Funeral Service
and Service for the Consecration
of a Memorial
LIBERAL JUDAISM
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Meditations

Thus says the Eternal God: A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more. Thus says the Eternal God: Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears. There is hope for your future, says the Eternal God.

Jeremiah

Rabbi Simeon said: There are three crowns: the crown of learning, the crown of priesthood, and the crown of royalty; but the crown of a good name excels them all.

Pirkey Avot

Give us the Vision

Shall we cry out in anger, O God,
Because Your gifts are ours but for a while?
Shall we be ungrateful for the moments of laughter,
The seasons of joy, the days of gladness and festivity,
When tears cloud our eyes and darken the world
And our heart is heavy within us?
Shall we blot from mind the love
We have known and in which we have rejoiced
When a fate beyond our understanding takes from us
Friends and kin whom we have cherished, and leaves us
Bereft of shining presences that have lit our way
Through years of companionship and affection?
Give us the vision, O God, to see and feel
That embedded deep in each of Your gifts
Is a core of eternity, undiminished and bright,
An eternity that survives the dread hours
Of affliction and misery.

Those we have loved, though now beyond our view,
Have given form and quality to our being.
They have led us into the wide universe
We continue to inhabit, and their presence
Is more vital to us than their absence.

Rabbi Morris Adler

The death of those close to our hearts grieves and humbles us. It devastates our lives, lives that once were filled with the warmth of their presence. It reminds us that we must all die, even the most humble and righteous among us. And yet we know that life does not end at the grave; the soul lives on.

How, then, do we accept the reality of death? By remembering the goodness of our loved ones and by shaping our lives after their example. For the memory of the righteous is truly a blessing, an inspiration for all our days. May our lives be worthy of their memory, always.

From *Siddur V’taheir Libeinu*, Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley

A Parable of the Dubner Maggid

A king once owned a large, beautiful, pure diamond of which he was justly proud, for it had no equal anywhere. One day the diamond accidentally sustained a deep scratch.
The king called in the most skilled diamond cutters and offered them a great reward if they could remove the imperfection from his treasured jewel. But none could repair the blemish and the king was sorely distressed.

After some time a new stone cutter came to the king and promised to make the diamond even more beautiful than it had been before. The king was impressed by his confidence and entrusted the stone to his care. And the man kept his word. With superb artistry he engraved a lovely rosebud around the imperfection and he used the scratch to make the stem.

We can emulate that diamond cutter. When life bruises us and wounds us, we can use even the scratches to create something of beauty and worth.

Accept the Judgment
Accept the judgment, O humbled heart,
Accept the judgment this time, too,
Without struggle, without wrath.

High in the north, snow covered fields
Conceal the grain ripening
Secretly, silently.

O humbled heart, bear your wintry fate
And be like those seeds
That wait for summer.

Rachel
Is It Really the End?

Is it really the end? The path is still clear,  
The mists of life still beckon from afar  
The sky is still blue, the grass is green;  
Autumn is coming.

I shall accept the judgment. My heart harbours no  
complaint.  
How red were my sunsets, how clear my dawn!  
And flowers smiled along my path  
As I passed.

Rachel

A Woman of Valour

A woman of valour, 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 labour 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 cheefully.  
She speaks with wisdom; the law of kindness is on her  
lips.  
Her children rise up and bless her; her husband sings her  
praises.  
Many daughters have done valiantly, but you excel them  
all.

After Proverbs 31
In the Rising of the Sun

    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 rustling of the 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.
Funeral Service

Eternal God, what are we, that You take notice of us? What are we, that You consider us? We are like a breath, our days are as a passing shadow.

We are strangers before You, sojourners as all our ancestors were; our days on earth are as a shadow, and there is no abiding.

From Psalm 90

Eternal One, You have been our refuge in all generations.

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

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, like grass which springs up in the morning:

In the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.

Our years come to an end like a sigh.

Whether our days be many or few, how little we achieve by our labours! Our lives soon end, and we depart.

So teach us to number our days, that we may acquire a heart of wisdom.

