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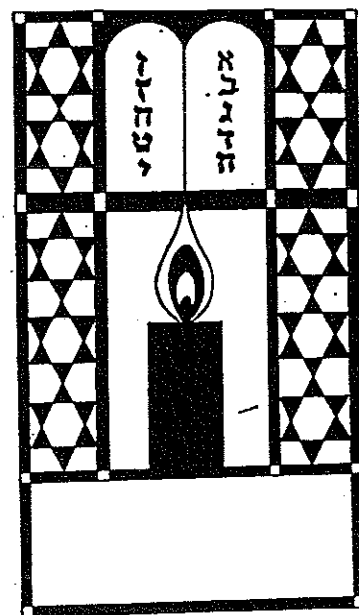
A Time of Remembrance
An Evening for Bereaved Jews
In preparation for
The Days of Awe

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Rabbi Stephanie Dickstein, LMSW- 212-399-2320 x224
Spiritual Care Coordinator

Robin Schoenfeld, LMSW- 212-399-2320 x211
Bereavement Program Coordinator

Shira Ruskay Center- 212-664-1632 www.shiraruskay.org
120 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019





Welcome

Song: *L'shanna Tova Tikatevu* May you be inscribed for a good year

For Love is Strong as Death

Bless us and heal us all.

It is a fearful thing

To love what death can touch.

A fearful thing

To love, hope, dream

To be:

To be

And to lose.

A thing for fool, this

And a holy thing

A holy thing

To Love

For your life has lived in me

Your laugh once lifted me

Your word was a gift to me

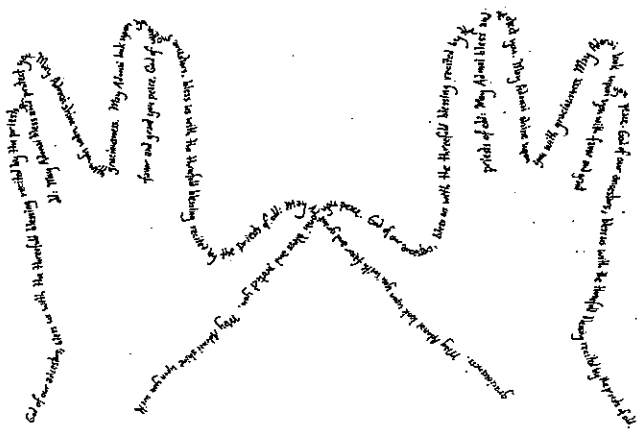
To remember this brings painful joy

'tis a human thing, love

a holy thing

to love what death has touched

Rabbi Chiam Stern



Season of Mortality

But tzedakkah/ charity, u'tshuva/ return, u'tfillah/ prayer

Can avert the severity of the decree

I sometimes think of the decree as the basic fact of our mortality. We are susceptible to sickness and pain, we suffer and die, we witness others doing the same. The decree is not a punishment; it simply is how life is. We avert its evil by living our life to the best of our ability. When death comes, it isn't God's punishment. God does judge us, but through our conscience, which teaches us to live better. Living as best we can is our most worthy response to our mortality, to our ignorance of what lies around the corner. The evil of the decree can not be avoided, but it can be transcended through the way we live- through returning to

our capacity for love, through prayer, which nourishes and inspires us, and through doing what is compassionate and just. Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg

Psalm 27

Seasons of Forgiveness – a meditation

Avinu Malkeynu, Chananu v'anneinu, ki ain banu maasim

Asay immanu, tzedakah v'chesed, v' hoshiaynu

Our parent, our sovereign, forgive us, for we don't have the deeds

Treat us with kindness and save and sustain us.

The Sweetness of Memory

For a sweet year, we dip an apple in honey and ask God for sweetness in the coming year. There is a deep aspect to the tradition's choice of honey as a sweetener. Honey is produced by bees, an unkosher animal which stings when it is disturbed, and humans steal it from their hives. Yet how much it is like our challenge in life. We can extract the pure from that which is impure, the healing from that which stings, and we can steal joy from life. In this time of remembering loss, we pray for the taste of sweetness, even from the bitterness of death.

