

Yom Kippur Creative Martyrology 5772
Jewish Congregation of Brookville

MUSICAL INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Before we begin I would like to thank our cantor, Talya Smilowitz, for her creative efforts in fashioning this service and concert and for leading us so expertly in prayer during these High Holidays. It is a delight to lead services with our cantor. What a joy to have our hearts lifted by her voice. I would also like to thank our musicians, most notably Natalie Tenenbaum for not only accompanying us on this Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah but for writing all the musical arrangements, in particular those for this service. Natalie, as well, has found her way into our hearts. She is a blessing to the JCB. And to our cellist, Reenat Pinchus, and violinist, Christiana Liberis for adding the voices of their instruments to our prayers, we thank you.

For those who attended last year's creative martyrology service you will notice that the structure of this year's service is similar, but all of the contemporary stories, and most of the musical selections differ. We begin our service. We begin as our tradition does with the story of Rabbi Akiva.

Ele Ezkarah—these I do remember. With these words the Mahzor opens the traditional Yom Kippur service in which we remember the martyrs of our people, in particular Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Akiva was martyred nearly 2,000 years ago. He died with the words Shema Yisrael on his lips. As he was tortured by the Romans, his disciples asked, "Even now you sing praises to God?" He responded, "All my life I have sought the meaning of b'chol nafshecha—love the Lord your God with all your soul. Now I understand." His voice rang out as the flames engulfed his body, "Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad." His last breath co-mingled with the verse's final letter, the dalet.

A powerful story. Yet remote and far removed from our own modern experiences. Still in our own age there have been too many who have died with these words on their lips. In our own time we have seen countless martyrs of our people. Too many to recount by name. And so in this service and concert we have sought to add contemporary voices to Akiva's.

We have rewritten our tradition's service as well because today the very word martyr has become defamed. When someone murders men, women and children it is not martyrdom. So we seek as well to recover the ancient meaning of Kiddush hashem—sanctifying God's name, dying for the sake of heaven. The meaning of martyrdom is not to cause death but to inspire life. Sacrifices are meant to inspire, to call us to do better. These deaths and the retelling of these stories are intended to rekindle our faith and in particular our Jewish faith. This was the Mahzor's original purpose. This is our purpose as well.

We remember our history when we recall individual stories. And so this afternoon, we will remember a few of our martyrs' names in order to rekindle our memories and rekindle the flame in our Jewish souls. Each and every life is equally cherished. Certain names find their way into our hearts.

1. We remember Primo Levi.

The modern era is framed by the Holocaust. Our contemporary stories of martyrdom begin there.

Primo Levi was born in Turin, Italy on July 31, 1919 to middle class Jewish parents. His father worked for a manufacturing firm. His mother played piano and spoke fluent French. Both were well-educated and avid readers. Although the family was not observant, Primo became a bar mitzvah at a local synagogue. He excelled in school and studied at the university to become a chemist. When Mussolini formed an alliance with Nazi Germany, Italy began to enact racial laws. It was then in 1938 that Primo Levi discovered his Jewish identity. In fact his chemistry degree was stamped with the mark "of the Jewish race."

Then in 1943 when Germany took over Italy he and some friends fled to the mountains to join the partisans. Inexperienced and ill trained, they were soon captured. When he was told by his Italian captors that resistant fighters were executed he confessed to being Jewish. He was sent to an internment camp near Modena. All was relatively ok until the Germans took over the camp. Then these Italian Jewish prisoners were herded on to cattle cars and shipped to Auschwitz. Levi said of the long train trip, "We said to each other things that are never said among the living...everybody said farewell to life through his neighbor." Of these 650 prisoners only 20 survived the eleven months, until the Russian army liberated Auschwitz on January 18, 1945. Primo Levi was one of these survivors. As the Russians approached the SS hurriedly evacuated the camp and forced its Jewish prisoners on a long death march. Levi was spared this march because he had recently fallen ill with scarlet fever. His illness spared his life.

