Memory is a central theme of Rosh Hashanah

- We sing "Zokhreinu" pleading that Hashem remember us & inscribe us in the book of life.
- We remind ourselves that Hashem "… remembers [our] deed[s]."[1]
- We blast the shofar and pray, "accept with compassion and desire our prayers of remembrance."[2]

And we pray Unetaneh Tokef, "On Rosh Hashanah it is inscribed, and on Yom Kippur it is sealed - how many shall pass away and how many shall be born, who shall live and who shall die, who in good time, and who by an untimely death … "[3]

In this short span of our existence, we want to know that our lives matter. That someone cares about us. That someone loves us & and that we, in turn, have loved someone.

Today is September 11th. Twenty-five years ago today, extremist Islamic terrorists crashed three planes into the twin towers and the Pentagon. Monique Ferrer spoke with StoryCorps - which aimed to collect at least one recording for each of the nearly 3,000 lives lost on this tragic day – about Michael Trinidad.

Monique Ferrer (MF): When I met Michael I was 14 years old, and I knew that he was gonna be my boyfriend. We got married when I was 19, and we were both kids. We really didn't know what [came] next. You know, get married and now what. When we were divorced, I remember the kids telling me that their father confided in them with a secret, and they didn't want to tell me. And I'm like 'Well, what's the secret?' and they said, 'Well, Daddy still loves you.' He doesn't want us to tell you. And I said, 'Well I know, and I love him too, but Mommy and Daddy have gone their separate ways, but we'll always be a family and we'll always be your Mom and Dad.'

On 9/11, I remember getting up to take my daughter--she had a doctor's appointment, so my daughter was home. At 9:04, I got a phone call, and it was Michael, and he was calling from the 103rd floor. And the first thing that he said was, 'I'm calling to say goodbye.' And I said, 'Why, where are you going?' And he said, 'Well, I'm in the building that was just hit by

[1] אַתָּה זוֹכֵר מַעֲשֶׂה עוֹלָם, Musaf, First Day of Rosh Hashana, Zikhronot.

[2] וּתְקַבֵּל בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרָצוֹן סֵדֶר זִכְרוֹנוֹתֵינוּ, Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

a plane.' He just wanted to tell me how much he loved the children, ...and he says, 'You know, I also wanna tell you that I always loved you.' And I said, 'I know, the kids told me.' And um, I'm remarried, so I asked my husband to get on the phone, and I thought maybe my husband could talk him into finding an exit. And when my husband got on the phone, Michael asked my husband if he would be my children's father. ... And my husband said, 'You're gonna be coming home, you're gonna be their Dad, and I'm--I'm their Dad, too.' And he's like, 'I don't think I'm gonna make it.' And, my daughter was there and she saw me becoming a little hysterical, and I didn't know whether to put her on, because I didn't know how he would react. He thought she was at school.

It just really breaks my heart that he's not here for them. It's like the only thing on his mind was to tell the kids that he loved them. And I tell the kids this every day: 'Everything you do, just think about your Dad.' And the thing is that my two children look just like him. And they talk like him. And they joke like him. So, it's like he's there. You know, I see him in them every day. And as much as he used to drive me crazy, he was my family and my best friend.[4]

Michael Trinidad – may your memory - and that of the other 2,976 victims and subsequent fatalities of 9/11 - be a blessing.

The New Year has begun. We are here. It could have been otherwise. ...

How precious is this moment... And each and every moment....

In the coming year, let us

- show the people we love, that they are loved,
- show our friends that they are precious,
- show strangers the gift of knowing that they, too, are unique, of infinite value, and worthy of dignity.

L'shana tova tikateivu v'tehateimu – may you be inscribed in the book of life for a good year.

[4] https://www.npr.org/transcripts/5784423.