Adapted from Rabbi Paul Teicher

Sharing a sweet memory or teaching

יִזְכוֹר

May it be Your will, our God and the God of our ancestors that this be a good new year, full of sweet memories of the past and sweet new things to come.

A note on Yizkor on Yom Kippur Day

APPLES IN HONEY

May it be your will, Eternal One
our God and God of our ancestors,
to renew us
with a good and sweet year.

Shalom

Shanna Tova u'm'tukah
A good and sweet year

תפוחים בדבש

יהי רצון מלפניך יהוה

אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו

שתחדש עלינו

שנה טובה ומתוקה:

וְעִמָּתָהּ יָרִים רֹאשִׁי

Now my head is lifted above

עַל אֹיְבֵי סְבִיבוֹתָי

the enemies who surround me,

וְאֶזְבְּחָהּ בְּאֵהָלִי וְזָבַחַי תְּרוּעָה

and I will offer shouts of joy in God's tent;

אֲשִׁירִיד וְאֶזְמַרְתָּה לִיהוָה:

I will sing chants to the Eternal.

שְׁמַע־יְהוָה קוֹלִי אֶקְרָא

Hear my voice, Eternal One, when I call,

וְחַנּוּנִי וְעֲנֵנִי:

be gracious and answer me.

לֵךְ אֲמַר לִבִּי בִקְשׁוּ פָנָי

"It is you I seek," my heart says,

אֶת-פְּנֵיךָ יְהוָה אֲבַקֵּשׁ:

"I seek your Presence, Eternal One."

אֶל-תַּחֲטֹתַי פָּנֶיךָ מִמּוֹנֵי

Do not hide your Presence from me,

אֶל תַּטְּ-בְּאַף עֵבְרֶךָ

do not turn away from me in anger;

עֲזֹרְתִי הִיזִיחַ

you have ever been my help.

אֶל-תִּשְׁטֹנְנֵנִי וְאֶל-תַּעֲזֹבֵנִי

Do not spurn or abandon me,

אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

my God of deliverance.

כִּי-אֲבִי וְאִמִּי עֲזָבוּנִי

Though my father and mother abandon me

וְיְהוָה יִאֲסָפֵנִי:

the Eternal One will take me in.

הוֹרֵנִי יְהוָה דְרֹכֶךָ

Teach me, Eternal One, your ways,

וְנִתְּנֵנִי בְּאַרְצְךָ מִישׁוֹר

guide me in the path of integrity

לְמַעַן שׁוֹרְרֵי:

that I might overcome my foe.

אֶל-תַּחֲנַנְנֵנִי בְנִפְשׁ אֶרֶץ

Do not give me over to my enemy,

כִּי קָמוּ-בִי עֲרֵי-יִשְׁמָר

for false witnesses arise against me,

וַיִּפְּחֵם חֲמָס:

those who testify viciously.

לֹלֵאָה הָאֲמַנְתִּי לְרַחֲמוֹת

So I trusted — to see the goodness

בְּטוֹב-יְהוָה בְּאֶרֶץ חַיִּים:

of the Eternal in the land of the living.

קְנוֹת אֶל-יְהוָה

Trust in the Eternal;

חֲזֵק וַיִּזְאַמֵּץ לְפָךָ

be strong and of good courage

וְקָמוּת אֶל-יְהוָה:

and trust in the Eternal.

From Rosh Hodesh Elul until Shemini Atzeret Psalm 27 is recited.

תְּהִלָּתִים כ"ז
PSALM 27

לְדָוִד.
Of David.

יְהוָה אֱוִירִי וַיִּשְׁעֵי
The Eternal is my light and deliverance,

מִמֶּנִּי אֵיירָא
whom shall I fear?