His number in the camp was 1-7-4-5-1-7. He wrote: "We have been baptized, we will carry the tattoo on our left arm until we die." In fact later in life when Primo Levi was the director of a paint factory and traveled to Germany for business, he wore short sleeve shirts in order to display his tattoo to his tormentors' unwitting, or perhaps knowing, accomplices. He published his first book in 1947. In Italian the title would be rendered to English as *If This is a Man*. Later, in 1961, the book would be translated into English under the title *Survival in Auschwitz*. His work would not be translated into Hebrew until after his death. Levi's chemistry appears to influence his literature. He writes with an almost scientific precision. He describes Auschwitz without feeling, in direct and seemingly objective terms. He argued that the camps required a new way of speaking. "Our language," he writes, "lacks words to express this offense, the

demolition of a man. In a moment with prophetic intuition, the reality was revealed to us: we had reached bottom. It is not possible to sink lower than this... Nothing belongs to us anymore; they have taken away our clothes, our shoes, even our hair; if we speak they will not listen to us, and if they listen, they will not understand. They will even take away our name; and if we want to keep it, we will have to find in ourselves the strength to do so, to manage somehow so that behind the name of us what we were still remains.”

No book gives voice to the horrors of Auschwitz better than Levi’s work. It leaves one cold. It strips away all remnants of sentimentality. If the book has a hero it is Lorenzo Perrone who shared his bread and soup ration with Primo Levi. Soon after the war Lorenzo succumbed to depression and alcoholism, dying on the streets in 1952. In 1957 when Primo and his wife, Lucia, had a son, they named him Renzo, almost certainly after the man who helped him survive Auschwitz. Lorenzo never asked for anything in return, yet everyday he shared his ration with Primo.

Primo Levi also battled depression and remained tortured by his experiences in Auschwitz throughout his life. On April 11, 1987 he fell down the stairs of his third story apartment in Turin. It was the same apartment in which he was born. The majority of scholars and writers, and even the town’s coroner, believe his death to be a suicide. He threw himself down the stairs. Yet he left no note. Questions remain. It seems darkly fitting. He was plagued by questions. He asked: How could a violinist become a callous taskmaster? How could a physician become a brutal murderer?

In an age when people commit suicide so that they might murder, we honor someone whose suicide affirms instead the questions of our age. Even Levi’s suicide is a resounding question mark. It is the question that continues to hover over our generation. Why do human beings commit such unspeakable evils against each other? How can we be capable of such demonic hate?

In addition to his many books, *If This Is a Man*, *The Truce* and *The Periodic Table*, Primo Levi also authored numerous poems. He writes:

You who live secure
In your warm houses
Who return at evening to find
Hot food and friendly faces:

Consider whether this is a man,
Who labors in the mud
Who knows no peace
Who fights for a crust of bread
Who dies at a yes or a no.
Consider whether this is a woman,

Without hair or name
With no more strength to remember
Eyes empty and womb cold
As a frog in winter.

Consider that this has been:
I commend these words to you.
Engrave them on your hearts
When you are in your house, when you walk on your way,
When you go to bed, when you rise.
Repeat them to your children.
Or may your house crumble,
Disease render you powerless,
Your offspring avert their faces from you.

The poem is entitled "Shema." Our generation's command is a question. We ask, "Is this a man? Can this be a woman?" It seems fitting to sing his poem in its original Italian. That was his language. We honor his memory with the music of his words. We are grateful to the cantor and Natalie for this original composition.

We remember Primo Levi.
SINGING OF "SHEMA"

2. We recall the memories of Dr. David Applebaum and his daughter, Naava.

Hannah Senesh, the Israeli poet and paratrooper who was killed when attempting to rescue fellow Jews from the Nazi slaughter in Hungary, once wrote: "There are stars whose radiance is visible on earth even though they have long been extinct. There are people whose brilliance continues to light the world even though they are no longer among the living. These lights are particularly bright when the night is dark. They light the way for humankind."

Such is the power of Naava and David Applebaum's story.

Naava Applebaum, age 20, was to be married on September 10, 2003 to Chanan Sand. They met in the Ezra religious youth movement and were engaged on the holiday of Purim. They decided to get married after Naava completed her national service. She worked at Zichron Menahem, an organization devoted to aiding children with cancer.

Her father, David, age 50, was an expert in emergency medicine. He grew up in Detroit and made aliya to Israel in 1981. In addition to his medical degree he also earned rabbinical ordination from Rabbi Aaron Soloveitchik. He spent many hours treating terror victims and gained a reputation for transforming emergency medicine. In one instance he operated on a shooting victim on Jerusalem's King George Street while

terrorists continued to fire their weapons. On September 9 he had just returned from the United States where he spoke at a symposium convened to mark the second anniversary of 9-11. There he said, "From one moment to the next, we never know what will happen in the ER, but it's in Jerusalem that real reality occurs."

The day before her wedding day Naava, went to the mikveh, ritual bath, as required by traditional Jewish law. As her family prepared for the wedding her father suggested they go to Café Hillel on Emek Refaim Street for a father-daughter talk. As they entered the café a terrorist detonated his bomb. Father and daughter were immediately killed. Five others were also killed. Over 50 people were injured.

