

Temple Beth-El
San Antonio, Texas

Penitential Memorial Service at Cemetery

Rabbi: O God, Author of life and death, we gather at this sacred spot during this penitential season to direct our hearts to You and to express our love for those who have gone before. Even in death, they are a blessing to us. Here, our own mortality is forcibly brought home to us. May we live nobly in the spirit of our beloved dead and meet the obligations which we have accepted from their hands. Renew our strength for the struggles of life and increase our courage to perform our tasks.

Surrounded by these monuments, these signs of mortality, we realize our own frailty; but we also know that from You comes life. These silent sentinels call us back to You and to the recognition of our duty. They rouse us to do good while our brief day lasts; to bring relief to the distressed, sunshine where darkness prevails, hope to those in despair, and support for every worthy cause. Send us from this sacred place with Your blessings. Guide and guard us as we proceed to our daily tasks. Amen.

Psalm 23

Together: *The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; He guideth me in straight paths for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou hast anointed my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

God creates our bodies from the earth, and returns us to the dust when our day is done.

God created us to be immortal.

God fashioned our physical lives like those of other creatures.

Yet God also made us in the image of God's own eternity.

Neither pride nor riches is profitable; they pass away as a shadow.

And as a ship's pathway in the water.

As a bird's flight through the air,

As the shooting of an arrow.

As soon as we are born, we begin to draw toward the end.

But the righteous live forever, and their reward is with the Lord.

They share in God's glory, and receive a beautiful crown from God's hand.

Rabbi: In this resting place of those who have passed through the valley of death, consecrated by the tears of dear ones they left behind, we feel more vividly than in any other spot how near You are to us. In this restful habitation of the dead, a peace, as if descending from another world, enfolds our souls. It lifts them to the contemplation of Your mercy and Your grace.

The unrest of the world is far away and shut out; the voice of passion and conflict is hushed! More distinctly, we hear and heed the inner voice, which reminds us that we are only pilgrims and sojourners here, and that this Earth is only the forecourt of the Eternal House. There our souls shall be satisfied in the presence of the everliving and merciful God.

O that this faith may ever sustain us in our trials, make us humble and grateful in prosperity, confident and hopeful in our adversity. May it teach us to employ our experiences to purify our souls, to strengthen all that is good within us and keep us from all that is evil. Then, when our time comes, we may be gathered in peace to our own eternal rest. Amen.

from Psalm 16:8-11

Together: *I have set the Lord always before me;
Surely God is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices;
My flesh also dwells in safety;
For You will not abandon my soul to the nether-world;
Neither will You suffer Your godly one to see the pit.
You make me to know the path of life;
In Your presence is fullness of joy, In
Your right hand bliss forevermore.*

Rabbi: Eternal God, we have come to sanctify our fleeting lives by linking them with Yours, O Life of all Ages. In You, generations past, present, and future are united in one bond of life.

At this sacred hour, we are aware of those souls through whom we have come to know of Your grace and love. All the wisdom, beauty, and affection that have enriched our lives are the garnered fruits of our communion with others.

Many of those to whom we owe so much are alive with us today; and we pray that we may be able to reward their goodness and their devotion to us by acts of love and loyalty.

But others have passed forever from our midst, leaving us a heritage of tender memories which now fill our minds.

Some of us recall today beloved parents who watched over us, nursed us, guided us, and sacrificed for us.

Some of us lovingly call to mind a wife or a husband, a life partner with whom we were truly united — in our hopes and our pains, in our failures and our achievements, in our joys and our sorrows.

Some of us remember brothers and sisters, who grew up together with us, sharing comradeship and love.

Some of us call to mind children, entrusted to our care all too briefly, taken from us before they reached the years of maturity and fulfillment, to whom we gave our loving care and from whom we received a trust which enriched our lives.

All of us recall beloved relatives and friends whose affection and devotion enhanced our lives, and whose visible presence will never return to cheer, encourage or support us.

The deaths of our loved ones left gaping holes in our lives. And yet, we are grateful for the gift of their lives. We are strengthened, too, by the blessings which they left us, by precious memories which comfort and sustain us as we recall them this day.

