



Yizkor

The prayers for the second day of the holiday mirror those of the first, with the requisite additions for Shabbat. One significant difference is the recitation of *Yizkor* on the second morning of Shavuot. *Yizkor*, a special memorial prayer for the departed, is recited four times a year. The fourth and final time of each year is the second day of Shavuot.

The word “*Yizkor*” means “Remember.” It is the first word of the prayer and also represents its overall theme. In this prayer, we beseech G-d to remember favorably the souls of our relatives who have passed on in the merit of the charity that we will give in their honor.

It is preferable to recite *Yizkor* in a congregational setting because of the special power of congregational prayer and the presence of the Torah scrolls. Nevertheless, when it is not possible to attend services, *Yizkor* can be recited at home.

Our sages tell us that there are certain spiritually elevated times when G-d is “extra near,” and consequently, the prayers of an individual are as powerful as communal prayers. When we are deprived of the ability to pray in a communal setting, it is safe to assume that we are in one of those special periods when heartfelt prayers recited in solitude are as effective as those recited with the congregation.

WHY?

Paradise is not a monolithic world but one comprised of myriad dimensions and levels.

The soul’s entry point in the Afterlife is shaped by its actions in this world—the spiritual revelations it effected through the many *mitzvot* it performed and the spiritual sensitivity it developed while enclothed in a physical body. It is true that the soul is in a state of progressive elevation to higher levels and deeper experiences, but all of it is based on, and therefore limited by, the actions it took while alive in the physical world.

There is, however, an intervention that enables us to positively influence what happens to a soul in the Afterlife. Good deeds performed in the memory of the deceased are credited to them and give their soul a new independent elevation.

This results from the fact that while the Afterlife, also known as Gan Eden or Paradise, is a most *pleasurable* realm, it is not the most *important* realm; with all of its deficiencies, our physical world is of greater importance. Only here is it possible to perform a mitzvah that affects both the physical and spiritual realms and fulfills the purpose of Creation.

The ability to perform *mitzvot* is what the soul lacks in the Afterlife, and our performance of them on its behalf is the most potent way to elevate a soul. Souls gain additional merit if their memory spur their loved ones to improve their ways. This is especially true regarding *mitzvot* done by children on behalf of their departed parents.

This is the function of *Yizkor*, where we pledge to give *tzedakah* in honor of our departed parents

and loved ones, and thereby bring merit to their souls and facilitate their elevation to higher and greater levels in the hereafter. By pledging to give charity—and following up on that pledge after the conclusion of the holiday—we are performing a positive physical deed in this world, something that the departed can no longer do.

HOW?

- *Yizkor* is customarily recited only by those who have at least one deceased parent.
- After reciting the morning (*Shacharit*) prayers, take a moment to meditate and emotionally connect with the loved ones in your life who have passed away.
- When *Yizkor* is recited at shul, all those who are lucky enough to have both parents alive depart the sanctuary for the duration of *Yizkor*. This can be implemented at home as well.

- Identify which passage of *Yizkor* is appropriate for you (depending on whether you are reciting it for a father, mother, etc.). Then recite the text, which appears below.
- If you wish, you can say the *Kel malei rachamim* prayer on p. 466.)
- Then we recite the *Av harachamim* prayer, wherein we ask G-d to remember the countless martyrs who lovingly gave their lives to sanctify G-d's name (*Siddur*, p. 338).
- Take another moment to contemplate your connection with your loved ones and the immense gratification they are feeling at this moment—for you are lovingly remembering them and pledging to charity in their behalf. Bask in the newly strengthened relationship!
- Remember after the holiday to make good on your pledge.

Whenever the name of a deceased is mentioned in the *Yizkor* service, it is given in the following form: the Hebrew name of the deceased following by בן, son of — or, בת, daughter of — and then the deceased's Mother's Hebrew name.

FOR ONE'S FATHER

יְזַכֵּר אֱלֹהִים נְשָׁמוֹת אֲבֹת מוֹרֵי (name of the deceased and that of his mother) שְׁחָלָךְ
 לְעוֹלָמוֹ, בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁבִלֵי נֶדֶר אֶתֶן צְדָקָה בְּעֵדוֹ, בְּשֹׁכֵר זֶה תִּהְיֶה נִפְשׁוֹ צְרוּרָה
 בְּצִרוֹר הַחַיִּים, עִם נְשָׁמוֹת אֲבֹתָהֶם יִצְחָק וְיִשְׂקָב, שָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה,
 וְעִם שְׂאֵר צְדִיקִים וְצְדִיקָנוֹת שְׁבִנְי עֵדֶן, וְנֹאמַר: אָמֵן:

May G-d remember the soul of my father, my teacher, (name of the deceased and that of his mother) who has gone onto his world, because, without making a vow, I shall give to charity on his behalf. As reward for this, may his soul be bound in the Bond of Life, together with the souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah; and together with the other righteous men and women in the Garden of Eden. Now let us respond: Amen.

