YIZKOR

Yizkor, which is recited on Pesach, Shavuot, and Shemini 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 these days, 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. In reciting Yizkor, the veil between the worlds of the living and the dead becomes more transparent.

Literally, yizkor means “remember.” During the Yizkor service, we take time to reflect on the lessons – taught through both word and deed – that we have learned from those who came before us. We draw upon those lessons for inspiration to improve our lives. We also commit ourselves to take action through pledging tzedakah (charity) in honor of our departed. The gift of tzedakah is a beautiful and tangible act of remembrance. Our tradition teaches that the merits for the tzedakah that we give are credited to the souls of those whom we recall. Participating in a Yizkor Service thus provides an opportunity both to remember, as well as to have our souls touch the souls of those we have lost.

Some of us were born Jewish, some of us have chosen Judaism, and some of us are not Jewish. All of us today remember parents, friends, and family who are Jewish and not Jewish. We embrace each other with love and care, building community and sharing dreams.

As a community, we recognize that no one who has lived has escaped hurting another, whether intentionally or inadvertently. Some of us may still be carrying wounds that were made by those we once loved and now have lost. Just as we can be angry with God and still pray, so do we affirm our capacity to remember and mourn despite our complicated feelings.

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 communal prayers.

May the memories of those we recall be a blessing in our lives.
ADONAI, what are human beings that You take account of them, mortalss 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.

—PSALM 144:3–4, 90:6, 90:12

For Yom Kippur:

On this solemn day we each make judgments about the quality of our life.

We re-examine our deeds and relationships with our community and with others.

We express our yearnings for a new year, a new beginning, a year during which we commit ourselves to work toward bringing health and peace to all.

We long for a year when individually and communally we shall strive to live in a way that is more reflective of the ideals that we cherish.

Now, in the midst of looking at our life and assessing its quality, we pause to reflect and to remember, and to dedicate ourselves anew.
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.

The deaths of those we now recall left holes in our lives, but we are grateful for the gift of their love. May their memory, recalled this day, be a blessing for us and all who come to know us.
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)
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)

BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS
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)

YESH KOCHAVIM
Yesh kochavim… there are stars whose light reaches earth

Only when they themselves are no more.

And there are people whose radiance illumines our memory

When they themselves are no longer in our midst.

These lights that shine in the darkest night

They light the way for humanity.

—HANNAH SENESH
IN MEMORY OF THOSE WE HAVE LOST

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 friends and relatives:

May God remember the soul of

my father אֱלֹהִים אֶת נִשְׁׁמַת אָבִי מֹרִי
my husband אָישִׁי בֶּן מוֹרִי
my partner בֶּן זִוגִי אֵהִי
my brother אָחִי בֵּנִי
my son סָבִי קְרוֹבִי
my grandfather קְרוֹבִי בְּׁנִי
my relative בְּׁרִי קְרוֹבִי
my friend יִנְּאָה יִנְּאָה

who has gone to his eternal home. In loving testimony to his life, I pledge tzedakah to help perpetuate ideals important to him. Through such deeds, and through prayer and remembrance, may his soul be bound up in the bond of life.

May I prove myself worthy of the many gifts with which he blessed me. May these moments of meditation strengthen the ties that link me to his memory. May he rest in peace forever in God’s presence. Amen.
IN MEMORY OF THOSE WE HAVE LOST

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 friends and relatives:

May God remember the soul of

who has gone to her eternal home. In loving testimony to her life, I pledge tzedakah to help perpetuate ideals important to her. Through such deeds, and through prayer and remembrance, may her soul be bound up in the bond of life.

May I prove myself worthy of the many gifts with which she blessed me. May these moments of meditation strengthen the ties that link me to her memory. May she rest in peace forever in God’s presence. Amen.
A MAN DOESN’T HAVE TIME

A man doesn’t have time in his life
to have time for everything.
He doesn’t have seasons enough to have
a season for every purpose. Ecclesiastes
was wrong about that.

A man needs to love and to hate at the same moment,
to laugh and cry with the same eyes,
with the same hands to throw stones and to gather them,
to make love in war and war in love.

And to hate and forgive and remember and forget,
to arrange and confuse, to eat and to digest
what history
takes years and years to do.

A man doesn’t have time.
When he loses he seeks, when he finds
he forgets, when he forgets he loves, when he loves
he begins to forget.

And his soul is seasoned, his soul
is very professional.
Only his body remains forever
an amateur. It tries and it misses,
gets muddled, doesn’t learn a thing,
drunk and blind in its pleasures
and its pains.

He will die as figs die in autumn,
shriveled and full of himself and sweet,
the leaves growing dry on the ground,
the bare branches already pointing to the place
where there’s time for everything.

—YEHUDAH AMICHAI
**IN EVERYTHING**

In everything there is at least an eighth part that is death. Its weight is not great. With that secret and carefree grace we carry it everywhere we go. On lovely awakenings, on journeys, in lovers’ words, in our distraction forgotten at the edges of our affairs it is always with us. Weighing hardly anything at all.

