zo-har ha-ra-kee-a maz'hee-reem et nish'mat \_\_\_\_\_ ben \_\_\_\_\_  
she'halach l'o-la-mo. Ba-al ha-ra-cha-meem yas'tee-rei-hu b'sei-ter k'na-  
fav l'o-la-meem. V'yitz'ror bitz'ror ha-cha-yeem et nish'ma-to. Adonai  
hu na-cha-la-to. V'ya-nu-ach b'sha-lom al mish'ka-vo. V'no-mar a-  
mein!

## For a Female

אל מלא רחמים שוכן במרומים. המצא מנוחה נכונה  
תחת כנפי השכינה. עם קדושים וטהורים בזהר הרקיע  
מזהירים את נשמת \_\_\_\_\_ בת \_\_\_\_\_  
שהלכה לעולמה. בעל הרחמים יסתירה בסתר כנפיו לעולמים.  
ויצרור בצרור החיים את נשמתה. יי הוא נחלתה.  
ותנח בשלום על משכבה, ונאמר: אמן.

Eil ma-lei ra-cha-meem sho-chein bam'ro-meem. Ham'tzei m'nu-chah  
n'cho-nah ta-chat kan'fei hash'chee-nah. Im k'do-sheem u-t'ho-reem  
k'zo-har ha-ra-kee-a maz'hee-reem et nish'mat \_\_\_\_\_ bat \_\_\_\_\_  
she'hal'cha l'o-la-mah. Ba-al ha-ra-cha-meem yas'tee-rei-hu b'sei-ter  
k'na-fav l'o-la-meem. V'yitz'ror bitz'ror ha-cha-yeem et nish'ma-tah.  
Adonai hu na-cha-la-tah. V'ya-nu-ach b'sha-lom al mish'ka-vah. V'no-  
mar a-mein!

O compassionate God, eternal Spirit of the universe, grant complete rest in your sheltering presence to \_\_\_\_\_, who has entered eternity. Master of motherly love, sheltered by Your divine wings, may he/she be bound up in the bond of eternal life. The Eternal God is his/her inheritance. May he/she rest in peace. Amen!

\* \*

**For Kever Avot v'Imahot**  
(between *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*)

אֵל מֵלֵא רַחֲמִים שׁוֹכֵן בְּמְרוֹמִים. הַמֵּצֵא מְנוּחָה נְכוֹנָה  
תַּחַת כְּנָפֵי הַשְּׂכִינָה. עִם קְדוּשִׁים וּטְהוּרִים בְּזֶהָר  
הָרָקִיעַ מְזַהֲרִים לְנִשְׁמוֹת יְקִירֵינוּ שֶׁהֵלְכוּ לְעוֹלָמָם.  
בְּעַל הָרַחֲמִים יִסְתִּירֵם בְּסֶתֶר כְּנָפָיו לְעוֹלָמִים. וְיִצְרֹר  
בְּצִרּוֹר הַחַיִּים אֶת נִשְׁמָתָם. יְיָ הוּא נִחְלָתָם. וְיִנּוּחוּ בְּשָׁלוֹם  
עַל מִשְׁכָּבָם. וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן.

*Eil ma-lei ra-cha-meem sho-chein bam'ro-meem. Ham'tze m'nu-chah  
n'cho-nah ta-chat kan'fei hash'chee-nah. Im k'do-sheem u-t'ho-reem  
k'zo-har ha-ra-kee-a maz'hee-reem l'nish'mot ya-kee-rei-nu she'hal'chu  
l'o-la-mam. Ba-al ha-ra-cha-meem yas'tee-rem b'sei-ter k'na-fav l'o-la-  
meem. V'yitz-ror bitz'ror ha-cha-yeem et nish'ma-tam. Adonai hu na-  
cha-la-tam. V'ya-nu-chu b'sha-lom al mish'ka-vam. V'no-mar a-mein!*

**Eil Malei Rachameem** - known as "The Memorial Prayer," affirms that in the fullness of compassion God has embraced the soul of the departed, the highest reward for a life lived in the spirit of righteousness and loving-kindness.

**God's Nearness:** "God is closest to those whose hearts are broken." (The Kotzker Rebbe)

**God Remembers:** It is written: *Zochir kol nanishkachot* ("God remembers all the forgotten."). There is no forgetting before God. Every person, achievement or deed is touched by eternity. It is a premise of Jewish faith that there is no lost or wasted word in the unredeemed epic of human history.

