

DEDICATING A MARKER (UNVEILING)

*“Over her grave Jacob set up a pillar;
it is the pillar at Rachel’s grave to this day”*
(Genesis 35:20)

Introduction

It is an ancient custom in Judaism to set a marker (tombstone or plaque) at the head of the grave to honor our departed. The marker is placed so that our dead will not be forgotten and so that we will know our loved ones’ burial sites.

This custom is mentioned many times in the Talmud. In the days of the Talmud it had already been the established custom to engrave inscriptions on markers. There are differing customs with respect to when a marker is put up or “unveiled.” While some observe the custom of not putting up the marker until twelve months after death, others may prefer to hold the unveiling anywhere between the end of *shloshim* (the 30 day morning period directly following burial) up to the one year anniversary of the death.

It is customary to cover the marker with a veil or some other kind of covering on the day of the ritual. The stone or plaque is “unveiled” during the ceremony.

It is also traditional to leave a small stone at the gravesite during a visit. Unlike flowers that die, a stone represents our undying memory for our loved ones who have left this world.

Ceremony

I suggest choosing a few of the readings on pages 2-4 to recite at the beginning of the ceremony. Choose readings (either those included here or others with which you are familiar) that you find meaningful and that resonate with you in connection with the deceased. Follow the readings with some personal words and/or reading(s) on page 5. After uncovering the marker, the final act of the ritual is the recitation of the קַדְשׁ (kaddish—sanctification) on pages 7 and 8. Prior to the kaddish, you may wish to recite the traditional memorial prayer, אֵל מָלֵא רַחֲמִים (Eil Malei Rahamim -- God Full of Compassion) on page 6, in either Hebrew and/or English. (In many cases, the cemetery will provide booklets containing the kaddish and other readings appropriate for an unveiling if you request them.)

If you have any questions, please feel free to give me a call at **818-832-7447**. I am sure that you will find doing this ceremony yourself to be a very meaningful and empowering experience.

Rabbi Janet Offel
Kaiser Hospice
Valley Service Area

Dedication of a Marker Consecration of a Memorial

Begin with one or more of the following passages through page 4 (or other readings that you find appropriate), then continue with personal words and/or reading(s) on page 5:

Psalm 23

יְהוָה רֹעִי לֹא אֶחְסָר׃ בְּנְאוֹת
דָּשָׁא יְרַבִּיצֵנִי עַל־מֵי מְנוּחֹת
יְנַהֲלֵנִי׃ נַפְשִׁי יִשׁוּבָב וְנַחְנִי
בְּמַעְגְלֵי־צְדָק לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ׃ גַּם
כִּי־אֵלֶךְ בְּגִיא צְלֻמוֹת לֹא־אִירָא
רָע כִּי־אַתָּה עִמָּדִי שְׁבֹטְךָ
וּמִשְׁעֲנֶתְךָ הִמָּה יְנַחֲמֵנִי׃ תַּעֲרֹךְ
לְפָנַי שִׁלְחוֹן נֶגֶד צָרָרִי דֹשְׁנֶת
בְּשִׁמּוֹן רֹאשִׁי כּוֹסֵי רְנוּחָה׃ אֵךְ טוֹב
וְחֹסֵד יִרְדְּפוּנִי כָּל־יְמֵי חַיִּי וְשִׁבְתִּי
בְּבַיִת־יְהוָה לְאָרְךָ יָמִים׃

Eternal God, 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. Yes, 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 overflows. Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Eternal God forever.

Psalm 121

אֲשָׂא עֵינַי אֶל־הַהָרִים מֵאַיִן יָבֹא
עֲזָרִי׃ עֲזָרִי מֵעַם יְהוָה עֲשֵׂה
שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ׃ אֵל־יִתֵּן לְמוֹט
רַגְלְךָ אֶל־יְנוּם שְׁמֹרְךָ׃ הִנֵּה לֹא
יְנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל׃
יְהוָה שְׁמֹרְךָ יְהוָה צִלְּךָ עַל־יַד
יְמִינְךָ׃ יוֹמָם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לֹא־יִכְפֹּה
וְיָרֵחַ בַּלַּיְלָה׃ יְהוָה יִשְׁמְרֶךָ
מִכָּל־רָע יִשְׁמֹר אֶת־נַפְשְׁךָ׃
יְהוָה יִשְׁמֹר־צִאתְךָ וּבואְךָ
מִמְעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם׃

