YIZKOR
FOR FESTIVALS

Adapted from
MAHZOR LEV SHALEM
Edward Feld, editor

THE RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY
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, even as we may not see their fulfillment.

—Mordecai M. Kaplan, Eugene Kohn, and Ira Eisenstein
(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, 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.

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.
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.

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.

In memory of male relatives or friends:

יזכור אלהים את שמה

(ア)בי

(參)안

(夫)妻

(子)子

(友)友

(別)別

(他)他

(の)の

(か)か

(他人)他人

(その他)その他

In memory of female relatives or friends:

יזכור אלהים את שמה

(阿)阿母

(参)参

(妻)妻

(子)子

(友)友

(他人)他人

(その他)その他

In memory of male relatives or friends:

In memory of female relatives or friends:

In memory of male relatives or friends:

In memory of female relatives or friends:

In memory of male relatives or friends:

In memory of female relatives or friends:

In memory of male relatives or friends:

In memory of female relatives or friends:

In memory of male relatives or friends:

In memory of female relatives or friends:
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 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 Paradise

Literal, "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.

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.

—ZELDA
(trans. Marcia Falk)
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’mei rabba, b’alma di v’ra, ki-r’uteih, v’yamlich 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’mei rabba m’varakh l’alam u-l’almei almayya.

Mourners:

Yitbarakh v’yishtabbah v’yitpa∙ar v’yitromam v’yitnasai v’yit haddar v’yit-alleh v’yit-hallal sh’mei d’kudsha, b’rikh hu, l’eilla 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-n’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’mei rabba v’al kol shemayya v’al kol yisra-ela.

Mourners:

Y’hei sh’lma rabba min sh’mayya v’hayyim aleinu v’al kol yisra-el, v’imru amen.