**Love is Strong as Death:** "For love is strong as death, harsh as the grave. Its tongues are flames, a fierce and holy blaze. Endless seas and floods, torrents and rivers never put out love's infinite fires." (Song of Songs 8:6-7)

**We are Spiritual Beings:** "We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience." (Teilhard de Chardin)

O God full of compassion for those You bring into this world, grant complete repose under the wings of Your presence to our loved ones who have entered eternity. Master of motherly love, sheltered by Your Divine wings, may they join the company of the holy and pure who shine as bright as heaven. May their souls be bound up in the bond of eternal life. The Eternal God is their inheritance. May they rest in peace. Amen!

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*Tziduk Hadeen*

**צדוק הדין**

הַצּוֹר תָּמִים פָּעֵל, בִּי כָּל דְּרָכָיו מְשֻׁפָּט. אֵל אֱמוּנָה וְאֵין  
עוֹל, צָדִיק וְיֵשֶׁר הוּא. הַצּוֹר תָּמִים בְּכָל פֶּעַל. מִי יֹאמֶר  
לֹא מָה תַּפְּעֵל? הַשְּׁלִיט בְּמָטָה וּבְמַעַל. מִמִּית וּמִחַיָּה.  
מוֹרִיד שָׁאוֹל וַיַּעַל. הַצּוֹר תָּמִים בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂה. מִי יֹאמֶר  
לֹא מָה תַּעֲשֶׂה? צָדִיק אַתָּה, יְיָ, לְהַמִּית וּלְהַחְיֹת, אֲשֶׁר  
בִּידֶךָ פִּקְדוֹן כָּל רוּחֹת. חֲלִילָה לָךְ זְכוּרֵנוּ לְמַחֲוֹת. וַיְהִי  
נָא עֵינֶיךָ בְּרַחֲמִים עָלֵינוּ פִּקְחֹת, בִּי לָךְ אֲדוֹן הַרַחֲמִים  
וְהַסְּלִיחוֹת.

"God is sure, our immovable Rock, all God's work is upright."  
(Deuteronomy 32:4) Who can say, "What is it that You do?" The  
Eternal governs what is above and what is below, overseeing  
both the valleys of death and the heights of life. God is sure, our  
immovable Rock. Who can say to God, "What will You do?" You  
are righteous in Your dealings in both death and life, and every  
soul is in Your trust.

## Meditations

The last word has not been spoken,  
the last sentence has not been written,  
the final verdict is not in.

It is never too late to change my mind, my direction,  
to say no to the past, and yes to the future,  
to offer remorse, to ask and give forgiveness.

It is never too late to start over again,  
to feel again, to love again, to hope again.

It is never too late to overcome despair,  
to turn sorrow into resolve  
and pain into purpose.

It is never too late to alter my world,  
not by magic incantations or manipulations of the cards  
or deciphering the stars.

But by opening myself to curative forces buried within,  
to hidden energies, the powers in my interior self.

In sickness and in dying,  
it is never too late.  
Living, I teach;  
Dying, I teach.  
It is never too late -  
some word of mine, some touch, some caress  
may be remembered.  
Some gesture may play a role  
beyond the last movement of my head and hand.

Write it on my epitaph  
that my loved ones be consoled,  
it is never, never too late.

Rabbi Harold Schulweis

\* \*

Death is not the enemy of life, but its friend, for it is the knowledge that our years are limited which makes them so precious. It is the truth that time is but lent to us which makes us, at our best, look upon our years as a trust handed into our temporary keeping. We are like children privileged to spend a day in a great park, a park filled with many gardens and playgrounds and azure-tinted lakes with white boats sailing upon the tranquil waves. True, the day allotted to each one of us is not the same in length, in light, in beauty. Some children of earth are privileged to spend a long and sunlit day in the garden of the earth. For others the day is shorter, cloudier, and dusk descends more quickly as in a winter's tale. But whether our life is a long summery day or a shorter wintry afternoon, we know that inevitably there are storms and squalls which overcast even the bluest heaven and there are sunlit rays which pierce the darkest autumn sky. The day that we are privileged to spend in the great park of life is not the same for all human beings, but there is enough beauty and joy and gaiety in the hours if we will but treasure them.