I lift up my eyes to the mountains; Where will I find my help? My help is the Eternal One, maker of heaven and earth. God will keep your foot from slipping, Your Guardian does not slumber. Behold, the Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. The Eternal One is your Shield, The Eternal One is your shade at your side. The sun will not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The Eternal One is your shield against evil, the Guardian of your spirit. The Eternal One is your shield, when you come in and when you go out, now and forever.

Psalm 15

יְהוָה מִי־גֹוֹר בְּאַהֲלֶךָ מִי־שָׁכֵן
בְּהַר קֹדְשֶׁךָ; הוֹלֵךְ תַּמִּים וּפְעֹל
צְדָק וְדָבַר אֱמֶת בְּלִבּוֹ; לֹא־רָגַל
עַל־לְשׁוֹנוֹ לֹא־עָשָׂה לְרַעְהוֹ רָעָה
וְחָרְפָה לֹא־נָשָׂא עַל־קִרְבּוֹ; נְבִיזָה
בְּעֵינָיו נִמְאָס וְאֶת־יְרֵאֵי יְהוָה
יַכְבִּד נִשְׁבַּע לְהִרְעֹ וְלֹא יִמָּר;
כִּסְפוֹ לֹא־נָתַן בְּגִשְׁף וְשָׁחַד
עַל־נַקִּי לֹא־לָקַח עֲשֵׂה אֵלֶּה לֹא
יִמוּט לְעוֹלָם:

Eternal God: Who may abide in Your house? Who may dwell in Your holy mountain? Those who are upright; who do justly, all whose hearts are true. Who do not slander others, nor wrong them, nor bring shame upon their kin. In whose eyes a wicked person is despised; but who honors those who are in awe of Adonai. Who give their word and, come what may, do not retract it. Who do not exploit others, who never take bribes. Those who live in this way shall never be shaken.

Selection from Psalm 90

אֲדֹנָי מֵעוֹן אַתָּה הָיִיתָ לָנוּ בְּדֹר
וְדֹר; בְּטָרֶם הָרִים יְלָדוּ וַתְּחַוֵּל
אָרֶץ וַתִּבֵּל וַיִּמְעוֹלֶם עַד־עוֹלָם
אַתָּה אֵל: תִּשָּׁב אֲנוֹשׁ עַד־דָּכָא
וַתֹּאמֶר שׁוּבוּ בְנֵי־אָדָם: כִּי אֶלֶף
שָׁנִים בְּעֵינֶיךָ כְּיוֹם אֶתְמוֹל כִּי
יַעֲבֹר וְאַשְׁמוּרָה בְּלִילָה; זָרַמְתָּם
שָׁנָה יִהְיוּ בַּבֶּקֶר כְּחֹצִיר יַחֲלֹף;
בַּבֶּקֶר יִצֵּץ וְחֲלֹף לָעָרֵב יִמּוֹלֵל
וַיִּבֶשׁ: יְמֵי שָׁנוֹתֵינוּ בָהֶם שְׁבַע־עִים
שָׁנָה וְאַם בְּגִבּוֹרַת שְׁמוֹנִים שָׁנָה
וְרִהָבִם עָמַל וְאָוֶן כִּי־זוֹ חַיִּשׁ
וְנִעְפָּה: לְמַנּוֹת יָמֵינוּ כֵּן הוֹדַע
וְנָבֵא לִבָּב חֲכָמָה: שׁוּבָה יְהוָה
עַד־מָתֵי וְהִנַּחֵם עַל־עַבְדֶּיךָ:
שִׁבְעֵנוּ בַּבֶּקֶר חֲסָדֶךָ וַיִּרְנָנָה
וְנִשְׁמַחָה בְּכָל־יְמֵינוּ: יִרְאֵה
אֶל־עַבְדֶּיךָ פְּעִלְךָ וְהִדְרֶךָ
עַל־בְּנֵיהֶם: וַיְהִי נֵעַם אֲדֹנָי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ עָלֵינוּ וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ כֹּונָנָה
עָלֵינוּ וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ כֹּונָנָה:

