

Unveiling Ceremony



CONGREGATION BETH EL

Suggested Order of Prayers for an Unveiling

1. Gathering / Why We Are Here
2. Psalm 23
3. The covering is removed.
4. Dedication
5. *El Malei Rachamim* is read.
6. *Kaddish* is recited.
7. The family can add any prayers, reflections, poems, etc. that they choose.

*This Unveiling Ceremony resource was created by
Congregation Beth El of Montgomery County with special thanks to
the Jewish Cemetery Association of MA.*

Psalm 121

I will lift up my eyes unto the mountains.
What is the source of my help?
My help comes from Adonai,
Maker of heaven and earth.
Ever watchful, You guide my steps
Guardian of Israel, You never slumber or sleep.
Always near us, You protect us
In daylight and moonlight.

Psalm 23

Eternal One, 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 through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
For You are with me;
With rod and staff You comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You have anointed my head with oil; my cup is overflowing.
Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
And I shall dwell in Your house forever.

Dedication

The practice of erecting a monument over the grave has its roots in the Torah.

“And Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath which is in Bethlehem, and Jacob erected a tombstone on Rachel’s grave.” (Genesis 5:19-20)

The placing of a monument (*matzevah*) can take place anytime after *Shloshim* (first 30 days after burial) and some aim for before the first *Yahrzeit* (one full year on the Hebrew calendar from the date of death). This would also hold true for the unveiling of a memorial tablet.

Despite widespread practice, there is no religious obligation to hold a public unveiling. Just as our tradition provides for the expression of mourning, so does it require that we resume our normal life pattern with the end of the mourning period so that we may weave new patterns of interpersonal relationships. The unveiling can be part of the healing process, though it is not a second funeral. It is a moment to mark the passage of time

We are reminded that the tomb of Moses had no unveiling ceremony nor even a marker. Yet the spirit of Moses continues to be an inspiration to his descendants.

The unveiling procedure, if it is desired, should be a private family affair and has a minimum of ritual. The recitation of a psalm and the Mourner’s Kaddish, or even silence in the presence of the intimate family circle is always appropriate as an expression of tribute. The presence of clergy is not essential.

Dedication

O God, in whose hands are the souls of all the living, we stand at the grave of _____, who has been taken from our family circle. We thank You for all that was true and good in their life, for all that was sweet and inspiring in their character.

May this hour, consecrated to the memory of _____, bring its message of consolation to us. May Your love comfort and sustain us so that, walking in the valley of the shadow of death, we may see Your light.

As we dedicate this memorial, help us, O God, to honor _____, by our actions and our aspirations. May their memory lead us to love You with all our hearts. Then, indeed, will that memory be a blessing.

In the name of the family of _____ and in the presence of relatives and friends, we consecrate this memorial as a sign of love and respect.

*(Covering is removed from the memorial
by a member of the family.)*

Memories may be shared at this time.

El Malei Rachamim

The *El Malei Rachamim*, a memorial prayer with profound emotional effect, is often chanted at funerals, unveilings and at cemetery visitations. Recitation in Hebrew and / or English with the deceased's Hebrew name is common.

El Malei Rachamim

Transliteration

El malei rachamim, shochen bam'romim, hamtzei m'nucha n'chona tachat kanfei ha-sh'china, b 'ma'alot k'doshim u-t'horim k'zohar ha-raki'a mazhirim, et nishmat _____ (insert name of the deceased)

For a male:

shehalach l'olamo. B'gan eiden t 'hei m'nuchato. Lachen, ba 'al ha-rachamim, yastirehu b'seter k'nafav l'olamim, v'yitz'ror bitz'ror ha-chayim et nishmato. Adonai hu nachalato, v'yanu'ach b'shalom al mishkavo. V'nomar: Amen.

For a female:

shehalecha l'olamah. B'gan eiden t 'hei m'nuchatah. Lachen, ba 'al ha-rachamim, yastireha b'seter k'nafav l'olamim, v'yitz'ror bitz'ror ha-chayim et nishmatah. Adonai hu nachalatah, v'tanu'ach b'shalom al mishkavah. V'nomar: Amen.

English Translation

O God full of compassion, Eternal Spirit of the universe, grant perfect rest under the wings of Your Presence to our loved one who has entered eternity. Master of Mercy, let them find refuge forever in the shadow of Your wings, and let their soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life. The Eternal God is their inheritance. May they rest in peace, and let us say: Amen.

El Malei Rachamim

אל מלא רחמים, שוכן במרומים,
המצא מנוחה נכונה, תחת כנפי השכינה,
במעלות קדושים וטהורים, בזוהר הרקיע מזהירים,
את נשמת _____ (insert name of the deceased)

For a male:

שְׁהַלֵּךְ לְעוֹלָמוֹ.
בְּגֵן עֵדֶן תִּהְיֶה מְנוּחָתוֹ,
לְכֵן בְּעַל הַרְחָמִים יִסְתִּירָהוּ בְּסִתְרֵי כְּנָפָיו לְעוֹלָמִים,
וַיִּצְרֹר בְּצִרּוֹר הַחַיִּים אֶת נִשְׁמָתוֹ.
יִי הוּא נִחְלָתוֹ,
וַיְנַיֵּחַ בְּשָׁלוֹם עַל מִשְׁכְּבוֹ, וְנֹאמֵר: אָמֵן.