Rabbi Joshua L. Liebman

\* \*

The origins of the Kaddish are mysterious;  
angels are said to have brought it down from heaven...

It possesses wonderful power. Truly, if there is any bond strong enough to chain heaven to earth, it is this prayer. It keeps the living together and forms a bridge to the mysterious realm of the dead. One might almost say that this prayer is the guardian of the people by whom alone it is uttered; therein lies the warrant of its continuance. Can a people disappear so long as a child remembers its parents?

Because this prayer does not acknowledge death, because it permits the blossom, which has fallen from the tree of humankind, to flower and develop again in the human heart, therefore it possesses sanctifying power.

From *Gates of Prayer*

\* \*

Our angels  
Spend much of their time sleeping...  
No matter how long they may sleep,  
One hundred, two hundred years,  
Ten centuries is not too much.  
The first to wake up  
Takes the torch that has been handed down,  
Adds a drop of oil to the lamp,  
Blesses the eternal light,  
And then recalls the name  
Of every other angel,  
And one by one as they are remembered  
They wake up.  
For them as for us  
There is nothing more beautiful  
Than memory.

Yehuda Amichai

\* \*

There is a season for everything,  
A time for every experience under heaven:  
A time to be born and a time to die,  
A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted;  
A time to tear down and a time to build up;  
A time to weep and a time to laugh,  
A time to grieve and a time to dance;  
A time to throw stones and a time to gather stones,  
A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing;  
A time to seek and a time to lose,  
A time to keep and a time to discard;  
A time to tear and a time to sew,  
A time to keep silence and a time to speak.

Based on Ecclesiastes 3

\* \*

Early or late, all must answer the summons  
to return to the Source of being,  
for we lose our hold on life when our time has come,  
as the leaf falls from the bough when its day is done.  
The deeds of the righteous enrich us all,  
as the fallen leaf enriches the soil beneath.  
The dust returns to the earth,  
the spirit lives on with God.

Like the stars by day, our beloved dead are not seen by mortal eyes.  
They shine on forever; theirs is eternal peace.

Let us be thankful  
for the companionship that continues in a love stronger than death.  
In sanctifying the name of God,  
we honor the memory of all our dearly departed.

CCAR Rabbi's Manual

\* \*

There are stars whose brightness is visible on earth although they  
have long burned out. There are people whose brilliance  
continues to light the world though they are no longer among the  
living. These lights are particularly bright when the night is dark.  
They light the way for us all.

Hannah Senesh

\* \*

Birth is a beginning  
And death a destination  
But life is a journey.  
A going, a growing  
From stage to stage.

From childhood to maturity  
And youth to age.  
From innocence to awareness  
And ignorance to knowing;

From foolishness to discretion  
And then perhaps to wisdom.

From weakness to strength  
Or strength to weakness –  
And often back again.

From health to sickness  
And back we pray,  
To health again.

From offense to forgiveness  
From loneliness to love,  
From joy to gratitude,  
From pain to compassion,  
And grief to understanding –  
From fear to faith.

From defeat to defeat to defeat  
Until, looking backward or ahead,  
We see that victory lies  
Not at some high place along the way,  
But in having made the journey,  
Stage by stage,  
A sacred pilgrimage.

Birth is a beginning  
And death a destination  
But life is a journey,  
A sacred pilgrimage –  
Made stage by stage –  
To life everlasting.

Rabbi Alvin Fine

\* \* \*



When I die  
If you need to weep  
Cry for someone  
Walking the street beside you.

And when you need me  
Put your arms around others  
And give them what you need to give me.

You can love me most by letting  
Hands touch hands,  
And souls touch souls.

You can love me most by  
Sharing your joys  
And multiplying your good deeds.

You can love me most by  
Letting me live in your eyes  
And not in your mind.

And when you say *Kaddish* for me  
Remember what our Torah teaches,  
Love doesn't die,  
People do.  
So when all that's left of me is love  
Give me away.

Merrit Malloy

\* \*

At the rising of the sun and at its going down,  
we remember them.  
At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter,  
we remember them.  
At the opening of buds and in the rebirth of spring,  
we remember them.  
At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of the summer,  
we remember them.

At the rustling of leaves and in the beauty of autumn,  
we remember them.

At the beginning of the year and when it ends,  
we remember them.

As long as we live they too will live:  
For they are now a part of us,  
as we remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength,  
we remember them,

When we are lost and sick at heart,  
we remember them.