Long ago the prophet Jeremiah prophesied:

The Lord declares:

"I will silence in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem
the sound of joy and happiness,
the voice of groom and bride.

Kol sason, v'kol simcha, kol chatan, v'kol kallah.

For the whole land shall fall to ruin. (Jeremiah 7:34)

Too often in our own age, rejoicing is silenced. The voice of the bride becomes Jeremiah's lament.

Naava was buried alongside her father in the Har HaMenuhot cemetery. Hundreds of friends and relatives traveling to Israel for the wedding arrived to discover that they would instead be attending the bride's funeral. On September 10th Naava and David Applebaum did not hear the words of the sheva brachot, the words where Jeremiah's lament is transformed into a prayer of hope.

"Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates happiness and contentment, love and companionship, peace and friendship, groom and bride. Let the mountains of Israel dance! Let the gates of Jerusalem ring with the sounds of joy, song, merriment, and delight—the voice of groom and the voice of the bride, the happy shouts of their friends and companions. We praise You, God, who brings bride and groom together to rejoice in each other." The lament remains a lament. It was not to become the prayer of hope and celebration."

Their souls were instead accompanied by El Malei Rachamim: "God, filled with compassion, grant infinite rest, in Your sheltering Presence, among the holy and pure, to the soul of Naava daughter of David, who has gone to her eternal home..."

At the funeral, Chanan placed in his fiancée's grave the wedding ring he had planned to place on her finger under the huppah. Yossi Klein Halevi said of the tragedy, "If a new book of the Bible were ever to be written about the modern return to Zion, it would have to include the story of the Applebaums."

Hannah Senesh wrote many poems. We are familiar with “Eli, Eli.” “My God, My God, may these things never end: the sand and the sea, the rush of the waters, the crash of the heavens, the prayer of man.” Less familiar is the poem: “LaMoot, To Die.” I imagine it was written for a friend who died far too young. Like Naava Applebaum, there were then too many young people who sacrificed their lives so that we might have a Jewish country, so that we might be a free people in our own land, in the land of Israel, in the city of Jerusalem.

To die... so young to die... no, no, not I.
I love the warm sunny skies,
Light, songs, shining eyes,
I want no war, no battle cry –
No, no...not I.

But if it must be that I live today
With blood and death on every hand,
Praised be God for the grace, I'll say
To live, if I should die this day...
Upon your soil, my land, my birthplace.

Again I want to thank the cantor and Natalie for setting this poem to original music.

Lamoot, lo, lo, ratzitz
To die, no, no, not I.

We remember the martyrdom of David and Naava Applebaum.
SINGING OF “LaMoot”

3. We recall the memory of David Mickey Marcus.

His story will be set to words and music. I thank Natalie for this original composition as we strive to give melody to the life of David Mickey Marcus. We pray that this musical piece helps to give meaning to his sacrifice.

MUSICAL INTRODUCTION

Marcus was born in Brooklyn to immigrant Jewish parents from Rumania. In Brooklyn’s Brownsville neighborhood he often had to defend himself against bullies. And so he learned to box and soon discovered that not only did he excel at athletics but also academics. In 1920 he was admitted to West Point. After graduating with honors he fulfilled his required years of military service. He then went to Brooklyn Law School. He spent most of the 1930’s prosecuting gangsters as a Federal attorney. Mayor LaGuardia named Marcus Commissioner of Corrections for New York City in thanks for his prosecution of Lucky Luciano.

In 1940 he recognized that war was imminent and voluntarily re-enlisted. After the attack on Pearl Harbor he served as executive officer to the military governor of Hawaii. In 1942 he was named the first commandant of the Army's new Ranger school, which developed innovative tactics for jungle warfare. On the eve of D-Day he voluntarily parachuted into Normandy with the 101st Airborne Division at the age of 41. With the defeat of Italy and then Germany it was Mickey Marcus who helped draw up the surrender terms. He became part of the occupation government in Berlin. Colleagues repeatedly identified him as one of the War Department's best brains.

His superiors charged him with planning how to sustain the starving millions now in liberated Europe. A major part of his responsibilities involved clearing out the Nazi death camps. It was this job and the experience of seeing first hand the evils of antisemitism that awakened his Jewish consciousness. He was named chief of the War Crimes Division, responsible for the Nuremberg trials which brought Nazi murderers to justice. Though never a Zionist he became convinced that the only hope for the survivors of European Jewry was the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine.

