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

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 gift of their lives and we are strengthened 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 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 gift of their lives and we are strengthened 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.

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(adapted from Mahzor Hadash)

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.

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, thoughtful 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.

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 strengthened by the blessings that they left us and the precious memories 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
Psalm 16:8–9. The verses in this passage come from Psalms 146:1–6, 90:6, and 90:12.

God is always near. Psalm 16:8–9.
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 right forefinger
of my daughter
of my father’s—
I remembered how clean
my fingernail
earnestly at
my friend
my sister
my partner
my wife
my mother
my brother
my husband
my relative
my relative
my partner
my husband
my father
my wife
my brother
my sister
my partner
my friend
my brother
my partner
my husband
my father
my wife
my brother
my sister
my partner
my friend
my brother
my partner
my husband
my father
my wife
my brother
my sister
my partner
my friend
my brother
my partner
my husband
my father
my wife
my brother
my sister
my partner
my friend
who has [have] gone to his [their] eternal home. In loving
testimony to his life [their lives], I pledge tz’dakah to help per-
petuate 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.

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 per-
petuate 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 husband __________________
my partner ____________________________________________
my brother __________________
my son __________________
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 per-
petuate 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 male relatives or friends:

יִזְכּוֹר אֱלֹהִים אֶת נִשְׁמָת
(אֶת־פָּנֶֽיךָ, נְעִימוֹת בִּימִינְךָ נֶֽצַח. אָמֵן.

In memory of female relatives or friends:

יִזְכּוֹר אֱלֹהִים אֶת נִשְׁמָת
(אֶת־פָּנֶֽיךָ, נְעִימוֹת בִּימִינְךָ נֶֽצַח. אָמֵן.

In memory of a mother
In memory of a father
In memory of a son
In memory of a daughter
In memory of a partner
In memory of a husband
In memory of a wife
In memory of a brother
In memory of a sister
In memory of a friend
In memory of a relative

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 influ-
ence for good.

"For I remember them as clean of justice, love, and care in
memory 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 influ-
ence for good."
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.

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 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.

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.

Exalted, compassionate God, 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.

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.
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.

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)
Mourners’ 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, exulted and acclaimed—though God, who is blessed, b’rākh 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’meh rabba, b’alma di v’ra, ki-r’uteih, v’yamlikh malkhuteih b’hayeikhon 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’meh rabba m’varakh l’alam u-l’almei almayya.

Mourners:
Yitbarakh v’yishtabbah v’yitpa∙ar v’yitnaseei v’yit∙haddar v’yit∙alleh v’yit∙hallal sh’meh d’kudsha, b’rākh hu, l’eilla min-kol birkhata v’shirata tushb’hata v’nehama 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.

Congregation and mourners:
Y’hei sh’meh rabba m’nunayyim aleinu.

Mourners:
Oseh shalom v’hu ya-aseh shalom aleinu v’al kol yisra-el [v’al kol yosh’vei teiveil], v’imru amen.

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