

יזכור
YIZKOR
FOR FESTIVALS

Adapted from
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Edward Feld, editor



THE RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY

Some people whose parents are living have a custom of leaving the service at this time, but even those who do not yet need to say the personal prayers of remembrance might remain and recite prayers for others as well as join in the communal prayers (beginning on page 3, below).

ADONAI, what are human beings
that You take account of them,
mortals that You care for them?
Humans are as a breath, their
days like a passing shadow.
In the morning they flourish
anew, in the evening they
shrivel and die.
Teach us to count each day,
that we may acquire a heart of
wisdom.

יהוה, מַה־אָדָם וַתִּדְעֶהוּ,
בְּיָאֲנוּשׁ וַתַּחֲשְׁבֵהוּ.
אָדָם לְהֶבֶל דָּמָה,
יָמָיו כְּצֵל עוֹבֵר.
בַּבֶּקֶר יִצְיָץ וְחָלָף,
לְעָרֵב יִמּוּלֵל וַיָּבֵשׁ.
לְמִנּוֹת יָמֵינוּ כֵּן הוֹדַע
וְנִבְיֵא לְבָב חֲכָמָה.

There is a time for everything, for all things under the sun:
A time to be born and a time to die,
a time to laugh and a time to cry,
a time to dance and a time to mourn,
a time to seek and a time to lose,
a time to forget and a time to remember.
This day in sacred convocation
we remember those who gave us life.
We remember those who enriched our lives
with love and beauty, kindness and compassion,
thoughtfulness and understanding.
We renew our bonds to those who have gone
the way of all the earth, to those whose
memory moves us this day.
As we reflect upon them, we seek consolation,
and the strength and the insight born of faith.

God is always before me, at my
right hand, lest I fall.
Therefore I am glad, made
happy, though I know that
my flesh will lie in the ground
forever.

שְׁוִיִּתִּי יְהוָה לְנִגְדֵי תְמִיד,
כִּי מִיָּמִינִי בַל־אֲמוּט.
לְכֵן שָׂמַח לְבִי וַיִּגַּל
כְּבוֹדִי, אֵף בְּשָׂרֵי יִשְׁכַּן
לְבַטָּח.

The deaths of those we now remember left holes in our lives.
But we are grateful for the gift of their lives and we are strength-
ened by the blessings that they left us and the precious memo-
ries that comfort and sustain us as we recall them this day.

INTRODUCTION. *Yizkor*, which is recited on Pesah, Shavuot, and Shmini Atzeret, as well as on Yom Kippur, is a time set aside to formally include in our thoughts and prayers family and friends who have passed away. During the joy of our festivals, we stop to remember those we love—a parent, a spouse or partner, a sibling, and in some cases, we mourn the tragic death of a child. May the memory of those we recall be a blessing in our lives.

WHAT ARE HUMAN BEINGS מַה־אָדָם. The verses in this passage come from Psalms 144:3–4, 90:6, and 90:12.

GOD IS ALWAYS שְׁוִיִּתִּי יְהוָה. Psalm 16:8–9.

YIZKOR

When I stray from You, Adonai, my life is as death; but when I cleave to You, even in death I have life.

You embrace the souls of the living and the dead.

The earth inherits that which perishes.

The dust returns to dust; but the soul, which is God's, is eternal.

Adonai is compassionate to all creation, granting us a share in unending life.

God redeems our life from the grave, joining us forever in the unending chain of life.

May we preserve the memory of those we love and are now gone, through charity in deed and thought.

May we live unselfishly, in truth and love and peace, so that we will be remembered as a blessing, as we lovingly remember, this day, those who live on in our hearts.

—JULES HARLOW

Backwards and Forwards

Yizkor:

Looking backward, we recall our ancestry.

Looking forward, we confront our destiny.

Looking backward, we reflect on our origins.

Looking forward, we choose our path.

Remembering that we are a tree of life, not letting go, holding on, and holding to, we walk into an unknown, beckoning future, with our past beside us.

—HAROLD SCHULWEIS
(*adapted*)

WE RECALL

Some of us recall parents who watched over us, nursed us, guided us, and sacrificed for us.

Some of us lovingly call to mind a wife, husband, or partner with whom we were truly united—in our hopes and our pains, in our failures and our achievements, in our joys and our sorrows.

Some of us remember brothers and sisters, who grew up together with us, sharing in the play of childhood, in the youthful adventure of discovering life's possibilities, bound to us by a heritage of family tradition and by years of togetherness and love.