MUSICAL INTERPRETATION

In 1947 Marcus returned to civilian life. A few months later the United Nations authorized the division of Palestine into Jewish and Palestinian states. David Ben Gurion asked Marcus to recruit an American army officer to serve as a military advisor to Israel's emerging army. Marcus pleaded with a number of colleagues but they refused so instead he decided to volunteer himself. The US War Department eventually granted Marcus permission to help the nascent Jewish state. They insisted that he not use his own name or rank and disguise his military record.

With the new name of Michael Stone, Mickey Marcus arrived in Tel Aviv in January 1948. In a few short months this American Jewish soldier transformed an underground organization into a regular national army. Mickey designed a command structure for the army and wrote training manuals, adapting his experiences at the Ranger school. He identified Israel's weakest points as the scattered settlements in the Negev and the new, Western regions of Jerusalem. Thanks to his planning and training Israel was ready for the attacks of Arab armies when the Jewish leadership declared independence in May 1948. His hit and run tactics, for example, kept the Egyptian army in the Negev off balance.

He planned the Palmach's attack on the critical Latrun fortress handed over to the Jordanian Legion from the British army. Unfortunately the attack failed and the road to Jerusalem remained closed, preventing critical supplies from reaching the beleaguered city's defenders. He then ordered the construction of the so-called Burma Road to bypass the main roads and rescue the city. Days before the United Nations negotiated a

cease fire Marcus' road reached Jerusalem, thus ensuring that the city always remained a part of the modern State of Israel.

For his efforts Ben Gurion promoted Mickey Marcus to the rank of Lieutenant General, the first general in Israel's history. It would not be an exaggeration to say that an American Reform Jew became Israel's first general since Judah Maccabee.

MUSICAL INTERPRETATION

Six hours before the cease fire began in the village of Abu Gosh, nearby Jerusalem, Marcus found himself unable to sleep. He walked beyond the guarded perimeter wrapped in a bed sheet to ward off the cool, desert evening. A sentry saw a white-robed figure approaching. The sentry shouted in Hebrew. Marcus responded in English. Neither understood the other. The young 18-year-old soldier fired a single, fatal shot. Yet another death from friendly fire. How many heroes are inadvertently killed by their brethren's hands? How many mistakes lead to needless grieving? How many accidental deaths fashion martyrs to add to our litanies?

Moshe Dayan accompanied Mickey Marcus' body to the United States for burial. His is the only grave at West Point's cemetery for an American killed while fighting under the flag of another country. His stone reads: "Colonel David Marcus—A Soldier for All Humanity." A memorial plaque is located in his synagogue in Brooklyn. It reads: "Killed in action in the hills of Zion while leading Israeli forces as their supreme commander in the struggle for Israel's freedom... Dedicated by his fellow members of Union Temple of Brooklyn December 9, 1949."

Hollywood would immortalize his story in the 1966 movie, "Cast A Giant Shadow," starring Kirk Douglas. Kibbutz Mishmar David and the Tel Aviv neighborhood of Neve David are named for him. Brooklyn's Colonel David Marcus Memorial Playground on Avenue P is also named for him. Ben Gurion said, "He was the best man we had."

How often do we forget how our lives are intertwined? How Israel and American Jewry are linked to each other? How we must serve each other? How we give life to each other?

MUSICAL INTERPRETATION

4. We remember Alona Abraham and Eric Eisenberg.

How often do we forget how our lives are intertwined?

Ten years ago our very own city was struck by terror. The memories of that day still haunt our dreams. On September 11, 2001 Alona Abraham and Eric Eisenberg lost their lives on that terrible and dark day.

Eric and Alona never met face to face. But their fates came together in the South Tower ten years ago. An American and an Israeli, martyred on 9-11.

On that day the skies of our city were blackened. It was a beautiful early fall day. The sky, a perfect blue. By 9:03 am the sky was darkened by clouds of smoke and ash. By 10:28 am the twin towers were no more. If you were not a New Yorker on that day, you became one after. The towers that served as beacons of the American dream, suggesting both hope and prosperity, were destroyed in mere hours. 9-11 continues to shape our world and our world view. 2,976 souls were murdered. Fathers, mothers, sons, daughters. Jews, Christians and Muslims. Who can forget the photos and stories detailed for one year in the Times? Who can forget the pictures of firefighters filling rows upon rows in our newspapers? Nearly 3,000 murdered. Millions more terrorized.