יְהוָה מַעֲזוֹ-חַיִּי
The Eternal is the strength of my life,

מִמֶּנִּי אֶפְחָד:
of whom shall I be afraid?

בִּקְרֹב עָלַי מְרֵעִים
When evildoers approach

לְאַכֵּל אֶת-בְּשָׂרִי
to consume me,

עָרִי וְאֵלֶי לִי
they, my adversaries and enemies,

תִּפְּחֵם בְּשִׁלְוֵי נִנְפְלֵי:
stumble and fall.

אִם-תַּחֲרַתָּה עָלַי מַחֲרָתָה
Were an army to encamp against me

לֹא-יִירָא לִבִּי
I would know no fear;

אִם-תִּקְוֶה עָלַי מִלְחָמָה
though war were waged against me,

בְּזֹאת אֲנִי בֹטָח:
I would retain my trust.

אֶחָד שְׂאֵלְתִי מֵאֵת-יְהוָה
One thing I ask of the Eternal,

אֲחַתְּהָ אֲבַקֵּשׁ—
only this do I seek —

שֶׁבִּתִּי בְּבֵית-יְהוָה
to dwell in the House of the Eternal

כָּל-יְמֵי חַיִּי
all the days of my life;

לְחַזֹּת בְּנִעֻם-יְהוָה
to behold the beauty of the Eternal

וּלְבַקֵּר בְּדִרְכָּיו:
and to frequent God's Temple.

כִּי יִצְפְּנֵנִי בְּסִכָּה
For God's *sukkah* will shelter me

בְּיָמֵי רָעָה
in days of evil;

וְסִתְּנֵנִי בְּסִתְּךָ אֱוִילִי
God's tent will conceal me,

בְּצִוֵּר יִרְוֹמְנֵנִי:
raising me upon a rock.

Edith and Manahel
Rabbi. Ron Afey

From
A Book of Jewish
Prayer and Meditations

THE PHRASE "time heals all wounds" can be very misleading. For those who hold their breath and hope that the steady procession of the calendar will end their pain, the promise of this phrase may eventually bring great disappointment. But for those who have learned to use time as a tool, the progression of the seasons provides many opportunities for healing.

In the midst of the joys of celebration, holidays may also bring up feelings and memories about people who have died, reminding us of their absence and recalling unresolved issues. Yizkor services come at these times of the year, when we are particularly vulnerable to the loss, regret, despair, and yearning that accompany grief. This is likely to be true even if the death happened long ago.

In the Yizkor service we remember those who have died, but the word "Yizkor" is actually a request that we make of God to remember the deceased. Remembrance, then, is something that we do in partnership with God.

Yizkor is a prayer which is said four times during the year on four specific Holy Days: Yom Kippur, Shemini Atzeret, Pesach, and Shavuot. The Yizkor prayer asks God to remember the soul of the deceased. Yahrzeit is a Yiddish word referring to the anniversary of the death of that person, according to the Jewish calendar (Sephardic Jews refer to this as Anos). The five days on which Yizkor and Yahrzeit are observed create a framework for acknowledging mourning's ongoing and changing needs.

The annual cycle of four Yizkor services provides a context for creative grief-work which encompasses the full range of mourning. The themes of the four holy days on which the prayer is recited correspond to major phases in the mourning cycle. Each day provides an opportunity to explore a different aspect of mourning through which we assess our growth and define the challenges which lie ahead.

Yizkor: A Time for You To Remember and To Heal

The Jewish calendar recognizes that the ongoing work of mourning is the task of a lifetime. We grow. We change. And we reevaluate past relationships and form new ones. This understanding of the ongoing needs of those who mourn is beautifully recognized in Yizkor and Yahrzeit.

