

Memorial Service
for
Adam Frank



April 20th, 2003

B'rukhim ha-Ba'im – Welcome

B'rukhim ha-ba'im. Welcome.

We are gathered here to celebrate the life of Adam Frank.

Today & in the days ahead, let us remember
the best in his character, words, and deeds.

Let's treasure his life and all that we remember about him, and
think about him in all his amazing complexity.

We are all human - thus we are born & thus we die.

We stand & fall. We rise up & decline.

We laugh & cry. We forget & remember.

We are all human.

We are also parts of nature's cycles of life & death,
of growth & decay.

For many of us, the finiteness of our lives in this world fills us with
a sense of urgency to give ourselves fully to this life
since we know not what lies beyond it.

Such is our "bundle of life" - *ts'ror ha-haiyim*.

We are bound up with the boundless.

We are made up of the eternal fabric of the universe.

Yet it is our transience that makes our lives so precious.

ʿAdam la-hevel damah; yamav k'-tsel over. (Thillah / Psalm 144.4)

A human being to a breath is similar;

one's days like a passing shadow.

Appreciating life's passing wonders,
we grieve as they leave us:
the greater our love, the greater our loss.
And while mourning feels awful,
it also fills us with awe for life
and helps us arrive at a "heart of wisdom." (Thillah / Psalm 90.12)
Thus, we grow in our grief
as it stretches the boundaries of our souls.
We must trek through adversity,
fully feel & then transcend the pain.
We must expand ourselves and support one another
to carry on the best in the life
of the one we celebrate & mourn,
to keep alive his legacy,
to tell his stories & sing his songs -
even as we forge ahead
with explorations of our own journeys.
Just as the falling leaves nourish the soil
from which will spring new life,
so too has Adam given us all so much to cherish,
so much to help us go on living.

Readings from the Works of Adam Frank

Hinneh, Mah Tov - Behold, How Good! (Adaptation* of T'hillah / Psalms 133.1)

As we celebrate and mourn Adam
today and in days to come,
let us remember the words of Psalm 133:

Hinneh, mah tov u-mah naim
shevet ahim* gam yahad.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
when people* gather together in community.

*originally "brothers" (ahim)

This song is an affirmation of our human connection
with one another.

Among progressive Jews
it has become common to sing
an egalitarian and universal version of this song.

The original language of the psalm
speaks only of a set of "brothers," ahim -
Jacob's sons representing only the "twelve tribes of Israel."

Yet we rejoice in the gathering together
of diverse "peoples," amim -
spanning our rainbow of differences.

Let us join together now in song.

Hinneh, mah tov u-mah naim
shevet amim* gam yahad.

(2x low, then 2x high, then 2x low again.)

La-Kol Z'man - For Everything There is a Season

(reflections from Qohelet / Ecclesiastes 3)

Family & friends:

**For everything there is a season,
and a time for every desire under the heavens:
a time to be born, and a time to die;...
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;...
a time to seek, a time to lose;...
a time to tear, and a time to mend....**

(excerpts from Ecclesiastes 3.1-7)

Rabbi:

There is nothing better for humanity
than to be happy & to do good in their lives. (Ecclesiastes 3.12)

Family & friends:

**For the lot of human beings
& the lot of all living beings is one....
The same one life-breath belongs to all.**

Rabbi:

The human has no superiority over other living beings
for all is ephemeral.
From dust we all came, and to dust we all return.

Family & friends:

**...there is nothing better for humanity
than to rejoice in their deeds,
for that is their lot.**

(Ecclesiastes 3.19-22)

Rabbi:

These ancient teachings express timeless sentiments of doubt & affirmation.

Gathering together today, we too acknowledge this wide range of human emotions in encountering life & in facing death.

By focusing on the progressive humanistic aspects of Jewish & all human traditions, we work to transcend the theological differences among people. These ancient words still have the power to remind us that human beings have the freedom & responsibility to foster the healing & improvement of the world, *tiggun ha-olam*.

We are here today in Adam Frank's honor to affirm the goodness, potential, & meaning of human life as we celebrate its soaring heights, ruminate in its plateaus, and mourn its fallen glories.

Lighting the Memorial Candle A Remembrance of Righteous Action for Blessing Zekher Ts'daqah LiV'rakhah

Rabbi:

"There are stars whose light reaches the earth only after they have disintegrated and are no more. And there are people whose memory lights the world after they have passed from it. The lights which shine in the darkest night are those which illumine for us the path...."

Family & friends:

"Blessed is the match that's consumed in kindling a flame. Blessed is the flame that burns in the secret depths of the heart." (Hannah Senesh*)

**As the days and years go by,
we will remember Adam
May the beauty of his life shine
from generation to generation like a flickering flame,
and may our lives always bring honor to his memory.
`Amen.**

(Light memorial candle.)

