

I'm here today as the Chief Executive of the Central Conference of American Rabbis to honor a rabbi of rabbis, our friend and colleague and past president of the CCAR, Rabbi Peter Knobel. I speak for all us at the CCAR when I say that we have lost a great leader, a scholar, and a friend. Peter stepped in as president at a moment when there was a leadership vacuum, and he served our conference with distinction. I'm proud to say that I was on the nominating committee that choose Peter to be the president – I remember being in that crowded conference room waiting to hear if he had accepted. And the excitement when he did, because we all knew he was the leader we needed at that time. He loved rabbis, he understood both the joys and the trials of the rabbinate, and strove to make the CCAR an ever better organization. He put his heart and soul into the conference in a multitude of ways, not the least of which was as a champion of *Mishkan T'filah*, which bears his thumbprint in ways big and small. Our siddur is an eternal testament to his brilliant understanding of liturgy and worship, and his willingness to experiment and consider that which had not yet been considered. And then there was his post-retirement work as an interim in several different congregations, rabbi-ing not only congregations in transitions but to other rabbis, thoughtfully helping them envision the future.

But I'm also here today because Peter was so important to me personally. Peter was a mentor to me, a smart, kind, and supportive teacher and friend. He was on the search committee that first brought me to the CCAR eleven years ago, and I had the joy of working with him on several books central to our identity as Reform rabbis, including *Navigating the Journey* and *Mishkan Moeid*. Peter was always there to give advice, share his experience, inspire by example, and lend a sense of humor to the proceedings. One of the qualities that I admired the most was that he was willing to keep learning and to keep stretching and to keep growing. When challenged with a new idea, he was able to be reflective and accept that while he didn't see the world a certain way, others might.

The poet Bialik wrote:

There was a man — and look, he is no more.
The music of his life suddenly stopped.
There was another song in him.
Now it is lost forever.

We are all stunned that Peter's voice will no longer be heard and his guidance no longer there at the ready. He had much more work to do and much more to contribute. What an incredible loss for everyone connected to Peter, of course especially for Elaine,

Jeremy, Seth and the whole family, as well as for the Jewish community as a whole. But I am so grateful for all he gave us. He will live on in all the work that we do, as we keep alive his passionate commitment to the Reform rabbinate and Reform Judaism.