Some of us call to mind children, entrusted to us too briefly, to whom we gave our loving care and from whom we received a trust that enriched our lives.

So many of us recall beloved relatives and friends whose affection and devotion enhanced our lives, and whose visible presence will never return to cheer, encourage, or support us.

Though they are gone, we are grateful for the blessings they brought to our lives. We are sustained and comforted by the thought that their presence in our lives remains an enduring blessing that we can bequeath to others.

We can show our devotion to them by our devotion to those ideas that they cherished.

O God of love, make us worthy of the love we have received by teaching us to love You with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our might, and to spread the light of Your divine love on all whose lives touch ours.

Give us strength to live faithfully, for we are cheered by our confidence that You will not permit our lives to be wasted, but will bring all our worthy strivings to live on, even as we may not see their fulfillment.

—MORDECAI M. KAPLAN, EUGENE KOHN, AND IRA EISENSTEIN
(*adapted from Mahzor Hadash*)

We each continue in private meditation, selecting from among the following and adding appropriate names as indicated. Personal prayers may be added.

We rise.

In memory of male relatives or friends:

יִזְכּוֹר אֱלֹהִים אֶת נִשְׁמַת

(for a father) _____ אָבִי מוֹרִי

(for a husband) _____ אִישִׁי

(for a partner) _____ בֵּן זִוגִי

(for a brother) _____ אָחִי

(for a son) _____ בְּנִי

(for other relative) _____ קְרוֹבִי

(for a friend) _____ חֲבֵרִי

(others) _____

שְׁהַלַּף לְעוֹלָמוֹ [שְׁהִלְכוּ לְעוֹלָמָם]. הִנְנִי נוֹדֵב/נוֹדֶבֶת
צְדָקָה בְּעֵד הַזְּכָרַת נִשְׁמָתוֹ [נִשְׁמוֹתֵיהֶם]. אָנָּה תְּהִי
[תְּהִינָה] נִפְשׁוֹ צְרוּרָה [נִפְשׁוֹתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת] בְּצָרוֹר
הַחַיִּים וְתְּהִי מְנוּחָתוֹ [מְנוּחָתָם] כְּבוֹד, שְׂבַע שְׂמֵחוֹת
אֶת־פְּנֵיךְ, נְעִימוֹת בִּימִינְךָ נְצַח. אָמֵן.

In memory of female relatives or friends:

יִזְכּוֹר אֱלֹהִים אֶת נִשְׁמַת

(for a mother) _____ אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי

(for a wife) _____ אִשְׁתִּי

(for a partner) _____ בַּת זִוגִי

(for a sister) _____ אָחוֹתִי

(for a daughter) _____ בַּתִּי

(for other relative) _____ קְרוֹבַתִּי

(for a friend) _____ חֲבֵרַתִּי

(others) _____

שְׁהִלְכָה לְעוֹלָמָהּ [שְׁהִלְכוּ לְעוֹלָמָן]. הִנְנִי נוֹדֵב/נוֹדֶבֶת
צְדָקָה בְּעֵד הַזְּכָרַת נִשְׁמָתָהּ [נִשְׁמוֹתֵיהֶן]. אָנָּה תְּהִי
[תְּהִינָה] נִפְשָׁה צְרוּרָה [נִפְשֵׁיהֶן צְרוּרוֹת] בְּצָרוֹר
הַחַיִּים וְתְּהִי מְנוּחָתָהּ [מְנוּחָתָן] כְּבוֹד, שְׂבַע שְׂמֵחוֹת
אֶת־פְּנֵיךְ, נְעִימוֹת בִּימִינְךָ נְצַח. אָמֵן.

צְדָקָה Tz'dakah/Charity

The Yizkor service was called *seder matnat yad*, the service of expressing generosity on behalf of those who have died. That name comes from the closing line of the Torah reading for the final day of the pilgrimage festivals (when Yizkor is recited): "Every person giving a gift according to the blessing they have received from Adonai" (Deuteronomy 16:17). Offering charitable gifts and performing acts of justice, love, and care in memory of those who have died provide us with ways of honoring their memory and continuing their influence for good.

*Though I stared
earnestly at
my fingernail*

Yesterday when I was on
the #7 bus
I happened to look
at the cuticle
of my right forefinger
and for a moment
I thought not that it
was mine
but that it was
my father's—

the same small
confusion I have
from time to time
when I catch sight
of my daughter
in her denim skirt, size 3,
and I feel lean, willowy,
in her clothes.