—LEA GOLDBERG  
*(translated by Rachel Tzvia Back)*

**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 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 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 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 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 tzedakah. 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 THOSE WHO DIED IN DEFENSE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND IN ACTS OF TERROR

May the people of Israel remember their sons and daughters who exposed themselves to mortal danger in those days of struggle prior to the establishment of the State of Israel and may they remember the soldiers of the Israeli Defense Forces who fell in the wars of Israel, as well as all those inside and outside the land who have fallen in terror attacks. May the people of Israel keep them in their memory; let them mourn the splendor of youth, the charm of valor, the holiness of will, and the devotion of sacrifice which came to an end in the heavy battles. May the loyal and valiant heroes of freedom and victory be sealed forever within the hearts of Israel.

The light of life is a finite flame. Like the Shabbat candles, life is kindled. Like the Hannukah candle, it is enough for one day yet a beacon through the ages. It burns, it glows, it radiates warmth and beauty, and then it fades and is no more.

We must not despair. We are more than a memory vanishing in the darkness. With our lives we give life. With our light we illumine the darkness. Something of us can never die; we move in the eternal cycle of darkness and death, of light and life.

The human spirit is the light of God, penetrating one’s most intimate being. (Proverbs 20:27)
Exalted, compassionate God, grant infinite rest in Your sheltering Presence, among the holy and the pure, to the souls of the millions of Jews: men, women, and children who were slaughtered, strangled, and burned in the Shoah. May they rest in paradise. Master of mercy, may they find perfect peace 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, grant infinite rest in Your sheltering Presence, among the holy and the pure, to the souls of the members of Congregation Sinai, along with all those whom we recall today. May their memory be a blessing, and may they rest in paradise. Master of mercy, may they find perfect peace 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

MIZMOR L’DAVID

Adonai ro-i, lo echsar.

Binot desheh yarbitzeini,
 al mei menuchot yenahaleini.

Nafshi yeshovev,
 yanchi v’mag’lei-tzedek l’ma-an shemo.

Gam ki elekh b’gei tzalmavet,
 lo ira ra ki ata imadi,
 shiv’tcha u’ mishantekha hema y’nachamuni.

Ta’aroch l’fanai shulchan neged tzor’rai,
 dishanta vashemen roshi, kosi r’vayah.

Ach tov va-chesed yird’funi kol-y’mei chayai,
 v’shavti b’veit Adonai l’orekh yamim.

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 through 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 will follow me all the days of my life,

And I shall dwell in the house of Adonai forever.
קדיש יתומים

Mourners:

יתבחל ויתקדים שם רבח,
בשלמה זי ברה, כרעה,
��לך ו��לך הבתים ובוומיך
והיה לכל בתי ישראל,
בשלמה ובם קרוב,
אמור אמן.

Congregation and Mourners:

יאה שם רבח מברכ לשלם ולשלמי עולם.

Mourners:

יתבר וחשפת וחפער וחידום
ותנשא וחיהר וחטף וחהל
שם י démarche, בריך היא,
לשלמה (בעש"ת לשלמה מלא)モノ ברכה וחיראה
ה tránh את והמתה זרובאי ושלמה,
אמרו אמן.

יאה שלמה רבחモノ שפייה,
והימים עלוון על כל ישראל
אמרו אמן.

עשה שלום בivr_xlimיווה מסה שלום
עלון על כל ישראל
אמרו אמן.
MOURNER’S KADDISH

Mourners:
Yitgaddal v’yitkaddash sh’meih rabba, b’alma di v’ra, ki-r’uteih, v’yamlikh malkhuteih b’chayyeikhon u-v’yomeikhon u-v’chayyei 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:

Y’hei sh’lama rabba min sh’mayya v’chayyim 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’imru amen.

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 say: Amen.

May God’s great name be blessed for ever and all time!
Blessed and celebrated, lauded and worshipped, exalted and honored, extolled and acclaimed be the name of the Holy One, who is blessed, beyond any blessing and praise, or any expressions of gratitude or consolation ever spoken in the world. And say: Amen.

May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life for us and all Israel. And say: Amen.

May the One who brings peace on high bring peace for us and all Israel. And say: Amen.
Forgetting someone is like forgetting to turn off the light in the backyard so it stays lit all the next day. But then it is the light that makes you remember.

The world is filled with remembering and forgetting like sea and dry land. Sometimes memory is the solid ground we stand on, sometimes memory is the sea that covers all things like the Flood. And forgetting is the dry land that saves, like Ararat.

And every person is a dam between past and future. When he dies the dam bursts, the past breaks into the future, and there is no before or after. All times becomes one time like our God: our time is one. Blessed be the memory of the dam.

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.

When a man dies, they say “He was gathered unto his fathers.” As long as he is alive, his fathers are gathered within him, each cell of his body and soul a delegate from one of his thousands of fathers since the beginning of time.