Satisfy us with Your kindness in the morning, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

Gladden us according to the days You have afflicted us, and the years in which we have seen evil.
Let Your servants behold Your works, and their children come to see Your glory.

Let Your favour, Eternal One, our God, rest upon us, and may our work have lasting value. O may the work of our hands endure.

From Psalm 91

Those who dwell in the shelter of the Most High shall abide in the shadow of the Almighty. They will say to the Eternal One: You are my refuge and my stronghold, my God in whom I trust. You cover me with Your wings, and shelter me under Your care. Your truth is my shield and my protection. I will not fear the terror of the night, or the dangers of the day. For You, Eternal One, are my refuge; O God Most High, You are my dwelling place.
Out of the depths we cry to You, O God—hearken to our voice. The mysteries of life and death are beyond our understanding. As the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are Your ways exalted above our ways, and Your thoughts above ours.

Teach us even when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death to trust in Your providence, and to reaffirm our faith in Your righteousness.
You are righteous, O God our Rock, and all Your ways are just. You are a faithful God, righteous and just and without iniquity. Who may question Your work? Who can understand the mysteries of Your ways? In Your love You give us life, and in Your wisdom You bring death to all. But in life and death alike, our souls are in Your hand, for You are a God of infinite compassion. We are frail and weak, and our life on earth is only a span. But Your love for us never fails; it endures throughout eternity. Even in our sorrow we praise Your name, saying together:

Baruch Da-yan Ha-Emet.

Let the true Judge be praised.

Unending is Your might, Eternal One; You are the Source of eternal life; great is Your power to redeem.

In Your love You sustain the living; in Your compassion You grant us eternal life. Your support the falling and heal the sick; You free the captive and keep faith with those who sleep in the dust.
Who is like You, Source of all strength? Who is Your equal, sovereign Author of life and death, whose will it is that goodness shall prevail?

Trusting in You, we see life beyond death.

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no evil shall touch them. To those without insight their death seems final, and their departure a calamity. But they are at peace, and though we may think they have been punished, their hope is full of immortality.
O God, full of compassion, exalted God, God of forgiveness, gracious and merciful, abundantly patient and full of love, grant perfect rest under the wings of Your presence, to the soul of 

For a man

Amen.

אלא מלאא רחום, שוכן
ב BorderRadius, אל桷 סליחה,
חוז הקדוש, ערק אפי
ורב חסד, המצה פורת
פשע והקרבה ישת

הمنهجה בנותה חתת כנפי
השכינה אזרחית...
שוהלชา לעולים. אנה בעל
הרוחמים זכרה ולא ל.emptyList
כפי-ركزתיי רדקי
ביוצרת החמימה.エネה לא
שעריו זרק אוצרה, שערי
המללה והנינה. בקר

נספיותifton
ל_EXTERNALS.png

הhim ארצית...
והא חלחלות, ובנייה בשלום
על משכבה, ואמירה אמק.
For a woman

O God, full of compassion, exalted God, God of forgiveness, gracious and merciful, abundantly patient and full of love, grant perfect rest under the wings of Your presence, to the soul of . . . . . . who has gone to her eternal home. Merciful God, remember her merits and righteous deeds which she performed on earth. Open for her the gates of righteousness and light, of compassion and grace. Shelter her for ever under your loving care, and let her soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life. May her destiny be with You, and may she rest in peace; and let us say: Amen.
Psalm 23

Eternal God, You are my Shepherd; I shall not want. You make me lie down in green pastures. You lead me beside still waters. You restore my soul; You guide me in paths of righteousness for Your name’s sake. Even when I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff: they comfort me. You prepare 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 Your house, Eternal God, for ever.

We are mortal and our days are as grass. We flourish like a flower in the field: the wind passes over it and it is gone, and its place knows it no more: but God’s love endures for ever. The dust returns to the earth as it was, but the spirit returns to God who gave it.
In humble submission to God’s will, and with abiding gratitude for the life of . . . . . . , we say together:

God has given, and God has taken away; may God’s name be praised.

May he come to his rest in peace.

May she come to her rest in peace.