O God, You have been our refuge in every generation. Before the mountains came into being, before You brought forth the earth and the world, from eternity to eternity You are God. You return us to dust; You decree: Return, you mortals!" For in Your sight a thousand years are as yesterday when it has passed, as a watch in the night. You engulf us in sleep; we are like grass that renews itself: at daybreak it flourishes anew; at dusk it withers and dries up. The span of our life is threescore years and ten, or, given strength, fourscore years; but the best of those years have trouble and sorrow. They pass by speedily, and we are in darkness. Teach us, therefore, so to number our days that we may attain a heart of wisdom. Turn to us, O God! Show mercy to Your servants. Satisfy us at daybreak with Your steadfast love that we may sing for joy all our days. Let Your deeds be seen by Your servants, Your glory by their children. May Your favor, O God, be upon us. Establish the work of our hands that it may long endure.

Selection from Proverbs 31

אִשָּׁת חַיִּל מִי יִמְצָא וְרָחֵק
מִפְּנִינִים מְכָרָהּ: בְּטַח בָּהּ לֵב
בַּעֲלָהּ וְשָׁלָל לֹא יַחְסֹר: גְּמַלְתָּהּ
טוֹב וְלֹא־רָע כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיהָ:
עוֹזֶזֶת לַבּוֹשֶׁה וְתִשְׁחַק לַיּוֹם
אֲחֵרוֹן: פִּיהָ פִּתְחָהּ בְּחִכְמָה
וְתוֹרַת־חֵסֶד עַל־לְשׁוֹנָהּ: צוֹפֶייהָ
הַלִּיכוֹת בֵּיתָהּ וְלֶחֶם עֲצָלוֹת לֹא
תֹאכֵל: קָמוּ בָנֶיהָ וַיִּאַשְׁרוּהָ
בַּעֲלָהּ וַיְהַלְלֶהּ: רַבּוֹת בְּנוֹת עָשׂוּ
חַיִּל וְאַתְּ עָלִית עַל־כָּלֵנָהּ:

A woman of valor, who can find? She is more precious than fine pearls. Her husband trusts in her, and so he lacks nothing; she does him good, never harm, all the days of her life. She perceives that her labor is rewarding, her candle burns on into the night. She reaches out to those in need, and extends her hands to the poor. She is clothed in strength and dignity, and she faces the future cheerfully. She speaks with wisdom; the law of kindness is on her lips. Her children rise up and bless her; her husband sings her praises. Many daughters have done valiantly, but you exceed them all.

From On The Doorpost of Your House:
Prayers and Ceremonies for the Jewish Home

To this sacred place I/we come, drawn by the eternal ties that bind my/our soul(s) to yours. Death has separated us. You are no longer at my/our side to share the beauty of the passing moment. I/We cannot look to you to lighten my/our burdens, to lend me/us your strength, your counsel, your faith. And yet what you mean to me/us neither withers nor fades. For a time we touched hands and hearts; still your voice abides within me/us, still your tender glance remains a joy to me/us. For you are part of me/us for ever; something of you has become a deathless song upon my/our lips. And so beyond the ache that tells how much I/we miss you, a deeper thought compels: we were together. I/We hold you still in mind, and give thanks for life and love. The happiness that was, the memories that do not fade, are a gift that cannot be lost. You continue to bless my/our days and years. I/We will always give thanks for you.

Before closing with the concluding prayers (Eil Male Rahamim and Kaddish), recite one or more of the following passages:

O God, in whose hands are the souls of all the living and the spirits of all flesh, standing at the grave of our beloved _____ who has been taken from us, we thank You for all that was true and good in his/her life, for all that was sweet and inspiring in his/her character.

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

On behalf of our family, and in the presence of our relatives and friends, we consecrate this memorial to _____ as a sign of undying love.

For a male:

נְשַׁמְתוֹ צְרוּרָה בְּצִרּוֹר הַחַיִּים

Nishmato tzrurah bitzror hahaim

May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life.

For a female:

נְשַׁמְתָּהּ צְרוּרָה בְּצִרּוֹר הַחַיִּים

Nishmatah tzrurah bitzror hahaim

May her soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life.

