

יזכור

INTRODUCTION. Yizkor is a time set aside to formally include in our thoughts and prayers family and friends who have passed away. In reciting Yizkor, the veil between the worlds of the living and the dead becomes more transparent. For some, memories of family and friends evoked by the festival add to our sense of fullness and peace. For some, those memories bring sadness at the loss of those we loved. For still others, these memories may be disquieting. Whatever our circumstances, as we travel through the cycle of the year, the people who were once with us in person travel with us in spirit.

The opening to a heavenly world, which Yizkor evokes, is symbolized by holding a Torah during the service and our standing as we recite the prayers recalling those who have died. Some communities begin doing so as these opening meditations are recited; some do so when the personal prayers for the departed are recited (page 335).

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

WE RECALL. A prayer written by Mordecai M. Kaplan, Eugene Kohn, and Ira Eisenstein, and adapted here.

recited on the last day of the Festival.

people whose parents are living have a custom of leaving the service at the end of the service, but even those who do not yet need to say the personal prayers of Yizkor might remain and recite prayers for others as well as join in the personal prayers (beginning on page 336 below).

יהוה, מה אדם ותדענהו,
בן אנוש ותחשבהו,
אדם להקל דמה,
ימיו כצל עובר.
בבקר יציץ וחקל,
לערב ימולל ויבש.
למנות ימינו בן הודע
ונביא ללב חקמה.

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.

שְׁוִיִּתִי יְהוָה לְנִגְדֵי תָמִיד,
כִּי מִיְמִינֵי בַל אָמוּט.
לְכֹן שָׂמַח לִבִּי וַיִּגַּל כְּבוֹדִי,
אֶף בְּשָׂרֵי יִשְׁכֹּן לְבֶטֶח.

תהלים טז:ח-ט

ADONAI 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.

Psalm 16:8-9

A PERSONAL MEDITATION

Eternal God, Master of mercy, give me the gift of remembering.
May my memories of the dead be tender and true, undiminished
by time; let me recall them, and love them, as they were.

Shelter me with the gift of tears.

Let me express my senses of loss—my sorrow, my pain,
as well as my love, and words unspoken.

Bless me with the gift of prayer.

May I face You with an open heart, with trusting faith,
unembarrassed and unashamed.

Strengthen me with the gift of hope.

May I always believe in the beauty of life, the power of goodness,
the right to joy.

May I surrender my being, and the soul of the dead,
to Your all-knowing compassion.

*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 re-
member 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 a love or to a grief 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 for-
giveness, or at least soothed
by the passage of time.

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

—ROBERT SAKS

An Eternal Window

In a garden I once heard
a song or an ancient blessing.

And above the dark trees
a window is always lit, in
memory

of the face that looked out
of it,
and that face too

was in memory of another
lit window.

—YEHUDAH AMICHAI
(translated by Chana Bloch)

MEMORIAL PRAYERS

We rise.

We each continue in private meditation, selecting from among the following
and adding appropriate names as indicated.

Personal prayers may be added.

In memory of female relatives or friends

May God remember the soul of זְכוֹר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נַשְׁמַת

my mother _____ אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי

my wife _____ אִשְׁתִּי

my partner _____ בַּת זוגִי

my sister _____ אַחֹותִי

my daughter _____ בַּתִּי

my grandmother _____ סִבָּתִי

my relative _____ קְרוֹבָתִי

my friend _____ חֲבֵרָתִי

(others) _____

סֵהֲלָכָה לְעוֹלָמָהּ\שְׁהֲלָכוּ לְעוֹלָמָן.
הִנְנִי נוֹדֵב\נוֹדֵבֶת צְדָקָה בְּעַד הַזְכָּרָת
שְׁמֹתֶהּ\גְּשֹׁמוֹתֶיהֶן.

אֲנִי תָהִי נִפְשָׁה צְרוּרָה\תְּהִינָה נִפְשׁוֹתֶיהֶן צְרוּרוֹת
בְּצְרוּר הַחַיִּים וְתִהִי מְנוּחָתָהּ\מְנוּחָתָן כְּבוֹד,
לְעַד שְׁמֵחוֹת אֶת־פְּנֵיהֶּ, נְעִימוֹת בִּימֵינָךְ נִצַּח. אָמֵן.

who has/have gone to her/their eternal home. In loving
testimony to her life/their lives, I pledge *tzedakah* to help
perpetuate ideals important to her/them. Through such
deeds, and through prayer and remembrance, may
her soul/their souls 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.

MEMORIAL PRAYERS

We rise.

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

In memory of male relatives or friends:

May God remember the soul of יִזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נַשְׁמַת

my father _____ אָבִי מוֹרִי

my husband _____ אִישִׁי

my partner _____ בְּן זוגִי

my brother _____ אָחִי

my son _____ בְּנִי

my grandfather _____ סָבִי

my relative _____ קָרוֹבִי

my friend _____ חֲבֵרִי

(others) _____

שְׁהֶלֶךְ לְעוֹלָמוֹ\שְׁהֶלְכוּ לְעוֹלָמָם.

הַנְּנִי נוֹדֵב\נוֹדֵבֶת צְדָקָה בְּעַד הַזְּכָרֹת

בְּשִׁמְתוֹ\בְּשִׁמְתֵיהֶם.