Therefore, with sorrowing hearts, we call to mind at this solemn hour all our beloved whom death has removed from our midst. We thank You, O God, for the years which You granted them, years in which they brought help, joy and comfort to many a heart. You, in Your love, gave them to us; and You, in Your wisdom, have taken them from us. We think of the time when they still moved among us, shared in our labors, and lavished their love and friendship upon us.

Though slumbering in their graves, they live in our hearts as lasting sources of inspiration, leading us to good deeds and noble thoughts. In gratitude for all the blessings they brought to us, to the Jewish people, and to humanity, we dedicate ourselves anew to the sacred tasks they bequeathed unto us. Extend, we pray, Your healing balm unto the bereaved. Comfort them with Your presence and sustain them with Your light.

In the rising of the sun and in its going down, we remember them.

In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter, we remember them.

In the opening of buds and in the rebirth of spring, we remember them.

In the blueness of the sky and in the warmth of summer, we remember them.

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

In the beginning of the year and when it ends, 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 joys we yearn to share, we remember them.

So long as we live, they too shall live, for they are now a part of us, as we remember them.

(All rise)

Memorial Prayer

Dear God, full of compassion, we turn to you from a world bereft of compassion, as we pray...Grant perfect peace in Your sheltering Presence to the souls of the six million, to the men, the women, the children slaughtered and burned in the ghettos and camps. Master of mercy, may they find the safe shelter denied them in this world, and may their souls be bound up in the bond of eternal life. Gracious God, You alone are their inheritance; so may they rest in peace...*Amen*

אֵל מְלֵא רַחֲמִים, שׁוֹכֵן בְּמְרוֹמִים.
הַמָּצֵא מְנוּחָה נְכוֹנָה תַּחַת כַּנְּפֵי הַשְּׂכִינָה,
עִם קְדוֹשִׁים וְטְהוֹרִים, כְּזוֹהַר הַרְקִיעַ מִזְהָרִים,
לְנִשְׁמַת יַקִּירֵינוּ שֶׁהִלְכוּ לְעוֹלָמָם.
בְּעַל הַרַחֲמִים, יִסְתִּירָם בְּסִתְרֵי כַּנְּפָיו לְעוֹלָמִים,
וְיִצְרֹר בְּצִרּוֹר הַחַיִּים אֶת־נִשְׁמָתָם.
יְיָ הוּא נִחְלָתָם, וְיִנְוְחוּ בְּשָׁלוֹם עַל מִשְׁכָּבָם
וְנֹאמַר: אָמֵן

Kaddish

Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'mei raba.
B'alma di v'ra chirutei, v'yamlich malchutei,
B'chayeichon uv'yomeichon uv'chayei d'chol
beit Yisrael, baagala uviz'man kariv. V'im'ru:
Amen.

Y'hei sh'mei raba m'varach l'alam ul'almei
almaya.

Yitbarach v'yishtabach v'yitpaar v'yitromam
v'yitnasei, v'yit'hadar v'yitaleh v'yit'halal
Sh'mei d'Kud'sha B'rich Hu, l'eila min kol
birchata v'shirata, tushb'chata

V'nechemata, daamiran b'alma. V'im'ru:

Amen. Y'hei sh'lama raba min sh'maya,
V'chayim aleinu v'al kol Yisrael. V'im'ru:

Amen. Oseh shalom bimromav

Hu yaaseh shalom aleinu, v'al kol Yisrael.

V'im'ru: Amen.

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא.
בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְרֵעוּתָהּ,
וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ, בְּחַיֵּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי
דְּכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב,
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

יְהִי שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וּלְעָלְמֵי
עָלְמַיָּא.

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם

וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא, וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל

שְׁמֵהּ דְּקוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא,

לְעֵלְמָא מִן כָּל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא, תְּשֻׁבְחָתָא

וְנַחֲמָתָא, דְּאָמְרוּ בְּעֵלְמָא. וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

יְהִי שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא,

וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם

עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

Rabbi: The departed whom we now remember have entered into the peace of life eternal. They still live on earth in the acts of goodness they performed and in the hearts of those who cherish their memory. May the beauty of their life abide among us as a loving benediction.

May the Source of peace send peace to all who mourn, and comfort all the bereaved among us.