When we have joy we crave to share,  
we remember them.

When we have decisions that are difficult to make,  
we remember them.

When we have achievements that are based on theirs.  
we remember them.

For as long as we live, they too will live;  
for they are now a part of us,  
as we remember them.

Rabbis Jack Reimer and Sylvan Kamens

\* \*

*Yit'ga-dal v'yit'ka-dash sh'mei ra-ba*

This profound praise of the living  
Praise for the generous gift of life.

Praise for the presence of loved ones,  
the bonds of friendship, the link of memory.

Praise for the toil and searching,  
The dedication and visions, the ennobling aspirations.

Praise for the precious moorings of faith,  
For courageous souls, for prophets, psalmists, and sages.

Praise for those who walked before us,  
The sufferers in the valley of shadows,  
The steadfast in the furnace of hate.

Praise for the God of our fathers and mothers,  
the Source of all growth and goodness  
the promise of what we build tomorrow.

*Yit'ga-dal v'yit'ka-dash sh'mei ra-ba*

This, the profound praise we offer.  
Praise for the generous gift of life.

Rabbi Harvey J. Fields

\* \*

### Burial Kaddish

*Yit'ga-dal v'yit'ka-dash sh'meh ra-ba*

*b'al'ma dee hu a-teed*

*l'it'cha-da-ta u-l'a-cha-ya-ah*

*me-ta-ya u-l'a-sa-ka*

*yat'hon l'cha-yei al'ma.*

*u-l'miv'nei kar'ta dee Y'rush'leim*

*u-l'sach'la-la heich'lei b'ga-vah.*

*u-l'me-kar pal'cha-na nuch'ra-ah*

*min ar'a v'la-a-ta-va pal'cha-na*

*dee sh'ma-ya l'at'rei.*

*v'yam'leech kud'sha b'reech hu*

*b'mal'chu-tei vee-ka-rei*

*b'cha-yei-chon uv'yo-mei-chon*

*uv'cha-yei d'chol beit Yis'ra-eil.*

*ba-a-ga-la u-viz'man ka-reev*

קדיש אחר הקבורה  
יתגדל ויתקדש שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא.  
בְּעֲלָמָא דִּי הוּא עָתִיד  
לְאַתְחַדְתָּא וּלְאַחֲיָא  
מִתְיָא וּלְאַסְקָא  
יְתְּהוֹן לְחַיֵּי עֲלָמָא.  
וּלְמִבְנֵי קְרִיתָא דִּי יְרוּשָׁלַם  
וּלְשִׁכְלָלָא הִיכְלָהּ בְּגֻזָּה.  
וּלְמַעְקָר פְּלַחְנָא נְכֻרָא  
מִן אֶרְעָא וּלְאַתְבָּא פְּלַחְנָא  
דִּי שְׁמִיָּא לְאַתְרָהּ.  
וַיְמַלִּיךְ קֳדָשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא  
בְּמַלְכוּתָהּ וַיְקַרְהּ  
בְּחֵיכּוֹן וּבְיוֹמִיכּוֹן  
וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל.  
בְּעָגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב

*v'im'ru, A-mein.*  
*Y'heh sh'meh ra-ba*  
*m'va-rach l'o-lam*  
*ul'al'mei al'ma-ya*  
*Yit'ba-rach v'yish'ta-bach,*  
*v'yit'pa-ar v'yit'ro-mam*  
*v'yit'na-seh, v'yit'ha-dar*  
*v'yit'a-leh v'yit'ha-lal*  
*sh'meh d'kud'sha, b'reech hu,*  
*l'ei-la mi-kol*  
*bir'cha-ta v'shee-ra-ta*  
*tush'b'cha-ta v'ne-che-ma-ta*  
*da-a-mee-ran b'al'ma,*  
*v'im'ru: Amen!*  
*Y'heh sh'la-ma ra-ba*  
*min sh'ma-ya v'cha-yeem*  
*a-lei-nu v'al kol Yis'ra-eil,*  
*v'im'ru: A-men!*  
*O-seh sha-lom bim'ro-mav,*  
*hu ya-a-seh sha-lom*  
*a-lei-nu v'al kol Yis'ra-eil,*  
*V'im'ru A-mein.*

וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:  
יְהִי שֵׁמֶה רַבָּא  
מְבָרַךְ לְעֵלָם  
וְלְעַלְמֵי עֲלָמִיא:  
יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִישָׁתַּבַּח,  
וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם  
וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר  
וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל  
שֵׁמֶה דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא  
לְעָלָא מְכַל  
בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירָתָא,  
תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנִחְמַתָּא,  
דְּאִמְרֵן בְּעָלְמָא,  
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:  
יְהִי שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא  
מִן שְׁמִיא וְחַיִּים  
עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל,  
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:  
עֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו  
הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם  
עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל,  
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

Let the glory of God be extolled,  
and God's Great Name be hallowed in the world  
May God's sovereignty soon be accepted,  
during our own life and the life of all Israel.  
And let us say: *Amen.*

Let the glory of God be extolled  
and God's name throughout the world  
that will be renewed.  
God will then restore the dead,  
raise them to eternal life,  
rebuild the city of Jerusalem,  
complete the Temple within it,  
uproot idolatry from the earth,  
and return our worship of God  
so that heaven and earth will meet.  
May the Holy One establish a magnificent sovereignty  
during our own life and the life of all Israel.  
And let us say: *Amen*.

Let the glory of God be extolled,  
and God's Great Name be hallowed in the world  
whose creation God willed.

May God's spirit rule in our own day,  
in our own lives,  
and in the life of all Israel,  
and let us say: *Amen*.

Let God's Great Name be blessed forever and ever.  
Beyond all the praises, songs, and adorations  
that we can utter is the Holy One, the Blessed One,  
Whom we glorify, honor, and exalt.  
And let us say: *Amen*.

For us and for all Israel, may the blessing of peace  
and the promise of life come true,  
and let us say: *Amen*.

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**Kaddish achar Hak'vurah** (קדיש אחר הקבורה) – Literally "Kaddish after a Burial," also called *Kaddish d'Ichadata* (קדיש דאתחדתא) - The Burial Kaddish was written at the beginning of the Middle Ages. It is recited at the graveside at the time of burial. It is the only form of Kaddish that includes any reference to death, to the bodily resurrection of the dead, or a

rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem. Though resurrection is a doctrine found in classic rabbinic Judaism, many in the liberal religious streams today accept the doctrine of the immortality of the soul in its place, and look to the advent of a Messianic era of peace and justice in place of the coming of a personal Messiah.

May the One Who causes peace to reign in the high heavens,  
also cause peace to descend upon us, upon all Israel,  
and upon all the world,  
and let us say: *Amen*.

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## Mourner's *Kaddish*

*Yit'ga-dal v'yit'ka-dash sh'meh ra-ba*  
*b'al'ma dee v'ra chir'u-teh,*  
*v'yam'leech mal'chu-teh*  
*b'cha-yei-chon uv'yo-mei-chon*  
*uv'cha-yei d'chol beit Yis'ra-eil,*  
*ba-a-ga-la u-viz'man ka-reev*  
*v'im'ru a-mein.*  
*Y'heh sh'meh ra-ba*  
*m'va-rach l'o-lam*  
*ul'al'mei al'ma-ya*  
*Yit'ba-rach v'yish'ta-bach,*  
*v'yit'pa-ar v'yit'ro-mam*  
*v'yit'na-seh, v'yit'ha-dar*  
*v'yit'a-leh v'yit'ha-lal*  
*sh'meh d'kud'sha, b'reech hu,*  
*l'ei-la mi-kol*

## קדיש יתום

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא.  
בְּעָלְמָא דִּי בְרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ,  
וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ  
בְּחַיִּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן  
וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל.  
בְּעָגְלָא וּבְזִמַּן קָרִיב  
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:  
יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא  
מְבָרַךְ לְעָלַם  
וְלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמֵיָא:  
יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח,  
וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם  
וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר  
וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל  
שְׁמֵהּ דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא  
לְעָלָא מְכַל

**History of the Kaddish:** We are not certain who wrote the Kaddish or when. It may be that it began as a brief, one sentence prayer ("May God's great name be blessed now and forever!") which increased in length over the ages. It is written in Aramaic using Hebrew letters, which was the language of the Jews between 586 B.C.E. and the 5th century C.E. and the language of study in the academies of Babylonia and Palestine.