Yizkor Prayers

(for a male)

יִכְוֹר אֱלֹהִים נִשְׁמַת . . . שְׂרָאֵל לְעֵלְמָהּ . בְּעֹבוֹר שְׂאֵנִי
נִוְדַר צְדָקָה בְּעֵדוּי, בְּשִׁכְרֵי זֵה, וְתָמָּה נִפְשֵׁי צֹרֵרָה בְּצֹרֵר
הַחַיִּים עִם נִשְׁמַת אַבְרָהָם, יַעֲקֹב וְרַחֵל, רַבִּיקָה,
רַחֵל וְלֵאָה, וְעִם שְׂאֵר צְדִיקִים וְצַדִּיקוֹת שְׁבִנּוּ עֵדֵנּוּ . אָמֵן .

Yizkor elohim nishmat . . . she'halach l'olamo. Ba'avur she'ani nodeir tz'daka ba'ado, b'shachar ze, t'hei nafscho tzrura bitz'ror hachayim im nishmot avraham, yitzchak v'ya'akov, sara, rivka, rachel, v'le'ah, v'im sh'ar tzadikim v'tzadkaniot she'b'gan eden. amen

May God remember the soul of . . . who has gone to his world. As I swear righteousness for him, because of this, may God bind his soul in the bond of life with the souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, and with the rest of the righteous whose piety is in the Garden of Eden. Amen.

(for a female)

יִכְוֹר אֱלֹהִים נִשְׁמַת . . . שְׂרָאֵל לְעֵלְמָהּ . בְּעֹבוֹר שְׂאֵנִי
נִוְדַר צְדָקָה בְּעֵדוּת, בְּשִׁכְרֵי זֵה, וְתָמָּה נִפְשֵׁי צֹרֵרָה בְּצֹרֵר
הַחַיִּים עִם נִשְׁמַת אַבְרָהָם, יַעֲקֹב וְרַחֵל, שָׂרָה, רַבִּיקָה,
רַחֵל וְלֵאָה, וְעִם שְׂאֵר צְדִיקִים וְצַדִּיקוֹת שְׁבִנּוּ עֵדֵנּוּ . אָמֵן .

Yizkor elohim nishmat . . . she'halcha l'olama. Ba'avur she'ani nodeir tz'daka ba'ada, b'shachar ze, t'hei nafscha tzrura bitz'ror hachayim im nishmot avraham, yitzchak v'ya'akov, sara, rivka, rachel, v'le'ah, v'im sh'ar tzadikim v'tzadkaniot she'b'gan eden. amen

May God remember the soul of . . . who has gone to her world. As I swear righteousness for her, because of this, may God bind her soul in the bond of life with the souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, and with the rest of the righteous whose piety is in the Garden of Eden. Amen.

From *Mitzvah and Mourning: A guided journal for
walking the mourner's path through grief to healing*
by Ame Benzer. (Jewish Lights Publishing)

Grieving During Holidays

By Lee Pollak, L.C.S.W.

Executive Director, NextSteps, A Sinai Program for Mourners



Bay Area
Jewish Healing
Center

It's Rosh Hashonah, the Jewish New Year. Soon after, it's Yom Kippur, the day of review and reflection. Everything about these holidays reminds us of family. Each has its traditions. We see parents with children, parents with parents, husbands with wives, sisters and brothers. We hear about – and may be included – in family gatherings that are annual events. We're urged by our tradition to reflect on how we live our lives. We observe the rituals of our heritage, and we're surrounded by the ambience of warmth and tradition. It seems as though everyone is as it has always been, and nobody is alone.

And then there's you – you, the mourner, the one who grieves, and who hurts, and for whom absolutely nothing seems as it has always been. As if each ordinary day isn't painful enough, you're now immersed in other people's togetherness and plans. L'Shana Tova?? Not for you, who can focus only on emptiness, sadness and pain.

