

Birth is a beginning.  
And death 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 pray, to health again.  
From offense to forgiveness,  
From loneliness to love,  
From joy to gratitude,  
From pain to compassion,  
And grief to understanding –  
From fear to faith;  
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  
A sacred pilgrimage.  
Birth is a beginning  
And death a destination.  
And life is a journey,  
A sacred pilgrimage –  
To life everlasting,

— *Rabbi Alvin Fine*