**The Origins of the Mourner's Kaddish:** The nucleus of the Kaddish is the blessing, "May God's

great Name be blessed forever and ever," and served as a consolation at the end of the service. The Kaddish developed in the initial years of the first millennium C.E.

**A Life-Affirming Prayer:** There is no mention of death throughout this prayer. Rather, it is a prayer praising God's greatness. The sanctification of God and the coming of God's dominion is the language used in the book of Ezekiel and suggests the resurrection of the dead (a doctrine affirmed in Maimonides' 13 Articles of Faith).

bir'cha-ta v'shee-ra-ta  
 tush'b'cha-ta v'ne-che-ma-ta  
 da-a-mee-ran b'al'ma,  
 v'im'ru: Amen!  
 Y'heh sh'la-ma ra-ba  
 min sh'ma-ya v'cha-yeem  
 a-lei-nu v'al kol Yis'ra-eil,  
 v'im'ru: A-men!  
 O-seh sha-lom bim'ro-mav,  
 hu ya-a-seh sha-lom  
 a-lei-nu v'al kol Yis'ra-eil,  
 V'im'ru A-mein.

בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא,  
 תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנַחֲמְתָּא,  
 דְּאָמְרִין בְּעֵלְמָא,  
 וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:  
 יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא  
 מִן שְׁמֵיָא וְחַיִּים  
 עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל,  
 וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:  
 עֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו  
 הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם  
 עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל,  
 וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

May the Source of peace send peace to all who mourn,  
 and comfort to all who are bereaved. *Amen.*

Let the glory of God be extolled,  
 and God's Great Name be hallowed in the world  
 whose creation God willed.

May God's spirit rule in our own day, in our own lives,  
 and in the life of all Israel,  
 and let us say: *Amen.*

**When is Kaddish Recited?** The *Kaddish* is recited during the first year of mourning, on the *Yahrzeit* (death anniversary), and during *Yizkor* (memorial) services on the festivals of *Pesach*, *Shavuot*, and *Sukkot*, and on *Yom Kippur*.

**A Child Who Remembers:** The *Kaddish* affirms the Jewish view that a child who says *Kaddish* can never forget a parent and that "remembrance is the key to redemption." (Baal Shem Tov)

**Mystical Interpretation of Kaddish:** Jewish mystics suggest that when the survivor says *Kaddish*, the spiritual impact on the departed soul is such that it continues its soul journey to *Gan Eden* (the Garden of Eden, or paradise). The Kabbalists (Jewish mystics) who affirmed the doctrine of *gilgul hanefesh* ("the turning over of the soul" or reincarnation) believed that saying the *Kaddish* is essential to the soul progressing to the point when it can return to a new life reincarnated.

Let God's Great Name be blessed forever and ever.  
Beyond all the praises, songs, and adorations  
that we can utter is the Holy One, the Blessed One,  
Whom we glorify, honor, and exalt.  
And let us say: *Amen*.

For us and for all Israel, may the blessing of peace  
and the promise of life come true,  
and let us say: *Amen*.

May the One Who causes peace to reign in the high heavens,  
also cause peace to descend upon us, upon all Israel,  
and upon all the world,  
and let us say: *Amen*.

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## Jewish Funeral and Mourning Customs

### Burial

It is a positive *mitzvah* (commandment) for mourners to bury their departed. The *mitzvah* is not complete until those in attendance at a funeral place earth and say *Kaddish*. Rabban Gamaliel ordered that all Jews, the wealthy and poor alike, should be buried in simple white clothes (*tachrichen*) and in a plain wooden box because all are equal in death. It is customary and certainly acceptable, however, for our beloved to be buried in their own clothing. The virtue of modesty and humility before God is at the base of these customs. Whereas some wish to bury their dear ones in a *taleet*, tradition insists that the *tzeetzeet* (fringes) be removed. We recommend that families pass a loved one's *taleet* to family members so that it can be used for worship perpetually and in memory of the departed.

### Bag of Earth from the Land of Israel

This custom derives from the desire of many Jews to be buried in the Holy Land.

### Casket Bearers

Family and friends act as casket bearers and carry the casket to the grave side. Though in traditional communities this honor and privilege is given only to men, we encourage women and girls over *bat mitzvah* age to be included as well. To walk with the dead to burial is the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of *chesed shel emet* (true compassion) without any hidden motive.