Cast your burden upon God; let the Eternal One sustain you.

For You, O God, are near to all who seek You; to all who seek You in truth.

As a father has compassion on his children, so I, the Eternal One, have compassion on those who revere Me.

As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you.

Be strong, and let your heart take courage: all who trust in God.
Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes towards the hills:
Where shall I look for help?
My help comes from the Eternal One,
Maker of heaven and earth.

You will not lose your foothold,
for your Guardian does not slumber.
The Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps.

Your God watches over you,
and is your shade close by.
The sun will not hurt you by day,
nor the moon by night.

The Eternal one shields you from evil,
and shelters your soul.
The Everpresent God will guard your coming in and your going out,
Now and always.
Souce of Eternity, we thank You for the hope of immortal life, and for the power to love, which is stronger than death. It keeps ever fresh our memories of those who have lived, and enshrines their spirits in our hearts. May our remembrance of . . . . . . comfort, help and bless us, now and in the years to come. O God, in humble submission to Your will, and taught by our tradition to praise You in times of sorrow as well as in times of joy, we hallow Your name, saying:

*Continue with Kaddish*

*Or*

Death is not the end. Those we love have passed through the gateway of the grave into the peace of eternal life. We know that all of us must tread the same path, though we do not know when the hour may come. Let us so live that the coming of that hour shall find us unafraid. May our deeds do honour to the memory of . . . . . . . . . as we turn from the contemplation of death to the tasks of life, saying:
יתגדל ויתyyyyMMdd שמה רבה
כעלמה דר-בריה ותעונתה,
יימלך מלכותה בת'יכון
гибונויכון ו bölüm דכל'бит
ישראל, Bàונלא וboom
קריב, יאמור: אמן.

יָהֵה שָׁמֶה רַבָּה
מ'ヴァראך l'alam ul'almey
מלָמוּ עֲלַלְמָי עֲלַמִּי.

יתברך ויתשתבך ויתפאר
יתمواد ויתנסא, ייתדוור
יתעלה ויתוכל שמה
קדושה, ברך הוא, עלילה
מַש'לופ-ברכת משה והי',
שהבחאת נהנתה לאמר
כעלמה, יאמור: אמן.

יָהֵה שָׁלָם רבא מַרְשֵׁמִיה
ורחיב עלינו ועל-כל
ישראל, יאמור: אמן.

ושש שָׁלוֹם בָּמוּרְפִי, הוה
יָשָׁה שָׁלָם עלינו ועל-כל
כל-ישראל על כל-بذיר
איב, יאמור: אמן.
Magnified and sanctified be the great name of the One by whose will the world was created. May God’s rule become effective in your lives, and in the life of the whole House of Israel. May it be so soon, and let us say: Amen.

May God’s great name be praised to all eternity.

Blessed and praised; glorified, exalted and extolled; lauded, honoured and acclaimed be the name of the Holy One, who is ever to be praised, though far above the eulogies and songs of praise and consolation that human lips can utter; and let us say: Amen.

May great peace descend from heaven, and abundant life be granted, to us and all Israel, and let us say: Amen.

May the Most High, Source of perfect peace, grant peace to us, to all Israel, and to all humanity, and let us say: Amen.

כִּי צְדָקָה יְהַמֶּם אַהֲבָּכֶם בַּעַצְּמֵיכֶם, נאַזְרִיָּה הֶכְלִלֵי.

May the Eternal God comfort you, and all who mourn.
Consecration of a Tombstone or other Memorial

From Psalm 8

Eternal One, our God, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!

You have stamped Your glory upon the Heavens!

When I look at the heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars that You have established,

What are we, that You are mindful of us, we mortals, that You care for us?

Yet You have made us little less than divine, and crowned us with glory and honour!

