

A MEMORIAL AND CONCLUDING SERVICE  
FOR THE YOM KIPPUR

Adapted from traditional sources  
Alvin J. Reines

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*(Music)*

### **Reader**

In this solemn hour when we consider the swift flight of the years, our thoughts turn to those who have been taken from our midst. On this day of Yom Kippur, we seek the strength to accept human finitude with firm and courageous faith. For man is feeble and perishable. His best laid plans are subject to disappointment and failure. Scarcely ushered into life, he begins his pilgrimage to the sepulcher. Through trial and suffering he hastens to the darkness of the grave. Thousands moisten their morsel of bread with tears and with the sweat of ceaseless toil, till their fondest hopes vanish in death. Destructive passions burn in the human breast and beguile to corruption and decay. Success and disappointment, pleasure and pain, mark the pathway of our earthly pilgrimage. Human life is a continual struggle against forces without and weakness within. Man prevails, only to succumb; he fails, only to renew the combat the next moment.

*(Music)*

### **Reader and Group**

The eye is never satisfied with seeing; endless are the desires of the heart. Nor mortal has ever had enough of riches, honor, and wisdom when death ended his career. Man devises new schemes on the grave of a thousand disappointed hopes. Discontent abides in the palace and in the hut, rankling alike in the breast of prince and pauper. Death finally terminates the combat, and grief and joy, success and failure, all are ended. Like a child falling asleep over his toys, man loosens his grasp on earthly possessions only when death overtakes him. The master and the servant, the rich and the poor, the strong and the feeble, the wise and the simple, all are equal in death. The grave levels all distinctions and makes the whole world kin.

## **Reader**

We are sojourners on earth and our days vanish like shadows. Yet the speedy flight of life, and the fact of the grave should not dismay us, but should teach us wisdom, wisdom to endow our fleeting days with abiding value. With the Psalmist we say, "So teach us to number our days that we may get us a heart of wisdom."

*(Music)*

## **Reader and Group**

These things do we remember: Through all the years ignorance like a monster has devoured our martyrs as in one long day of blood. Rulers have arisen through the endless years, oppressive, savage in their senseless power, filled with a sick thought: To make an end of the house of Israel.

## **Reader**

Our times are in Thy hands. One generation cometh into the world to be blessed with days of peace and safety, another endures the cruelties of persecution and war. Sorrowful and dangerous have been the days of our lives. We have lived through years of tyranny and destruction, and are well-schooled in sorrow and grief. We have seen the just defeated, the innocent driven into exile, and the righteous brought to a merciless martyrdom.

## **Reader and Group**

At this hour of memorial, we recall with reverence all men who have perished through the cruelty of war and oppression. Not punished for any individual guilt, but without discrimination, the aged and the young, the learned and the humble have been driven in multitudes along the road of pain and pitiless death. For no sin of theirs have they perished, but to satisfy the lust and greed of madness. They lie at rest in nameless graves in distant jungles and lonely fields. Yet they shall not be forgotten. We give them place beside the cherished memories of our own beloved. If we but learn the lesson of their lives, their deaths shall not have been in vain.

*(Music)*

*(Silent Devotion)*

## **Reader**

We remember with sorrow those whom death has taken from our midst.

*(Congregation Rises)*

## **Kaddish**

*(Congregation Is Seated)*

## **Reader**

The day is fading; the voice of Yom Kippur will soon be silent. From this house of Israel we are about to return to our homes, to seek peace in the communion of our family life. May the love we have within ourselves this Day enter into our homes so that they may become sanctuaries. Then will our dwelling places stand firm amidst the storms of life, refuges from the turbulence of daily existence.

## **Reader and Group**

Now at the end of day, we hope and trust for the inner light that knows no time. May the shadows that have darkened our spirits vanish, and the rays of serenity shine through the clouds. We have striven to become renewed in spirit and strengthened in will. May the courage and resolve we have sought enable us to shape our destinies according to our ideal desires.

*(Music)*

## **Closing Meditation**

# A Yom Kippur Meditation

Though life is troubled, we are here;  
Despite the sorrow, we are here.  
We know of pain and failure;  
Still we are here.  
For the sun can shine on a winter day,  
And a warm embrace bring tomorrow's hope.

We have come tonight to be forgiven and to forgive,  
To forgive ourselves, as we would forgive others.  
For this we celebrate Yom Kippur, to create atonements,  
Not to condemn, but to accept,  
Not to dwell on moods bitter and dark,  
But to bring peace to the deep places of the human soul.  
Amen.

Alvin J. Reines