So there I was
on the #7 bus
overtaken by a longing
very close to love
staring at the cuticle
of my right forefinger.

I remembered how clean
and short he kept his
nails
and suddenly there was
the whole man
reconstituted
from a fingernail
standing before me,
smiling broadly,
his face flushed
with pleasure.

But then just as suddenly
he was gone
and though I stared
earnestly
at my fingernail
I failed to bring him back.

—MERLE FELD

We each continue in private meditation, selecting from among the following and adding appropriate names as indicated. Personal prayers may be added.

We rise.

In memory of male relatives or friends:

May God remember the soul of
my father _____
my husband _____
my partner _____
my brother _____
my son _____
my relative _____
my friend _____
(others) _____

who has [have] gone to his [their] eternal home. In loving testimony to his life [their lives], I pledge *tz'dakah* to help perpetuate ideals important to him [them]. Through such deeds, and through prayer and remembrance, may his [their] soul[s] be bound up in the bond of life. May I prove myself worthy of the many gifts with which he [they] blessed me. May these moments of meditation strengthen the ties that link me to his [their] memory. May he [they] rest in peace forever in God's presence. Amen.

In memory of female relatives or friends:

May God remember the soul of
my mother _____
my wife _____
my partner _____
my sister _____
my daughter _____
my relative _____
my friend _____
(others) _____

who has [have] gone to her [their] eternal home. In loving testimony to her life [their lives], I pledge *tz'dakah* to help perpetuate ideals important to her [them]. Through such deeds, and through prayer and remembrance, may her [their] soul[s] be bound up in the bond of life. May I prove myself worthy of the many gifts with which she [they] blessed me. May these moments of meditation strengthen the ties that link me to her [their] memory. May she [they] rest in peace forever in God's presence. Amen.

IN MEMORY OF MARTYRS:

יִזְכּוֹר אֱלֹהִים נְשָׁמוֹת כָּל־אֲחֵינוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁמָּסְרוּ
אֶת־נַפְשׁוֹתֵיהֶם עַל קְדוּשַׁת הַשֵּׁם. הַנְּגִי נוֹדֵב/נוֹדֵבֵת
צְדָקָה בְּעֵד הַזְּפֹרֶת נְשָׁמוֹתֵיהֶם. אָנָּה יִשְׁמַע בְּחַיֵּינוּ הַד
גְּבוּרָתָם וּמִסִּירוֹתָם וְיִרְאֶה בְּמַעֲשֵׂינּוּ טָהָר לְבָב וְתַהֲיִינָה
נַפְשׁוֹתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת בְּצָרוֹר הַחַיִּים וְתִהְיֶי מְנוּחָתָם כְּבוֹד,
שְׂבַע שְׂמָחוֹת אֶת־פְּנֵיךָ, נְעִימוֹת בִּימֵינֶךָ נְצַח. אָמֵן.

IN MEMORY OF CONGREGANTS:

יִזְכּוֹר אֱלֹהִים נְשָׁמוֹת יְדִידֵינוּ חֲבָרֵי הַקְּהָל הַקְּדוֹשׁ הַזֶּה
שֶׁהֲלָכוּ לְעוֹלָמָם. אָנָּה תַּהֲיִינָה נַפְשׁוֹתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת
בְּצָרוֹר הַחַיִּים וְתִהְיֶי מְנוּחָתָם כְּבוֹד, שְׂבַע שְׂמָחוֹת אֶת־
פְּנֵיךָ, נְעִימוֹת בִּימֵינֶךָ נְצַח. אָמֵן.

IN MEMORY OF THE SIX MILLION:

