

# A Mourner's Kaddish

קדיש יתום

## Companion

This guide was created as a resource for the Death and Bereavement Outreach Initiative at Temple De Hirsch Sinai. Additional information on the Mourner's Kaddish may be found in the following publications or by consulting your rabbi.

*A Treasury of Comfort*

Rabbi Sidney Greenberg

*Saying Kaddish: How to Comfort the Dying, Bury the Dead & Mourn as a Jew*

Anita Diamant

*Grief in Our Seasons: A Mourner's Kaddish Companion*

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## Introduction

The Mourner's Kaddish, קדיש יתום, calls out to God from the depths of human tragedy. Jews recite this exaltation at the very moment when faith itself is shaken - upon the irreparable loss of one closest to the heart. We maintain the connection between the bereaved and the Holy One even while wrestling and struggling, and in doing so we link ourselves firmly to Jewish tradition.

Jewish custom is to recite the Mourner's Kaddish for a lost loved one daily during the periods of intensive mourning, *Shiva* (7 days) and *Sheloshim* (30 days). When grieving the loss of a parent, including step-parents and adopted parents, custom is to recite Kaddish for 11 months. There is comfort in the repetition of this ritual, yet sometimes we yearn for something new: a new way of expressing and understanding our grief.

Rabbi Sidney Greenberg wrote: "The Psalmist wisely spoke of walking 'through the valley of the shadow.' By the same token, however, the valley is open on both sides." May this Mourner's Kaddish Companion lend us the strength to traverse the valley.

There are stars whose light reaches the earth only after they themselves have disintegrated and are no more. And there are people whose brilliant memory lights the world long after they have passed from it. These lights which shine in the darkest night are those which illumine our paths.

*adapted from Hannah Senesh*

The Psalmist wisely spoke of walking "through the valley of the shadow." No road of life can detour around the valley. By the same token, however, the valley is open on both sides. Having entered into it, we need not make of it our permanent dwelling place. After we have lingered there for a while we can walk through it and out of it. To be sure, our scars may very well continue to throb sensitively when we experience the weariness that comes with this journey. The sense of loss may always remain with us, but the sharp pain subsides. With the Psalmist we can then affirm out of the depths of our own experience: "Though weeping lingers in the night, joy comes in the morning."

*adapted from Rabbi Sidney Greenberg*

## Recent Loss





## Recent Loss

This is the hall, this the hush, this the hour  
I rise to praise the Lord of all the living  
and the lonely dead.

I rise to praise;  
I raise my voice,  
I lift my head,  
despite the sick  
despite the dead  
despite the cries  
of pain, I rise  
to praise my Lord.

I praise the Lord  
whom all men praise  
with separate song.  
He made the earth,  
the sky, the throng  
of those who raise  
in prayer phrase  
their souls to Him.

This holy hour, this hush, this lull  
I yield to Him whose glory is beyond all praise  
and bless His name, and say Amen.

*Ruth Brin*

We can't pray that You make our lives free of problems; this won't happen and it is probably just as well. We can't ask You to make us and those we love immune to disease, because You can't do that. We can't ask You to weave a magic spell around us so that bad things will only happen to other people, and never to us....But people who pray for courage, for strength to bear the unbearable, for the grace to remember what they have left instead of what they have lost, very often find their prayers answered.

*adapted from Rabbi Harold Kushner*

It is hard to feel serene when our world is not complete, when those who once brought wholeness to our life have gone. Yet in the emptiness their passing leaves behind, we are not alone. For we have the companionship of the living, and even our loved ones who have died live on in our hearts, for what they were is part of what we have become.

*Rabbi Richard Levy*

## Recent Loss





## Difficult Loss

A good person,  
    Though take from us too soon,  
    Will rest in peace,  
For honor in old age  
    Does not come from length of life.  
Honor in old age  
    Does not come from length of years.  
Understanding  
    Is the gray hair of humanity;  
A blameless life  
    Is ripeness of age.  
Perfection in limited years  
    Is like living for many years.  
So a good person,  
    Though take from us too soon  
    Will rest in peace.  
Let us, then  
    With peace of mind,  
    Let that good soul rest.