Recite Eil malei rahamim, in Hebrew and/or English before concluding with the Kaddish on pages 7-8:

Eil malei rahamim

אל מלא רחמים שוכן במרומים.
המצא מנוחה נכונה תחת כנפי
השכינה עם קדושים וטהורים כזוהר
הרקיע מזהירים את נשמת _____
בן/בת _____ שהלך/כה לעולמו/מה.
בעל הרחמים יסתירה/ה
בסתר כנפיו לעולמים.
ויצור בצרור החיים את נשמתו/תה.
יי הוא נחלתו/תה.
וינוח/תנוח בשלום על משכבו/בה.
ונאמר אמן:

*Eil malei rahamim shohen bamromim,
hamtze menuhah nehonah tahat
canfey hashhinah, im k'doshim u-t'horim
kezohar harakea mazhirim et
nishmat _____ ben/bat
_____ shehalach/kah
l'olamo/mah. Baal harahamim
yastirehu/hah b'seter c'nafav l'olamim.
V'yitzror bitzror hahaim et nishmato/tah.
Adonai hu nahalato/tah.
V'yanuach/tanuach b'shalom al
mishcavo/va. v'nomar: amen.*

God full of compassion, Eternal Spirit of the universe,
grant perfect rest under the wings of Your Presence
to _____ who has entered eternity.
Master of Mercy, let him/her find refuge forever
in the shadow of Your wings, and let his/her soul be bound up
in the bond of eternal life.
The Eternal God is his/her inheritance.
May he/she rest in peace, and let us say: Amen.

Kaddish

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא. בְּעֻלְמָא
דִּיבְרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ, וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ
בְּחַיֵּינוּ וּבְיוֹמֵינוּ וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל.
בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזַמַּן קָרִיב וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

*Yit-ga-dal v'yit-ka-dash sh'mei ra-ba
b'al-ma di-v'ra chi-r'u'tei, v'yam-lich mal-
chu-tei b'cha-yei-chon u-v'yo-mei-chon
u-v'cha-yei d'chol beit Yis-ra-eil, ba-a-
ga-la u-vi-z'man ka-riv, v'i-m'ru: Amein.*

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעַלְמֵי וּלְעַלְמֵי
עָלְמַיָּא:

*Y'hei sh'mei ra-ba m'va-rach l'a-lam
ul'al-mei al-ma-ya.*

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמַם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא
וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְקֻדְשָׁא
בְּרִיךְ הוּא לְעַלְמָא מִן כָּל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירָתָא,
תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא, דְאָמְרוּ בְּעֻלְמָא,
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

*Yit-ba-rach v'yish-ta-bach, v'yit-pa-ar
v'yit-ro-mam v'yit-na-sei, v'yit-ha-dar
v'yit-a-leh v'yit-ha-lal sh'mei d'kud-sha,
b'rich hu, l'ei-la min kol bir-cha-ta v'shi-
ra-ta, tush-b'cha-ta v'neh-cheh-ma-ta
da-a-mi-ran b'al-ma, v'i-m'ru: Amein.*

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

*Y'hei sh'la-ma ra-ba min sh'ma-ya
v'cha-yim, a-lei-nu v'al kol Yis-ra-el,
v'i-m'ru: Amein.*

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם
עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן

*Oseh shalom bimromav, hu ya-aseh
shalom aleinu v'al-kol Yisrael,
v'i-mru: Amein*

Exalted and Sacred are You, in the world created by Your will,
and Your sovereignty will prevail in our own day, in our own lives,
and in the life of all Israel and all creation, speedily and soon, and say: amein.

You will be blessed in the world for ever and ever, through all eternity.

And blessed, and praised, and honored, and extolled, and glorified,
and adored, and exalted above all else is Your Holy Presence, blessed be You
beyond all blessings and songs and praises and consolations
that may be uttered in this world, and say: amein.

Peace will descend from the heavens, and life for all of us,
for all of Israel, and for all the people of the earth; and say amein.
May the One who makes peace in the heavens, make peace descend on us
and on all Israel, and on all the peoples of the earth, and say: amein