אֵל מְלֵא רַחֲמִים, שׁוֹכֵן בְּמְרוֹמִים, הַמְּצֵא מְנוּחָה נְכוֹנָה
תַּחַת כַּנְּפֵי הַשָּׁכִינָה, בְּמַעְלוֹת קְדוּשִׁים וְטְהוּרִים, כְּזֶה־
הַרְקִיעַ מְזַהְרִים, לְנְשָׁמוֹת כָּל־אֲחֵינוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
שֶׁנִּטְבְּחוּ בְּשׂוֹאָה, אֲנָשִׁים נְשִׁים וְטָף, שֶׁנִּחְנְקוּ וְשֶׁנִּשְׂרְפוּ
וְשֶׁנִּהְרְגוּ, שֶׁמָּסְרוּ אֶת־נַפְשׁוֹתֵיהֶם עַל קְדוּשַׁת הַשֵּׁם, בְּגֵן
עֵדֶן תִּהְיֶי מְנוּחָתָם. אָנָּה בְּעַל הַרְחָמִים, הַסְּתִירָם בְּסֵתֶר
כְּנֶפֶיךָ לְעוֹלָמִים. וְצָרוֹר בְּצָרוֹר הַחַיִּים אֶת־נְשָׁמוֹתֵיהֶם.
יְהוּה הוּא נְחַלְתָּם. וְיִנְוְחוּ בְּשָׁלוֹם עַל מְשַׁכְּבוֹתֵיהֶם.
וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

בְּגֵן עֵדֶן IN PARADISE
Literally, "in the Garden of Eden." We imagine that the soul, which connects all living beings with their divine source, returns, after the death of the body, to God's care.

*A Yizkor Meditation
in Memory of a Parent
Who Was Hurtful*

Dear God,

You know my heart.
Indeed, You know me better than I know myself,
so I turn to You before I rise for Kaddish.

My emotions swirl as I say this prayer. The parent I remember was not kind to me. His/her death left me with a legacy of unhealed wounds, of anger and of dismay that a parent could hurt a child as I was hurt.

I do not want to pretend to love, or to grieve that I do not feel, but I do want to do what is right as a Jew and as a child.

Help me, O God, to subdue my bitter emotions that do me no good, and to find that place in myself where happier memories may lie hidden, and where grief for all that could have been, all that should have been, may be calmed by forgiveness, or at least soothed by the passage of time.

I pray that You, who raise up slaves to freedom, will liberate me from the oppression of my hurt and anger, and that You will lead me from this desert to Your holy place.

—ROBERT SAKS

IN MEMORY OF MARTYRS:

May God remember the souls of the martyrs of our people, who gave their lives for the sanctification of God's name. In their memory do I pledge *tz'dakah*. May their bravery, their dedication, and their purity be reflected in our lives. May their souls be bound up in the bond of life. May they rest in peace forever in God's presence. Amen.

IN MEMORY OF CONGREGANTS:

May God remember the souls of our friends, members of this holy congregation, who have gone to their eternal home. May their souls be bound up in the bond of life. May these moments of meditation strengthen the ties that link us to their memory. May they rest in peace forever in God's presence. Amen.

Exalted, compassionate God, comfort the bereaved families of this congregation. Help us to perpetuate everything that was worthy in the lives of those no longer with us, whom we remember this day. May their memory endure as a blessing. And let us say: Amen.

IN MEMORY OF THE SIX MILLION:

Exalted, compassionate God, grant perfect peace in Your sheltering presence, among the holy and the pure, whose radiance is like the heavens, to the souls of all the men, women, and children of the House of Israel who were slaughtered, strangled, and burned in the Shoah. May they rest in paradise. Master of mercy, may they find eternal shelter beneath Your sheltering wings, and may their souls be bound up in the bond of life. ADONAI is their portion. May they rest in peace. And let us say: *Amen*.

IN MEMORY OF ALL THE DEAD:

אל מלא רחמים, שוכן במרומים, המצא מנוחה נכונה
תחת כנפי השכינה, במעלות קדושים וטהורים, כזהר
הרקיע מזהירים, לנשמות כל-אלה שהזפרנו היום לברכה,
שהלכו לעולמם, בגן עדן תהי מנוחתם. אָנָּה בַּעַל
הרחמים, הסתירם בסתר כנפיה לעולמים. וצרוּר בצרוּר
החיים את-נשמותיהם. יהוה הוא נחלתם. ויגוּחוּ בְּשָׁלוֹם
על משפבותיהם. ונאמר אמן.

מזמור לדוד.

יהוה רעי, לא אחסר.
בנאות דשא ירביצני,
על מי מנחות ינהלני.
נפשי ישובב, ינחני במעגלי צדק למען שמו.
גם כי אלך בגיא צלמות לא אירא רע כי אתה עמדי.
שבטך ומשענתך המה ינחמני.
תערך לפני שלחן נגד צררי,
דשנת בשמן ראשי, כוסי רויה.
אך טוב וחסד ירדפוני כל-ימי חיי,
ושבתי בבית יהוה לארך ימים. תהלים כג

My Peace

My peace is tied by a thread
to yours.