### Flowers at the Funeral

While most people wish to have flowers displayed at the funeral, this is not a traditional Jewish custom. The stark reality of death should not be hidden. Rather, the money spent on flowers might be given instead as *tz'dakah* in the memory of the departed to a cause to which he or she was committed.

## The Funeral Service

Traditional elements of every funeral service include the recitation of psalms and the delivery of a eulogy (*hesped*) that praises the dead. The *Eil Malei Rachameem* includes the Hebrew name of the departed and affirms that the soul has been received by God. Judaism does not permit open caskets once the funeral service begins. At the grave, psalms may be recited as well as the *Tziduk Hadeen* and *Kaddish*. The mourners (traditionally seven relatives of the deceased: father, mother, husband, wife, child, brother, and sister - including half-brother and half-sister) wear the traditional *k'reeyah* (torn) ribbon as a sign that a part of our hearts has been torn away with the death of our loved one. This ribbon is worn for seven days (excluding *Shabbat* and holidays, when there is no public mourning permitted). This custom dates back to the Bible (2 Samuel 13:31). The *k'reeyah* ribbon is worn over the heart for parents only. For all other mourners, it is worn over the right breast side. When tearing the ribbon, the blessing *Baruch Atah Adonai dayan haemet* (Praised are You, Adonai our God, the true Judge) is recited. After earth is placed the mourner's *Kaddish* is recited. It is traditional for mourners to leave the site of burial by passing between parallel lines of those attending who say, "*Hamakom y'nachem etchem b'toch sh'ar aveilei Tzion veerushalayim.*" ("May God comfort you among the other mourners in Zion and Jerusalem.")

## Returning Home

There are many mourning customs that may be observed at the home during *shiva*, the seven days of the most intense mourning. These include washing hands when returning from the cemetery, saying blessings over all food eaten, eating lentils and eggs, covering mirrors, men not shaving, and not wearing leather, etc.

## The Mitzvah of Comforting Mourners

The Talmud teaches *mitzvah b'shtika* ("the mitzvah is performed in silence") when visiting mourners. Often visitors do not know what to say to a mourner. The less said the better, and visitors should follow the lead of the mourners. However, it is better to speak of the dead than to ignore what is weighing heavily on every-

one's heart. The atmosphere of the house of mourning should not be light-hearted nor seem like a party. If a condolence call is not possible, then a note or card should be sent expressing sympathy.

### **The Mourning Period**

There are three periods of mourning for the seven categories of mourners - *shiva*, which means seven in Hebrew, begins on the day of the burial and ends on the seventh day. During this period, the mourners remain at home and grieve. After *shiva* is the *shlosheem*, which means 30 in Hebrew, a period that extends through the 30th day after burial. Other restrictions are observed during this period: mourners begin to return to normal life (work, school, etc.), but avoid parties and celebrations. It is permissible to attend a *bar/bat mitzvah* or wedding ceremony, but a mourner should not stay for the celebration. During the first year, mourners say *kaddish* for 11 months. It is assumed that the soul, which has spent 11 months in transition, is received by God before the conclusion of one year.

### **When *Kaddish* is Recited**

*Kaddish* is recited at the burial, during the first year after burial, on the *yahrzeit* (death anniversary) and on the holidays of *Pesach*, *Shavuot*, *Sukkot*, and *Yom Kippur*.

### **Visiting Graves between *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur***

It is a tradition to visit the graves of loved ones between *Rosh Roshanah* and *Yom Kippur*. Sagel Bloomfield conducts an annual *Ke'ver Avot v'Imahot* service on the Sunday morning before *Yom Kippur* and invites the community to attend.

### **Burial in Mausoleums and Concrete Walls**

In ancient times, all burials were in rock-hewn caves. There were separate caves for each family and niches dug in the rock for each body, as indicated in the story of Abraham purchasing a burial site for Sarah (Genesis 23). This is equivalent to a modern mausoleum. Tombs of this sort became common during Mishnaic and Talmudic times (Baba Batra 5:8; Eruveem 5:1; Sanhedrin 47b).

Later tradition held that burial should be done in the earth (Shulchan Arukh, Yoreh Deah 362). Such burial is permissible according to Jewish law and tradition. Among non-orthodox Jews, the custom is common. For those who place their loved ones in wall crypts, it is a tradition to put earth from the land of Israel in the casket so that the deceased should have direct contact with the earth and the land of Israel. Sagel Bloomfield provides this earth upon request.