FOR ONE'S MOTHER

(name of the deceased and that of her mother) יזכור אלהים נשמת אמי מורתִי
שְׁהִלְכָה לְעוֹלָמָהּ, בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁפָלִי נָדַר אֶתֶן צְדָקָה בְּעֵדָהּ, בְּשֹׁכֵר זֶה תִּהְיֶה
נִפְשָׁה צְרוּרָה בְּצִרוּר הַחַיִּים, עִם נִשְׁמוֹת אֲבֹרָהּם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, שָׂרָה רִבְקָה
רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, וְעִם שְׂאֵר צְדִיקִים וְצְדִיקָנוֹת שְׁבִנֵּי עֵדֶן, וְנֹאמַר: אָמֵן:

May G-d remember the soul of my Mother, my teacher, (name of the deceased and that of her mother) who has gone on to her world, because, without making a vow, I shall give to charity on her behalf. As reward for this, May her soul be bound in the Bond of Life, together with the souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah; and together with the other righteous men and women in the Garden of Eden. Now let us respond: Amen.

FOR A MALE RELATIVE

husband son brother uncle grandfather
יזכור אלהים נשמת זקני | דודי | אחי | בני | בעלי
(name of the deceased and that of his mother) שְׁהִלְכָה לְעוֹלָמוֹ, בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁפָלִי נָדַר
אֶתֶן צְדָקָה בְּעֵדוֹ, בְּשֹׁכֵר זֶה תִּהְיֶה נִפְשׁוֹ צְרוּרָה בְּצִרוּר הַחַיִּים, עִם נִשְׁמוֹת
אֲבֹרָהּם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, שָׂרָה רִבְקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, וְעִם שְׂאֵר צְדִיקִים וְצְדִיקָנוֹת
שְׁבִנֵּי עֵדֶן, וְנֹאמַר: אָמֵן:

May God remember the soul of my grandfather/uncle/brother/son/husband (name of the deceased and that of his mother) who has gone on to his world, because, without making a vow, I shall give to charity on his behalf. As reward for this, may his soul be bound in the Bond of Life, together with the souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah; and together with the other righteous men and women in the Garden of Eden. Now let us respond: Amen.

FOR A FEMALE RELATIVE

wife daughter sister aunt grandmother
יזכור אלהים נשמת זקנתי | דודתי | אחותי | בתי | אשתי
(name of the deceased and that of her mother) שְׁהִלְכָה לְעוֹלָמָהּ, בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁפָלִי נָדַר
אֶתֶן צְדָקָה בְּעֵדָהּ, בְּשֹׁכֵר זֶה תִּהְיֶה נִפְשָׁה צְרוּרָה בְּצִרוּר הַחַיִּים, עִם נִשְׁמוֹת
אֲבֹרָהּם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, שָׂרָה רִבְקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, וְעִם שְׂאֵר צְדִיקִים וְצְדִיקָנוֹת
שְׁבִנֵּי עֵדֶן, וְנֹאמַר: אָמֵן:

May G-d remember the soul of my grandmother/aunt/sister/daughter/wife (name of the deceased and that of her mother) who has gone on to her world because, without making a vow, I shall give to charity on her behalf. As reward for this, may her soul be bound in the Bond of Life, together with the souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah; and together with the other righteous men and women in the Garden of Eden. Now let us respond: Amen.

FOR ONE'S EXTENDED FAMILY

יִזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים נְשָׁמוֹת זְקֵנֵי וְזִקְנוֹתַי, דּוֹדֵי וְדוֹדוֹתַי, אַחֵי וְאַחֵיֹתַי, הֵן מֵצַד אָבִי, הֵן מֵצַד אִמִּי, שֶׁהָלְכוּ לְעוֹלָמָם, בְּעֵבוֹר שְׁבִלֵי נֶדֶר אֶתֵּן צְדָקָה בְּעַדָם, בְּשִׁבְרֵי זֶה תִּתְּיֵנָה נַפְשׁוֹתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת בְּצִרוֹר הַחַיִּים, עִם נְשָׁמוֹת אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, שָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, וְעִם שְׂאֵר צְדִיקִים וְצַדִּיקוֹת שְׁבִנְיָן עַד, וְנֹאמַר: אָמֵן:

May G-d remember the souls of my grandfathers and grandmothers, uncles and aunts, brothers and sisters both on my father's side and on my mother's side, who went on to their world, because, without making a vow, I shall give to charity on their behalf. As reward for this, may their souls be bound in the Bond of Life, together with the souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah; and together with the other righteous men and women in the Garden of Eden.

Now let us respond: Amen.

The Rohr Jewish Learning Institute

Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky
Chairman

George Rohr
Principal Benefactor

Rabbi Efraim Mintz
Executive Director

EDITOR

Rabbi Mordechai Dinerman

COORDINATOR

Rabbi Shmuly Karp

PRODUCTION TEAM

Chaya Mushka Kanner

Rochel Karp

Rivki Mockin

Mimi Palace

EDITORIAL BOARD

Rabbi Heshy Epstein, Columbia, SC

Rabbi Dovid Flinkenstein, Wilmette, IL

Rabbi Chaim Hanoka, Pasadena, CA

Rabbi Menachem Klein, Memphis, TN

Rabbi Shalom Lubin, Parsippany, NJ