And the beloved holidays
and glorious seasons of
the year—
with the wealth of
fragrances, flowers,
fruit, leaves, and winds,
the fog and the rain,
the sudden snow
and the dew—
are suspended on a thread
of longing.

I and you and the
Sabbath.
I and you and our lives
in the last incarnation.
I and you
and the lie.
And the fear.
And the breaches.
I and you
and the Creator
of the heavens that have
no shore.
I and you
and the riddle.
I and you
and death.

—ZELDA
(trans. Marcia Falk)

IN MEMORY OF ALL THE DEAD:

Exalted, compassionate God, grant perfect peace in Your sheltering presence, among the holy and the pure, whose radiance is like the heavens, to the souls of all those we have recalled today. May their memory be a blessing, and may they rest in paradise. Master of mercy, may they find eternal shelter beneath Your sheltering wings, and may their souls be bound up in the bond of life. ADONAI is their portion. May they rest in peace. And let us say: *Amen*.

PSALM 23

A PSALM OF DAVID.

ADONAI is my shepherd, I shall not want.
God gives me repose in green meadows,
and guides me over calm waters.
God will revive my spirit and direct me on the right path—
for that is God's way.
Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no
harm, for You are at my side.
Your staff and Your rod comfort me.
You prepare a banquet for me in the presence of my foes:
You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and kindness shall be my portion all the
days of my life,
And I shall dwell in the house of ADONAI in the fullness
of time.

קדיש יתום

Mourners:

יִתְגַּדֵּל וַיִּתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא,
בְּעֵלְמָא דֵי בְרָא, כְּרַעוּתָהּ,
וַיִּמְלִיף מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיִּיכוּן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוּן
וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,
בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב,
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

Congregation and mourners:

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעַלְמֵי וּלְעַלְמֵי עַלְמֵיָא.

Mourners:

יִתְבָּרַךְ וַיִּשְׁתַּבַּח
וַיִּתְפָּאֵר וַיִּתְרוֹמֵם
וַיִּתְנַשֵּׂא וַיִּתְהַדָּר
וַיִּתְעַלֶּה וַיִּתְהַלָּל
שְׁמֵהּ דְקַדְשָׁא, בְּרִיף הוּא,
לְעֵלָא מִן כָּל-בְּרִכְתָּא
וְשִׁירְתָּא תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא
דְאָמִירָן בְּעֵלְמָא,
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמֵיָא וְחַיִּים
עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו
הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם
עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל
[וְעַל כָּל-יּוֹשְׁבֵי תִבְלִי],
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

Mourner's Kaddish

May God's great name be exalted and hallowed throughout the created world, as is God's wish. May God's sovereignty soon be established, in your lifetime and in your days, and in the days of all the House of Israel. And respond with: *Amen*.

May God's great name be acknowledged forever and ever!

May the name of the Holy One be acknowledged and celebrated, lauded and worshipped, exalted and honored, extolled and acclaimed—though God, who is blessed, *b'rikh hu*, is truly beyond all acknowledgment and praise, or any expressions of gratitude or consolation ever spoken in the world. And respond with: *Amen*.

May abundant peace from heaven, and life, come to us and to all Israel. And respond with: *Amen*.

May the One who brings harmony on high, bring harmony to us and to all Israel [and to all who dwell on earth].

And respond with: *Amen*.

Mourners:

Yitgaddal v'yitkaddash sh'meih rabba, b'alma di v'ra, ki-r'uteih, v'yamlikh malkhuteih b'hayyeikhon u-v'yomeikhon u-v'hayyei d'khol beit yisra-el, ba-agala u-viz'man kariv, v'imru amen.

Congregation and mourners:

Y'hei sh'meih rabba m'varakh l'alam u-l'almei almayya.

Mourners:

Yitbarakh v'yishtabbah v'yitpa-ar v'yitromam v'yitnassei v'yit-haddar v'yit-alleh v'yit-hallal sh'meih d'kudsha, b'rikh hu, leilla min-kol birkhata v'shirata tushb'hata v'nehamata da-amiran b'alma, v'imru amen. Y'hei sh'lama rabba min sh'mayya v'hayyim aleinu v'al kol yisra-el, v'imru amen.

Oseh shalom bi-m'romav hu ya-aseh shalom aleinu v'al kol yisra-el [v'al kol yosh'vei teiveil], v'imru amen.

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