Many of those who lost their lives on 9-11 frantically called loved ones before they died. They left voice mail messages on answering machines and cell phones.

As Ladder Company 13 rolled out of its firehouse towards the World Trade Center, Captain Walter Hynes called home. He left a voice mail for his wife. "Honey, it's real bad. I don't know if we'll make it out. I want to tell you that I love you and I love the kids." Melissa Hughes was trapped on the 101st floor. She called home. Her husband of one year was asleep in their bed in San Francisco. He never heard the phone ring. He occasionally listens to the message. "Sean, it's me. I just wanted to let you know I love you and I'm stuck in this building in New York. A plane hit the building, or a bomb went off. We don't know, but there's lots of smoke and I just wanted you to know that I love you always. Bye."

Eric Eisenberg grew up nearby in Plainview. He was Mr. Fix It, repairing palm pilots and computers. His friends would try to play jokes on him and make slight changes to his computer to see if he noticed. He always did. He always responded with a big, infectious laugh. Before that fateful day he purchased a new blue BMW. He was so excited that on the day he picked up the car he wore a shirt of the same color.

After the first plane hit the north tower he called his mother and grandmother. He promised them that he was evacuating, but his mother Paula Shapiro knew better. She said, "I knew he was there trying to get other people out." Eric Eisenberg was 32 years old on September 11, 2001.

At that same moment Alona Abraham, age 30, also lost her life when her flight, United Airlines 175, struck the south tower where Eric Eisenberg worked.

Seeing America was one of Alona's dreams. She liked the weather, shopping and cities. She started this vacation in the States in Boston where she went whale watching and walking in Cambridge. She called home and said, "Eema I'm having a great time." Her

mom said she was laughing and talking about going on picnics and sightseeing with friends. She planned to return again.

She was the eldest of three children. Her parents immigrated to Israel from Bombay. Alona worked long hours at Applied Materials where she was an industrial engineer. She took her vacations seriously as well, traveling to Paris, Amsterdam and even to Africa for a safari. She traveled alone. She was independent and religious, even keeping kosher wherever she went. These vacations provided her with a necessary respite. For a few weeks she could escape the bombings and shootings at home in Israel.

The song we dedicate to Alona and Eric was written by our cantor. Its chorus is structured around the biblical book of Lamentations. 2,500 years ago, the prophet Jeremiah lamented the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians with the words:

Alas!

Lonely sits the city

Once great with people!...

Bitterly she weeps in the night,

Her cheek wet with tears.

There is none to comfort her

Of all her friends.

All her allies have betrayed her;

They have become her foes..."

Words spoken millennia ago. Still they touch a chord within our souls.

With the words of this song we remember Alona Abraham and Eric Eisenberg.

SINGING OF "BITTERLY SHE WEEPS"

5. We remember Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner

Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner were two individuals whose memories as well were joined in death. It was the summer of 1964, two young Jewish New Yorkers, ventured to Mississippi, to join the Congress of Racial Equality's Freedom Summer and help register African Americans to vote. They were murdered by Ku Klux Klan members, along with James Earl Cheney, a fellow civil rights activist.

Andrew Goodman was raised on the Upper West Side. He graduated from the Walden School and was attending Queens College at the time of his murder. He was the middle son of liberal Jews. His family was devoted to intellectual pursuits and social justice. In mid June he joined Michael Schwerner in Meridian, Mississippi.

Michael Schwerner graduated from Pelham High School. His mother was a science teacher at New Rochelle High School, his father, a businessman. He graduated from

Cornell, where he was responsible for integrating the school's chapter of AEPi. He was a student at Columbia's School of Social Work at the time of his murder. He and his wife Rita, were active in the Congress of Racial Equality. In time he became the director of the community center in Meridian. He was in fact the first white to be posted outside of Jackson.

Schwerner had been targeted by the Ku Klux Klan. He raised the ire of its members when he went door to door urging the support of white blue collar workers. He also organized a boycott of a popular store until it hired its first African American. He was known by his friends as Micky.

On June 21st he, Andrew Goodman and James Earl Cheney set out to Philadelphia, Mississippi to investigate the burning of Mount Zion Methodist Church. On their return they were arrested by the deputy sheriff for an alleged traffic violation. They were fined and told to leave the county. As they continued to drive back to Meridian they were stopped by two carloads of Ku Klux Klan members. Goodman and Schwerner were shot and killed. Cheney was beaten and then shot. Their bodies were not found for two months.