For a female:

שְׁהַלִּכָה לְעוֹלָמָהּ.
בְּגֵן עֵדֶן תִּהְיֶה מְנוּחָתָהּ,
לְכֵן בְּעַל הַרְחָמִים יִסְתִּירָהּ בְּסִתְרֵי כְּנָפָיו לְעוֹלָמִים,
וַיִּצְרֹר בְּצִרּוֹר הַחַיִּים אֶת נִשְׁמָתָהּ.
יִי הוּא נִחְלָתָהּ,
וַתְנַיֵּחַ בְּשָׁלוֹם עַל מִשְׁכְּבָהּ, וְנֹאמֵר: אָמֵן.

Mourner's Kaddish

The Mourner's Kaddish is ideally recited in the presence of a minyan (10 Jewish adults).

English Translation

Magnified and sanctified be Your name, O God, throughout the world, which You have created according to Your will. May Your sovereignty be accepted in our own days, in our lives, and in the life of all the House of Israel, speedily and soon, and let us say, Amen.

May Your great name be blessed forever and ever.

Exalted and honored, adored and acclaimed be Your name, O Holy One, blessed are You, whose glory transcends all praises, songs, and blessings voiced in the world, and let us say, Amen.

Grant abundant peace and life to us and to all Israel, and let us say, Amen.

May You who establish peace in the heavens, grant peace to us, to Israel, and to all the earth, and let us say, Amen.

May God comfort you among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem, and let us say, Amen.

Mourner's Kaddish

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא. בְּעֻלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ,
וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ, בְּחַיִּיכוּן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוּן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית
יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעֻגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וְלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא.

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמַם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר
וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְקַדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא,
לְעֻלָּא מִן כָּל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא,
דְאָמְרוּ בְּעֻלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא, וְחַיִּים טוֹבִים עָלֵינוּ
וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ, וְעַל כָּל
יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְעַל כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

Transliteration

Yit-gadal v'yit-kadash sh'may raba b'alma dee-v'ra che-ru-tay,
ve'yam-lich mal-chutay b'chai-yay-chon uv'yo-may-chon uv-
cha-yay d'chol beit Yisrael, ba-agala u'vitze-man ka-riv, ve'imru
amen.

Y'hay sh'may raba me'varach le-alam uleh-almay alma-ya. Yit-
barach v'yish-tabach, v'yit-pa-ar v'yit-romam v'yit-nasay, v'yit-ha-
dar v'yit-aleh v'yit-halal sh'may d'koo-d'shah, b'rich hoo. layla
meen kol beer-chata v'she-rata, toosh-b'chata v'nay-ch'mata,
da-a meran b'alma, ve'imru amen.

Y'hay sh'lama raba meen sh'maya v'cha-yim aleynu v'al kol
Yisrael, ve'imru amen.

O'seh shalom beem-romav, hoo ya'ah-seh shalom aleynu v'al
kol Yisra-el, ve'imru amen.

They Are Gone

By Anonymous

You can shed tears that they are gone,
Or you can smile because they lived.

You can close your eyes and pray that they will come back,
Or you can open your eyes and see all that they have left.

Your heart can be empty because you see them,
Or you can be full of the love that you shared.

You can turn back on tomorrow and live yesterday,
Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.

You can remember them and only that they are gone,
Or you can cherish their memory and let it live on.

You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back,
Or you can do what they would want:

Smile,
Open your eyes,
Love, and
Go on...

Ecclesiastes 3

To everything there is a season;

A time for everything under the sun.

A time to be born and a time to die,

A time to laugh and a time to mourn,

A time to seek and a time to lose.

This is a time we gather to remember
someone who gave meaning to our lives.

This is the time we recall the bonds that hold us,
the love we shared the memories that sustain us.

We Remember Them...

By Rabbis Sylvan Kames and Jack Riemer

At the rising of the sun and at its going down,
We remember them.

At the blowing of the wind and the chill of winter,
We remember them.

At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring,
We remember them.

At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer,
We remember them.

At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn,
We remember them.

At the beginning of the year and when it ends,
We remember them.

As long as we live, they too will live;
for they are now a part of us,
as 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 joy we crave to share,
We remember them.

When we have decisions that are difficult to make,
We remember them.

When we have achievements that are based on theirs,
We remember them.

As long as we live, they too will live;
for they are now a part of us,
as we remember them.

When I Die

By Merrit Malloy

When I die give what's left of
me away
To children and old men that
wait to die.

And if you need to cry,
Cry for your brother walking
the street beside you.
And when you need me, put
your arms around anyone
And give to them what you
need to give to me.

I want to leave you something,
Something better than words
or sounds.

Look for me in the people I've
known or loved,
And if you cannot give me
away,
At least let me live in your
eyes and not on your mind.

You can love me best by let-
ting hands touch hands,
And by letting go of children-
that need to be free.

Love doesn't die, people do.
So, when all that's left of me
is love,
Give me away.

Do not stand at my grave and weep,
I am not there, I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow;
I am the diamond glints on the snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain;
I am the gentle autumn's rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush,
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft star that shines at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry.
I am not there; I did not die.

—Anonymous