

A Poem for Zayin Adar

מודה אני לפניך מלך חי וקים — *I give thanks to You, O King; Living and Eternal One.*

I've looked upon the face of death, and I walked away more eager to live.

I've seen a face that can do nothing but take; and I walked away more eager, more eager,

Forever thankful to Hashem for the ability to give.

How can I ever repay Him, how can I ever fulfill; in my own limited space, the chance He offers me with each breath?

Only I am so privileged, only I see so clear; for I have seen something many don't, I have looked upon the face of death.

Humbled by a certainty so visually real; you can see it, sense and feel, death's ultimate power over all,

Young and old, large and small, strong and weak, physically fit and not at all;

Hero and goat, good and bad, very short and very tall,

Humbled, I say, broken, no way; for what good would become of a frightened shattered me?

Faced with the humbled truth, there is more to this than this; and I, not he or she, still have that opportunity.

To live and enjoy life's pleasantries; the warmth of the sun, the chill of the breeze,

Eat, drink, and be happy, the joy of a Shabbos meal; a Yomtov surrounded by family, friends and guests,

Each moment, a special priceless gift, not only the comfort and the joy,

But also every stab of pain, of hardship, each cough and every sneeze,

But greatest of all by far is being able to serve Hashem, each in our own way;

וגמילת חסדים, עבודה, תורה, with each of these, doing our very best.

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Ours, ours, is a special gift, following an example set by Moshe and H-shem Himself; on this very day,

The gift called Chessed Shel Emes, the truest kindness; the truth is we take much much more than we can ever give,

We give with commitment, love and devotion, when we're needed; we are kind and caring in every way,

But it's inspiration, truth, Emes, meaning and purpose, that we take; the truth of why and how to live.

We give with gentle kindness, to eyes that do not blink,

We're so thoroughly concerned and sensitive; for one who will not frown,

From things difficult and unpleasant; we don't shy away, or shrink,

We know the object of our devotion; once wore a princely crown.

Not just an empty shell to be preserved; for old times' sake not to be again.

Nor to satisfy the shame or guilt of past shortcomings, by family or friends,

Nay, 'tis a vessel pure and holy; a portion of G-d it did contain,

To be resurrected in pure holiness, at the end of time; when this bitter golus ends.

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The focus of our kindness; born of love and a boundless appreciation,
He was a Jew, she was a Jew, a descendant of this great nation,
It matters not the kind of life; who was this person, this powerless taker?
How privileged are we, to provide the dignity, preparing the journey to meet his Maker.

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We pray for the atonement of transgressions; those large and those so small,
For who is the ultimate Tzaddik in this, who does not sin at all?
The Tachrichim of pure linen, earth from Israel, Tehillim, prayer and purification;
All symbolic of one idea; the gift of atonement, from the kind Master of Creation.

The shroud of pure linen, so clean and so white;
So serene, so very peaceful, what a holy, holy sight,
Sewn without the smallest knot, tied only with a bow
אני מאמין באמונה שלמה, Moshiach is on his way, we know.

Just like the High Priest on Yom Kippur; atoning for every sin,
This Tzaddik will be מליץ יושר for his brethren and his kin.
There are no cuffs or pockets; nothing physical to take along,
Rich and poor, the mighty and the weak; in the same ground they will belong.
Why be worried, why be jealous, life spent pursuing power, wealth and gain?
I've looked upon the face of death, I've seen it - in the end it's all the same.

אשרינו מה טוב חלקינו, How fortunate are we, we who have this special gift?
Yea, we value each and every breath of life, our spirits soar and do uplift,
We know the why and how to live; we fear nought, even death.
Like Zayin Adar's Moshe, I am the servant of H-shem;
With every special blessed breath.

מודה אני לפניך מלך חי וקים — *I give thanks to You, O King; Living and Eternal One.*

I've looked upon the face of death, and I walked away better able to live,
I saw a face that could only now take; and I walked away better able to give,
For this we are forever grateful; we can make it up to Him,
With truth as our guide, we're bound to see the prophecy fulfilled.