The sheriff and six conspirators were convicted of civil rights violations but not murder. Two defendants were acquitted because of a deadlocked jury. It was not until forty years later that the murderer was convicted, but then only on three counts of manslaughter.

In sharing remembrances we could have recounted the memories of American Jewish soldiers, even a Jewish recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor. There are many such examples. We have many American Jewish heroes, and far too many who made the ultimate sacrifice. They died in Normandy and Iwo Jima, Gettysburg and Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq. But they are not our only martyrs. In remembering the martyrs of our people we must not only remember soldiers but also those who struggled to better our world and defend our nation in different ways. We must as well recall the martyrs of the civil rights struggle. They were martyrs who never carried a weapon but carried within their hearts the inspiration of the prophets.

We remember two New York Jews who sought to better our world. It seems fitting that in recalling the memory of Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner we sing a Gospel song. It was written by the all female acappella group, "Sweet Honey in the Rock."

I don't know how my mother walked her trouble down
I don't know how my father stood his ground
I don't know how my people survive slavery
I do remember, that's why I believe...

My God calls to me in the morning dew
The power of the universe knows my name
Gave me a song to sing and sent me on my way
I raise my voice for justice, I believe

We recall the martyrdom of Micky Schwerner and Andrew Goodman.

SINGING OF "I Remember, I Believe"

6. Ani Maamin

And now at the conclusion of this service, Eleh Ezkerah—These I do remember, we sing the song that best exemplifies our faith, Ani Maamin. Centuries ago Moses Maimonides penned these words as part of his thirteen principles of faith, "Ani maamin—I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the messiah, and even though he delays, I still believe."

Even these words are tinged with the pain of loss. It is said that the tune to which these words are most often sung was composed by the Hasidic rebbe, Reb Azriel David, in a cattle car as he was transported to Treblinka. The tune was taken up by other Hasidim. They too sang this song as they were being herded into the gas chambers. Soon the song came to be adopted by other Jewish prisoners and became known as the Hymn of the Camps. We believe with perfect faith.

The question of our generation lingers. Perfect faith?, we ask. Primo Levi embodies our questions. For in our generation the very nature of martyrdom has been transformed. No longer do people knowingly go to their death. The Jewish philosopher, Emil Fackenheim, remarked that the Holocaust even robbed Jews of the choice to be martyred. Our heroes were not told like prior generations, "Convert or die." They were instead marched to the gas chambers. They were walked to their deaths. Can they properly be called martyrs? They did not go willingly, or even knowingly, into the fire. They were thrown in. These fires cast them as accidental martyrs. Some earned this title when traveling on vacation or sitting at an office desk in Manhattan. Others we call martyr because they ventured out for a cup of coffee or walked through the hills of Jerusalem on a late night stroll. None knowingly chose Kiddush Hashem. None chose death to sanctify God's name.

If martyrdom is only a matter of choice then indeed our generation has witnessed both its transformation and defamation. If the meaning of this term is instead about those who died because of their faith, because they were Jews, then our generation has too many martyrs to enumerate. If the intention of our tradition's service is that we gain inspiration, then let these deaths not be in vain. Let us grant meaning to their sacrifices. Let our faith gain renewed inspiration and vigor. May our commitment never waver. Intentional or not their sacrifices can indeed provide us with strength.

We believe. Again and again we say, we believe with perfect faith. We stand with generations before us. We remember those who died in order to sanctify God's name.

SINGING OF "ANI MAAMIN"

7. YIZKOR

We turn now to the Yizkor service, when we recall our own personal losses.

There are two types of tears.

There are the tears of pain. These tears burn our cheeks when death stands before us, when the weight of the heartache and loss feel crushing. These are the tears of despair when we feel like we will never be able to live without our loved one. We look back at these tears and wonder how we ever summoned the strength to place a shovel of dirt into our loved one's grave.

Later the tears of memory begin to roll down our cheeks. These tears do not sting. Instead they are sweet. We find that we laugh and smile when recalling stories of our father or mother, husband or wife, brother or sister, child or grandparent. These tears bring with them the memories of loved ones. They hurt, but do not sting. Their taste is not the salt of bitterness but the sweetness of memory.

There will always be tears. Some will sting. Others will be sweet. These later tears will bring with them memories, stories, images, pictures, words and values. We cry when we remember. But we also gain strength from these tears. Our tears are no longer incapacitating, but ennobling.

May God help us transform all of our bitter tears into the sweet tears of memory.

SINGING OF "WANTING MEMORIES"

We turn from the contemporary to the songs and prayers of our tradition.

Rabbi Steven Moskowitz
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