Reflections on the Life of the Deceased

Eulogy - Hespel

Family & Friends Sharing Memories & Insights

* Hannah Senesh or Szenes, 1921-44, Jewish poet and anti-fascist resistance fighter killed by the Nazis, quoted in Reconstructionist prayerbook series from Reconstructionist Press, respective passages from *Kol Haneshamah: Shabbat Vehagim*, 1995, p 4; and *Kol Haneshamah: Limot Hol*, 1996, p 526. Original publication and translator information not cited.

A Mourner's Qaddish - Qaddish Yatom (literally "Dedication of an Orphan")

Just as the medieval "Mourner's" *Qaddish* is an affirmation, rather than a lament, so too is this *Qaddish*.

While the other *Qaddish* affirms and praises the god in whom many Jews have believed, this new meditation centers us on our "dedication," our *qaddish*, to life and its improvement. Please rise.

Family & friends:

**Let us reach for greatness and let us dedicate ourselves -
in the name of the living multitudes of this world.**

Rabbi:

Nit-gaddel v'-nit-qaddesh -
b'-shem rabei haiyot ha-olam ha-zeh.

**May it be our will and desire
to work for healing & for equity, for freedom & for peace -
to foster these in our lives, & in our days,
& in the lives of everyone in the world,
swiftly and soon.**

And let us say: "To Life!"

Rabbi:

Y'he` r'uta` v'-rayon shela-nu
la-avod lirphuah u-l'-tse^hdeq, l'-herut u-l'-shalom -
l'-gaddel `otam b'-haiyei-nu, u-v'-yomei-nu,
u-v'-haiyei kulam ba-olam,
b'-agala` u-vizman qariv.

V'-havah no`mar:

"L'-Haiyim!"

Family & friends:

"L'-Haiyim!"

**Let us remember our loved ones in all their humanity,
with all their strengths and limitations.**

**As we learn from their lives,
let us bless and praise their memories with our actions.**

Rabbi:

N'-varekh u-n'-shave'ah `otam.

Family & friends:

Let us remember them in their glory and at their heights.

Rabbi:

B'-tiph`eret u-v'-romemut shela-hem.

Family & friends:

**May we carry on the best elements
of their lives with splendor.**

Rabbi:

Nissa` b'-hadar.

Family & friends:

**May we ascend in the shining examples
of their praiseworthy deeds.**

Rabbi:

Na-aleh b'-divrei l'-halel.

Family & friends:

**Even as we speak, we know that the value of each life
exceeds what can be expressed in blessings or in songs,
in praises or in words of consolation.**

Rabbi:

Qodesh ha-nep^hesh
oleh min kol b'rakhot `o shirim,
sh'vahim `o nehamot.

Family & friends:

**Let us make peace in the world.
Peace is our responsibility,
the responsibility of all the Jewish people, all of Yisra`el,
and the responsibility of all peoples in the world.**

Rabbi:

Na'aseh shalom ba-olam.
Na` na'aseh shalom alei-nu,
v'-al kol Yisra`el,
v'-al kol ha-olam.
V'-no`mar: "Amen."

Family & friends:

`Amen.

Rabbi:

Let there be peace for us all.
Let us reach out to one another
to help bring peace to each other in this hour of grief.
Let us care for each other at this time of loss.

Family & friends:

**For the one we mourn, for Adam,
let us find lessons & inspiration in his legacy,
and let us remember his righteous actions for blessing.**

Rabbi:

Nizkor ts'daqah liv'rakhah.

All together:

`Amen.

Rhymes of Love unaccompanied

Before my corpse is laid on shelf
I will unfold the core of self,
expose experience, lay out theories
thrust forth metaphors in series
delineate my inner voices
enunciate my active choices

Before my universe can die
I'll set it free of me and I,
detach my strivings with deft dexterity
post my motives to posterity,
orchestrate meaning in wordless rhyme
continue my pulse in flawless time

To offer loyal heirs endorsement
in unborn worlds of reinforcement
I'll plant perspectives in sealed suspension,
grow fresh freedoms in forceful tension,
forecast tangible strips for landing
frangible flights of understanding.

To map the frame where lives are crossed
I'll factor each facet and count each cost,
Measure values, elucidate passions
Pinpoint perceptions, quantify fashions,
dissolve religion in raw reliance,
coin love's profile in casts of science,

refract my soul through reams of reference,
chisel my niche in schemes of deference,
chart my vision in blocks and sections,
extrapolate my introspections,
bury in academic fields
the waste my integration yields.

Adam Frank