The little innocent face looks so sublimely simple and confiding among the terrors of death. Crimeless and fearless, that little mortal passed under the shadow and explored the mystery of dissolution. There is death in its sublimest and purest image; no hatred, no hypocrisy, no suspicion, no care for the marrow ever darkened that little one's face; death has come lovingly upon it; there yearnings of love, indeed, cannot be stifled; for the prattle and smiles, and all the little world of thoughts that were so delightful, are gone forever. Awe, too, will overcast us in its presence; for we are looking on death. But we do not fear for the little lovely voyager; for the child has gone, simple and trusting, into the presence of its allwise Father....

*Leigh Hunt*

Is there sorrow greater than this? Where is there consolation? In the presence of boundless grief, the poet said "There is no longer a prayer on my lips." Yet we must pray, just as we must weep, because we can do no other. O God, be with us in our grief, until hope breaks through like a bud in a dark corner of the earth.

## Loss of a Child





# Memory

They are not dead who live  
In hearts they leave behind.  
In those whom they have blessed  
They live a life again,  
And shall live through the years  
Eternal life, and grow  
Each day more beautiful  
As time declares their good,  
Forgets the rest, and proves  
Their immortality.

*Hugh Robert Orr*

All life grows riper and fuller when rooted in the lives of upright men and women, when its soil is enriched by deeds of loving kindness and mercy. All life becomes lovelier when it is watered by streams of memory and fed by the cool springs of recollection and remembrance.

*Jacob P. Rudin*

In the rising of the sun and it 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 leaves and in the beauty of autumn,  
we remember them.  
In the begging 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.

# Memory



## In Memorium

The light of life is a finite flame.  
Like the Shabbat candles,  
life is kindled, it burns, it glows,  
it is radiant with warmth and beauty.  
But soon it fades, its substance is consumed,  
and it is no more.  
In light we see;  
in light we are seen.  
The flames dance and our lives are full.  
But as night follows day,  
the candle of our life burns down and gutters.  
There is an end to the flames.  
We see no more  
and are no more seen,  
yet we do not despair,  
for we are more than a memory  
slowly fading into the darkness.  
With our lives we give life.  
Something of us can never die:  
we move in the eternal cycle  
of darkness and death,  
of light and life.

## Mourner's 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, ba'agala  
u'vizman kariv. V'imru: Amen.  
Y'hei sh'mei raba m'varach  
l'alam ul'al'mei almay.  
Yitbarach v'yishtabach v'yitpa'ar  
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'shir'ata, tush'b'chata  
v'nechemata, da'amiran  
b'alma. V'imru: Amen.  
Y'hei sh'lama raba min  
sh'maya, v'chayim aleinu v'al  
kol Yisrael. V'imru: Amen.  
Oseh shalom bimromav, Hu  
ya'aseh shalom aleinu, v'al  
kol Yisrael. V'imru: Amen.*

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא.  
בְּעָלְמָא דִּי בְרָא כְרֻעֻתָּהּ,  
וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָּהּ, בְּחַיֵּיכוֹן  
וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל  
בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעִנְיָא  
וּבְזְמַן קָרִיב. וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.  
יְהִי שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ  
לְעָלָם וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמֵיָא.  
יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר  
וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא, וְיִתְהַדָּר  
וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ  
דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא,  
לְעֵלָא מִן כָּל בִּרְכָתָא  
וְשִׁירָתָא, תּוֹשֵׁבְתָא  
וְנִחְמָתָא, דְּאִמְרֵיכוֹן  
בְּעָלְמָא. וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.  
יְהִי שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן  
שְׁמַיָּא, וַחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ, וְעַל  
כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל. וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.  
עֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרְמָיו הוּא  
יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל  
כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל. וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.