### **Cremation and the Burial of Ashes**

Based on the biblical verse “For dust you are, and to dust you shall return” (Gen. 3:19), Jewish tradition has maintained that burial should be in the earth. Most Jewish cemeteries provide crypt entombment as an option that is accepted by rabbinic authorities. Cremation historically has been rejected, but is accepted by some segments of the Jewish population. Questions regarding these matters should be addressed to a rabbi or the funeral director.

### **Jewish Notions of the Afterlife**

Judaism affirms that there is a separate reality to the soul that is joined to the body during life. At birth, the soul enters the body (“God formed the human from the dust of the earth. God blew into the human’s nostrils the breath of life - *nishmat chayeem* - and the human became a living being.” - Genesis 2:7) and at death the soul departs and returns to God. Orthodox Jews hold to the belief in the physical resurrection of the dead (*m’chayei hameiteem*) at the time of the coming of the Messiah. Many liberal Jews have reinterpreted this doctrine to mean that renewal is possible at all times as if being brought back from a kind of spiritual death. Reform Judaism adopted the Greek idea of the immortality of the soul. Jewish mystics in the *Kabalah* affirm the belief in *gilgul hanefashot* (literally “the turning of souls,” reincarnation), the belief that the soul departs upon physical death and undergoes a period of spiritual cleansing before returning to a metaphysical state known as the *otzar hanefashot* (treasury of souls) and then a return to a new life.

## Glossary of Terms

***Beit ha-cha-yeem*** - "House of life," a euphemism for cemetery.

***Chevra Kadisha*** - A Jewish funeral "holy society."

***Eil malei rachameem*** - "God full of compassion." The memorial prayer acknowledging that God has received the soul of the departed.

***Gilgul hanefashot*** - "Wheel of souls," a reference to reincarnation.

***Hesped*** - "Eulogy."

***Kaddish*** - (Aramaic) A prayer affirming the "sanctity" of God's name said by mourners.

***Kever Avot v'Imahot*** - A memorial service at the cemetery between *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* "honoring parents, grandparents" and loved ones.

***K'reeyah*** - The "tearing" of the black ribbon worn by mourners signifying the rending of the heart at the time of loss.

***K'vod lameit*** - "Honoring the dead."

***K'vod lachayeem*** - "Honoring the living."

***L'vayat hameit*** - "Accompanying the body" to the site of burial.

***M'chayei hameiteem*** - "Bodily resurrection of the dead."

**Memorial marker** - In Jewish tradition, the memorial marker is placed on the grave 11 months after burial.

***Minyan*** - A "quorum of 10" Jews required for a Jewish religious service. (In traditional communities only men are counted; in Reconstructionist, Reform and Conservative communities, both women and men are counted.)

***Nichum aveileem*** - "Comforting the mourners."

***Olam habah*** - "The world to come."

***Shiva*** - The "seven" days of mourning that follow a burial.

***Shiva candle*** - A large candle lit without blessing upon return home from cemetery that burns for "seven" days.

***Sh'losheem*** - The period of "thirty" days of mourning following burial.

***Tachricheem*** - "White shrouds" traditionally worn by the deceased.

**Taharah** - The “ritual cleaning/purification” of the body before burial.

**Tzeeduk hadeen** - “The true Judge.” The first blessing said upon hearing of a death and repeated at burial.

**Tz’dakah** - “Righteousness.” Refers to the giving of money to worthy causes in memory of the deceased.

**Yahrzeit** - (Yiddish) The Anniversary of the death.

**Yahrzeit candle** - A 24-hour candle lit every *Yahrzeit*.

**Yizkor** - The Memorial service held on *Pesach, Shavuot, Succot* and *Yom Kippur*.

## Sources

This service booklet and notes were written, compiled and edited by Rabbi John L. Rosove, Temple Israel of Hollywood. Selections in this service have been excerpted from *The Rabbis Manual*, published by the Central Conference of American Rabbis (1988) and *Gates of Repentance*, published by the Central Conference of American Rabbis (1978). All material is under copyright by the CCAR and is reprinted here by permission.

**Note:** This prayer booklet has replaced God’s holiest name *YHVH* with *yod-yod* so that if, per chance, the booklet is discarded, God’s holiest name is respected. Tradition teaches that any paper or parchment on which this name is written cannot be disposed of casually. Please leave the booklet at the cemetery for future use. Thank you.

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