From Psalm 103

Bless the Eternal One, O my soul, and let my inmost being praise Your holy name, O God. You forgive all our iniquities, and heal all our afflictions.
You redeem our life from destruction, and surround us with love and compassion. You are merciful and gracious, abundantly patient and full of love. You do not deal with us according to our sins, or requite us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is Your love for those who revere You. For You know our frailty, and remember that we are dust. We are mortal, and our days are as grass. We flourish like a flower in the field: the wind passes over it and it is gone, and its place knows it no more. But Your love, Eternal God, rests for ever on those who revere You, and Your righteousness extends to future generations if they keep Your covenant and live by your precepts. You make Your throne in the loftiest heights, and Your sovereignty rules over all. Let all Your creatures praise You, throughout the length and breadth of Your realm. Bless the Eternal One, O my soul.
Unending is Your might, Eternal One; You are the Source of eternal life; great is Your power to redeem.

In Your love You sustain the living; in Your compassion You grant us eternal life. You support the falling and heal the sick; You free the captive and keep faith with those who sleep in the dust.

Who is like You, Source of all strength? Who is Your equal, sovereign Author of life and death, whose will it is that goodness shall prevail?

Trusting in You, we see life beyond death.
Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes towards the hills:
Where shall I look for help?
My help comes from the Eternal One,
Maker of heaven and earth.

You will not lose your foothold,
for your Guardian does not slumber.
The Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps.

Your God watches over you,
and is your shade close by.
The sun will not hurt you by day,
nor the moon by night.

The Eternal one shields you from evil,
and shelters your soul.
The Everpresent God will guard your coming in and your going out,
Now and always.
Psalm 23

Eternal God, You are my Shepherd; I shall not want. You make me lie down in green pastures. You lead me beside still waters.

You restore my soul; You guide me in paths of righteousness for Your name’s sake.

Even when I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff: they comfort me.

You prepare 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 Your house, Eternal God, for ever.
For a man

O God, full of compassion, exalted God, God of forgiveness, gracious and merciful, abundantly patient and full of love, grant perfect rest under the wings of Your presence, to the soul of . . . . . . who has gone to his eternal home. Merciful God, remember his merits and righteous deeds which he performed on earth. Open for him the gates of righteousness and light, of compassion and grace. Shelter him for ever under your loving care, and let his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life. May his destiny be with You, and may he rest in peace; and let us say: Amen.
O God, full of compassion, exalted God, God of forgiveness, gracious and merciful, abundantly patient and full of love, grant perfect rest under the wings of Your presence, to the soul of . . . . . . who has gone to her eternal home. Merciful God, remember her merits and righteous deeds which she performed on earth. Open for her the gates of righteousness and light, of compassion and grace. Shelter her for ever under your loving care, and let her soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life. May her destiny be with You, and may she rest in peace; and let us say: Amen.

Much time has passed since we said our last farewell to . . . . . . . . We have not ceased to miss him/her, and though our sorrow has become gentler, this service reminds us of its first intensity. But we have not come here
simply to grieve, though we do that, but to remember and to
give thanks. We know that our loved one abides in our
hearts and in his/her continuing influence upon us. For so it
has been said, נפשך לברכה, בברכה כו וברכות.
The righteous require no monument, their words are their
memorial. Yet it helps us to know that there is one place on
earth for ever dedicated to his/her memory. We therefore
consecrate this memorial as a visible symbol of his/her
enduring presence among us.

*The inscription is read*

May it inspire those who come here in the years ahead to
give thanks for his/her life, and to praise God’s name saying:

*We continue with Kaddish*

*Or*

In the name of the family of . . . . and in the presence of
his/her family and friends, we consecrate this monument to
his/her memory, as a token of our love and respect.

*The inscription is read*

החי נשמהו/נשמהו צורוה בברכה וברכות

May his/her soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life.

*We continue with Kaddish*

*Or*

**FOR A CHILD**

To You, O Source of peace, we turn in our time of need.
Give us strength and patience to bear our burden of sorrow.
Help us to overcome our grief, that we may return to life
and its tasks. Deepen our love for one another; teach us to
open our hearts to all who need us, and guide us on our path until we find abiding love that survives all loss and sustains us through every trial. Grant consolation, Eternal God, to sorrowing parents and to all who mourn. Heal our wounds, renew our hope and our faith. May the memory of our beloved . . . . remain precious to us, and inspire us to labour for a world in which every life shall find its fulfilment.

