

# *DEATH AND IMMORTALITY*

We are not to close our eyes to death. Nor are we to pretend that our grief, our mourning, our ache are all unreal. We have learned the price of such denial and evasion. The momentary relief it may bring us is followed by an overwhelming despair on the morrow.

Pain, suffering, death are real. It must be confronted with emotional honesty. Beyond that, the vacuum left in the wake of our loss must be filled with a creative memory, with a remembrance which leads to activity. Death must be overcome by deeper living, fear by more courageous faith, remorse by stronger resolve.

We Jews believe in an immortality of influence. We believe that no gesture of goodness is swallowed up into oblivion. There is a conservation of moral energy wherein the quality of goodness expressed in the lives of those we remember is transformed into our own attitudes and behavior towards life.

The past is not over. It flows into the present towards the dreams of the future.

The immortality of those we honor and remember lies in the eternity of our people and its purpose – to repair the world, to unite the fragmented, to bind the wounds of the bruised.

The Yizkor is not alone for those who have sustained the loss of relatives. It is a prayer of the collective memory of a people for those who have lived to sanctify our world, for those who have transcended the narrow boundaries of the self to find the “other.” Let no Jew feel that he is exempt from such meditation and memory. Let him not leave the sanctuary to others.

Let us join together to unite the three time dimensions of our Jewish being: To recall who we were, who we are and who we must become.