



*Kahal B'raira /*  
community of choice

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Congregation for Humanistic Judaism

# CREMATION SERVICE





Birth is a beginning  
Death is a destination  
And life is a journey:

From childhood to maturity  
And youth to age;  
From innocence to awareness  
And ignorance to knowing;  
From foolishness to discretion  
    And, then perhaps, to wisdom;  
From weakness to strength  
Or strength to weakness--  
    And, often, back again;  
From health to sickness  
    And back, we hope, to health again;  
From offense to forgiveness,  
From loneliness to love,  
From joy to gratitude,  
From pain to compassion,  
And grief to understanding;  
From defeat to defeat to defeat--  
Until, looking backward or ahead,  
We see that victory lies  
Not at some high place along the way,  
But in having made the journey, stage by stage.

Birth is a beginning  
And death a destination;  
And life is a journey.

And every journey ends.

We are suffering from a great loss. \_\_\_\_\_, an important person in our lives, has died; is gone. We can all wish it could be otherwise, but we know that this death is final. The look, the touch, the smile, the frown, all these are gone from the physical world, as we, too, will someday be.

The Talmud tells us that a rabbi was once passing through a field where he saw a very old man planting an oak-tree. "Why are you planting that tree" he asked. "Surely you do not



expect to live long enough to see the acorn grow into an oak-tree?" "Ah!" replied the old man. "My ancestors planted trees not for themselves, but for us, in order that we might enjoy their shade or their fruit. I am doing likewise for those who will come after me.

We are the field in which \_\_\_\_\_ planted. Our memories are the acorns of this life, and the truths we learned will grow into the oak trees of wisdom that we pass on to later generations.

### Poem

Burn out, my life, burn quick,  
Not much is left now of the wick.  
Let there be light on my last day,  
To point the way.

Don't flicker life, burn clear.  
Then like a spring-thought disappear.  
I hate to stint! Life blaze away!  
Let me have least at least one day!

Abraham Reisen (trans. Joseph Leftwich)

Cremation is an act of courage and affirmation. If the physical remains were the essence of the person then to commit them to the fire would be too difficult to bear. Better to let the earth, and time, take responsibility for what happens. But body is not the essence: it is the matrix in which life weaves a glowing personality. Without life the structure yields, and there are left only elements, the stuff of which the stars and earth are made. To add fire is only to hasten the inevitable return of the body to nature, so that it may partake in many more lives. We honor \_\_\_\_\_ by returning these physical remains to the great store of resources of the earth, where someday in some different form they will again contribute to life. The book is not the paper – the wood pulp and linen – that can be recycled and used for other books. The book is the stories, the thoughts, and the memories they implant in the reader. We have been readers of this story and, like the traveling peddlers and singers of history, we will go from this place to share it with others.



### Responsive Reading

Leader: At the rising of the sun and at its going down

**Mourners: We will remember \_\_\_\_\_**

At the blowing of the wind in the chill of winter,

**We will remember \_\_\_\_\_**

At the opening of the buds in the rebirth of spring

**We will remember \_\_\_\_\_**

When we are weary and in need of strength

**We will remember \_\_\_\_\_**

When we are lost and sick at heart

**We will remember \_\_\_\_\_**

When we have decisions that are difficult to make

**We will remember \_\_\_\_\_**

When we have joys we yearn to share

**We will remember \_\_\_\_\_**

When we seek advice that does not come,

**We will remember \_\_\_\_\_**

When we are alone and afraid,

**We will remember \_\_\_\_\_**

For \_\_\_\_\_ will be a part of us as long as we live

**And we will remember.**

**Barukh ha-or sheh-b'khol eh-khod.**

Radiant is the light in each of us

*dAxe' lOwakJbeH rOwah*

*™FwrGAb*

**Barukh ha-or b'olam.**

Radiant is the light of the world

*£AlOw, Gb rOwah* *™FwrGAb*

**Barukh ha-or ha-atid.**

Radiant is the light of the future

*dÓta'ah rOwah* *™FwrGAb*

**Barukh ha-or ba-zeh-car-own shel**

\_\_\_\_\_.

Radiant is the light in the memory of

*leH §OwrJakÓzaJb rOwah*

*™FwrGAb* \_\_\_\_\_