The inscription is read

Yitgaddal v’yitkaddash sh’meh rabba b’alma di v’ra chir’uteh, v’yamlich malchuteh b’chay-yezychon uv’yomezychon uv’chayyey d’chol beyt yisrael ba’agala uviz’man kariv v’im’ru: amen.

Y’he sh’meh rabba m’varach l’alam ul’almey almayya.

Y’he sh’lama rabba min sh’mayya v’chayyim aleynu v’al kol yisrael, v’imru: amen.

Oseh shalom bim’romav hu ya’aseh shalom aleynu v’al kol yisrael v’al kol b’ney adam, v’im’ru: amen.

Magnified and sanctified be the great name of the One by whose will the world was created. May God’s rule become effective in your lives, and in the life of the whole House of Israel. May it be so soon, and let us say: Amen.

May God’s great name be praised to all eternity.

Blessed and praised; glorified, exalted and extolled; lauded, honoured and acclaimed be the name of the Holy One, who is ever to be praised, though far above the eulogies and songs of praise and consolation that human lips can utter; and let us say: Amen.

May great peace descend from heaven, and abundant life be granted, to us and all Israel, and let us say: Amen.

May the Most High, Source of perfect peace, grant peace to us, to all Israel, and to all humanity, and let us say: Amen.

Peace, peace to the far and the near, says the Eternal God.
Eternal God: grant strength to Your people. Eternal God: bless Your people with peace.

On visiting the Grave or other Memorial

EITHER

You are no longer at my side, for death has separated us. I cannot look to you to lighten my burdens or to give me the benefit of your strength, your wisdom, your faith. Yet what you meant to me does not wither or fade. I remember so much about you, and the many things we shared. There are times when the pain of missing you seems more than I can bear, yet there is much for which I must give thanks. For life and love, the happiness you gave me, the blessing that you were which I cherish in my heart. Rest in peace, my loved one, I will never forget you.

OR

Death has separated us from those we loved. We cannot look to them to lighten our burdens or give us the benefit of their strength, their wisdom or their faith. Yet what they meant to us does not wither or fade. We remember so much about them, and the many things we shared. There are times when the pain of missing them seems more than we can bear, yet there is much for which we must give thanks. For life and love and happiness, for the blessing that they were which we cherish in our hearts. May those we loved rest in peace, we shall never forget them.
Notes to selected scriptural and modern passages

The texts and English translations have been taken from “Siddur Lev Chadash” and extra material translated in the style of that book.

p.4  *Thus says the Eternal God...* Jer. 31:14-15a, 16a.
      *Rabbi Simeon said...* Avot 4:13
      *Give us the vision...* Rabbi Morris Adler, p53f., The Bond of Life, ed.

p.5  *The death of those...* p.116, Siddur V’taheir Libeinu, Congregation
      Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley, 1979-80
      *A king once owned...* p.144, A Treasury of Comfort, ed. Sidney
      Greenberg, 1967

p.6  *Accept the judgment...* Rachel (Rachel Bluwstein, 1890-1931), p5,
      ibid

p.7  *Is it really the end?...* Rachel, p.79f., ibid.
      *A woman of Valour...* Based on Prov. 31:10-12, 18, 20, 25-26, 28-29.


p.9  *Eternal One, You have been our refuge...* Ps. 90:1b-2, 4-6, 9b-10, 12,
      14-16, 17.

p.11 *Those who dwell in the shelter...* Ps. 91:1-2, 4-5, 9.


p.18 *Cast your burden...* Ps. 55:23a; 145:18; 103:13; Isa. 66:13; Ps. 31:25.

p.23 *Eternal One, our God...* Ps. 8:2, 4-6
      *Bless the Eternal One...* Ps. 103:1-2, 8-11, 15-19, 22.
This booklet is a partner publication of Siddur Lev Chadash
a prayerbook containing services and prayers for
weekday and sabbaths, festivals and various occasions

©Liberal Judaism (ULPS), 2015
The Montagu Centre, 21 Maple Street, London W1T 4BE
Printed by JJ Copyprint