אֲנֵא תְהִי נַפְשׁוֹ\צְרוּרָה\תְהִי־יָיִנָּה נִכְשׁוּתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת

בְּצָרוֹר הַחַיִּים וְתְהִי מְנוּחָתוֹ\מְנוּחָתָם כְּבוֹד,

שְׁבַע שְׂמָחוֹת אֶת־פְּנֵיךְ, נְעִימוֹת בִּימִינְךָ נְצַח. אָמֵן.

who has/have gone to his/their eternal home. In loving testimony to his life/their lives, I pledge *tzedakah* to help perpetuate ideals important to him/them. Through such deeds, and through prayer and remembrance, may his soul/their souls 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.*

TZEDAKAH צְדָקָה. 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: "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.

FOR THOSE WHO DIED IN DEFENSE OF THE STATE OF
ISRAEL AND IN ACTS OF TERROR

Some congregations add the following:

יִזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נַשְׁמוֹת כָּל־אֲחֵינוּ וְאֲחֵיוֹתֵינוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
שֶׁהִקְרִיבוּ אֶת־נַפְשֵׁיהֶם בְּדֶרֶךְ לְהַקְמֵת מְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל
וּבְהַגְנָתָהּ, וְכָל־אֵלֶּה שֶׁנִּטְבְּחוּ בְּמַעֲשֵׂה חַבְלָה. בְּעִבּוֹר
שְׂאֵנוּ מִתְּפִלָּיִם בְּעֵד הַזְּכָרֹת נִשְׁמָתָם. אָנָּה נוֹכַח
לְעוֹלָם הַדָּ גְבוּרָתָם וּמַסִּירוֹתָם וְתַמִּימוֹתָם, וְתַהֲיִינָה
נִפְשׁוֹתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת בְּצִרוּר הַחַיִּים וְתַהֲיִי מְנוּחָתָם כְּבוֹד,
שְׁבַע שְׂמַחוֹת אֶת־פְּנֵיהֶ, נְעִימוֹת בִּימֵינְךָ נָצַח. אָמֵן.

May God remember the souls of all those of the house of
Israel who sacrificed themselves to establish the State of Israel,
or who have perished in its defense, and those slaughtered in
acts of terror. In their memory we pray. May the memory of
their bravery, their dedication, and their innocence be with us
throughout time. May their souls be bound up in the bond of
life; may they be remembered with honor and may they rest in
peace at Your right hand forever. *Amen.*

IN MEMORY OF ALL THE DEAD

אֵל מְלֵא רַחֲמִים, שׁוֹכֵן בְּמְרוֹמַיִם, הַמְצֵא מְנוּחָה נְכוֹנָה
תַּחַת כַּנְפֵי הַשְּׂכִינָה, בְּמַעְלוֹת קְדוּשִׁים וְטְהוּרִים,
בְּזֶהַר הַרְקִיעַ מְזוּהָרִים, לְנַשְׁמוֹת כָּל־אֵלֶּה שֶׁהִזְכַּרְנוּ
הַיּוֹם לְבָרְכָהּ, שֶׁהִלְכוּ לְעוֹלָמָם, בְּגֵן עֵדֶן תַּהֲיִי מְנוּחָתָם.
אָנָּה בֹּעַל הַרְחָמִים, הַסְתִּירָם בְּסִתְרֵי כַּנְפֶיךָ לְעוֹלָמִים.
וְצִרוּר בְּצִרוּר הַחַיִּים אֶת־נַשְׁמוֹתֵיהֶם. יְהוּה הוּא נַחֲלָתָם.
וְיִנּוּחוּ בְּשָׁלוֹם עַל מִשְׁכַּבּוֹתֵיהֶם. וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן.

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.*

מְזֹמֹר לְדָוִד.
A PSALM OF DAVID
Mizmor l'david.

יְהוָה רֹעִי, לֹא אֶחְסָר.

ADONAI is my shepherd; I shall not want.
Adonai ro-i lo ehsar.

בְּנֵאֹת דָּשָׁא יִרְבִּיצֵנִי, עַל מֵי מְנַחֹת יִנְהַלֵּנִי,
God lays me down in green pastures, leads me to still waters,
Binot desheh yarbitzeini, al mei m'nuhot y'nahaleini.

נַפְשִׁי יִשׁוּבֵב, יִנְהַנֵּי בְּמַעְגְלֵי צְדָק לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ.
renews my life, guides me in right paths—for that is God's way.
Nafshi y'shoveiv, yanheini v'maglei tzedek l'ma-an sh'mo.

גַּם כִּי אֵלֶךְ בְּגֵיא צַלְמוֹת
Though I walk through a valley as dark as death,
Gam ki eileikh b'gei tzalmavet

לֹא אֵירָא רָע כִּי אַתָּה עִמָּדִי.
I fear no evil, for You are with me;
lo'ira ra ki atah imadi.

שִׁבְטְךָ וּמִשְׁעַנְתְּךָ הֵמָּה יִנְחַמְנִי.
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
Shivt'kha u-mishantekha heimah y'nahamuni.

תַּעֲרוֹךְ לִפְנֵי שִׁלְחָן נֶגֶד צָרָי,
You spread a table before me in full view of my foes;
Ta-arokh l'fanai shulhan neged tzor'rai,

דִּשְׁנַת בְּשֶׁמֶן רֹאשִׁי כּוֹסֵי רוּיָה.
You anoint my head with oil, my cup is overflowing.
Dishanta va-shemen roshi, kosi r'vayah.

אֵךְ טוֹב וְחֶסֶד יִרְדְּפוּנִי כָּל-יְמֵי חַיִּי,
Only goodness and steadfast love shall pursue me
all the days of my life,
Akh tov va-hesed yird'funi kol y'mei hayai,

וְשָׁבְתִי בְּבַיִת יְהוָה לְאָרְךָ יָמִים.
And I shall dwell in the house of ADONAI forever.
V'shavti b'veit Adonai l'orekh yamim.