Even if your loss was long in the past, these holidays encourage you to remember, and to review. This time of beginnings feels out of sync with your entire being. This time of focusing on the past, anticipating the future, and spending time with those we love feels like yet another affront to those of us with no hope, with no joy, and with endings rather than beginnings. We aren't anticipating the future. We can only mark time by how long it's been since someone important to us died. As others are overwhelmed with family and activity, we are overwhelmed with yearning and missing. We feel more alone than ever.

But death, as we all know, is not only a part of our life, but of everyone's life, and, with some thought, it is possible to approach this holiday time with a different set of expectations – ones that include comfort and peace and even hope. Even mourners can find solace in the meanings and customs of our Jewish holidays and all they entail. Even with the burden of grief that we carry, this can be a Shana Tova for us, too. Perhaps the following ideas can help:

1. **Plan Ahead.** Anticipatory preparation is a coping tool that can ease the impact of the

holiday itself. When you anticipate the worst, the actual event usually is not as bad as expected. No matter what, by thinking ahead, you've prepared yourself for some of the worst that could arise.

2. **Assess Traditions.** Be realistic about what you can handle. This is a time to set limits. Think about priorities and eliminate the pressures of I-have-to-do-it-this-way-because-I-always-have. If nothing else, death teaches impermanence. It pushes us to rethink all that we rely on, and allows us to redefine long held patterns. There are always new ways to approach old traditions, and whatever happens this year does not need to be an unchangeable blueprint for all future years.
3. **Balance Solitude and Sociability.** Grief is exhausting. It requires a lot of internal readjusting, and that takes a lot of energy. So intersperse 'alone' time to revitalize and to let down, with 'outside' time to be with others. Schedule your own special moments to let it all out. You may find that clears some space for comfort, even moments of pleasure.
4. **Acknowledge Memories.** Remember that grief does not let you choose between pain and pleasure. Rather, it's a state that involves learning how to manage the pain that exists, so that we can discover pleasures that also exist. Any mourner realizes that our loved ones are never forgotten. Relationships don't end with death, but instead become transformed. Memories are important tools for healing. Shared memories promote bonding between friends and family. Sorrow shared is sorrow diminished. Including your deceased loved one in your holiday plans can be creative and comforting. You can burn a special candle, read a special poem, put out a favorite picture. It does make a difference.

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5. **Don't Accept Silence.** Perhaps the greatest myth of all is that if the deceased is not spoken about, the mourner will not think of him or her. All of us who have mourned know this is ridiculous. When during a holiday period do we NOT think of those we have loved? How much more comforting it is to be able to share our recollections, than to be isolated in solitary thoughts. How wonderfully heartwarming to know that someone else is thinking of our loved one, and that they care too. By breaking codes of silence, mourners find they are not alone. In these ways, the deceased live on in our lives.

6. **Think About Others.** It's never only about you, even if it feels so. It's hard to realize that when we see the outsides of others, we may misread the insides. We can never really tell who, like ourselves, is hurting. You will be amazed at how much you can gain by reaching out. The benefits far outweigh the energy it takes, and it can be so rewarding. There are many ways to volunteer in our community, and so many who will welcome a kind word, or gesture or invitation.

7. **Seek Pleasure.** With the death of your loved one, some parts of your life have died, to, but not all. There are still people and things that are special and meaningful to you. Lots make you cry, but there can be laughter too. If you can't think of anything to make you feel good, try something that used to work, or try what someone else suggests. The important thing is to try.

8. **Use Resources.** In this community, they are all around you. There are professional as well as personal resources. You need not walk alone as you walk the Mourner's Path. Today's mourners become tomorrow's comforters who become the next day's mourners who become... That is the true cycle of the seasons and the years.

It's tempting to dread the Jewish holidays when one is a mourner, and yes, you will have some difficult moments. But it is possible to experience comfort and pleasure too. Try some of the above suggestions. Remember that if loss has become a part of your life, it's because you have loved and cared. These Jewish holidays may inspire us to review and remember, but they can also truly be new starts and new beginnings as well. We can come together in grief, as well as in hope as we wish for us all a "Shana Tova."