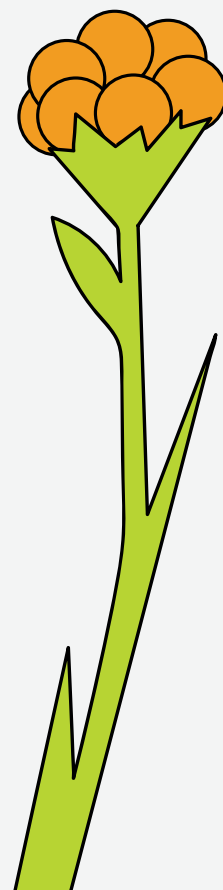


Yom HaZikaron

Viewing the Ceremony– Suggested Methods for Active and Involved Viewing and for Processing the Ceremony Contents



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+ For the activity leader

Masa Israel invites you to gather members of your organizations and communities for a group screening of our annual Yom HaZikaron Ceremony, which will be broadcast on Facebook live stream. Join the 5,000 individuals on the ground and tens of thousands around the globe, to take part in Israel's largest English-language ceremony for over a decade.

Hear of the tremendous contributions of lone soldiers and Masa alumni to the Israeli story and connect in a visceral way to the moments that make a Nation. Deepen the sense of community and Peoplehood bonding us together throughout the world, while paying tribute and respect to the modern heroes of our Nation.

**Yom Hazikaron 2020: Monday, April 27th:
1:00 - 2:30 pm EST – For more information,
[click here.](#)**

Possible methods:

- **Between text and context**

- o Before the ceremony screening: the participants receive a text that appears in the film (they still don't know where or in what context) and learn about its meaning.

Suggested texts:

- Yizkor

Yizkor – May God remember the soul of my father, my teacher (mention the person's Hebrew name and the name of his mother) who has gone to his eternal world,

Because I will – without obligating myself with a vow – donate charity for his sake.

In this merit, may his soul be bound up in the bond of life,

With the souls of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, And with the other righteous men and women who are in the Garden of Eden; and let us say, Amen.

(The above Yizkor prayer is the original prayer written to mention the names of the deceased. It is said on some Jewish holidays at Ashkenazi synagogues by those who have lost one or

both of their parents. The later Yizkor prayers (memorializing IDF soldiers, Holocaust victims, etc.) were based on this prayer text.

Yizkor for those who fell in Israel's wars

May the nation of Israel remember its faithful and courageous sons and daughters –the soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces, and all members of the undergrounds and brigades, the warriors in the battles at sea, members of the intelligence community, security personnel, policemen, and those in the prison service – who gave up their lives in war to ensure the existence of Israel. And all those who were killed within Israel and outside of Israel at the hands of murderers and terrorists.

May Israel remember and be blessed in its progeny and mourn the radiance of their youth, the glory of their heroism, the purity of their will, and the selflessness of those who fell in the costly wars.

May the fallen of the wars of Israel, crowned with victory, be inscribed upon the hearts of Israel for all generations.

The ceremony features the Yizkor prayer for fallen IDF soldiers, which is based on the original Yizkor prayer. What differences do you find? What does each text emphasize?

Does the general version promote memory or does it, perhaps, foster forgetting? Why? For whom are the general prayers better suited – those with no connection to the fallen, who are thereby enabled to participate in the general remembrance of them, or the relatives of the fallen, who are thereby enabled to maintain the privacy of their mourning?

+ For the activity leader

The Yizkor prayer was composed after the massacre of the European Jewish communities in the First Crusade (1096), but the text recited at the ceremonies is

very different from the original. It is based on the eulogy delivered by Berl Katzenelson for those who fell in the Battle of Tel Hai (1920), which was, essentially, a secular version of the original prayer (among other things, Katzenelson changed the opening from "May God remember" to "May the nation of Israel remember").

At the end of Israel's War of Independence, Culture Officer Ahuvia Malchin and poet Aharon Ze'ev adapted Katzenelson's eulogy to create a prayer for the memory of those who fell in the war, and a number of years later a version was created for Holocaust Day as well. The El Maleh Rachamim prayer has been said at funerals and at gravesites in Ashkenazi communities since the 17th century. These two prayers are part of a more ancient custom – Hazkarat Neshamot ("mentioning of souls") – first documented in the ninth-century C.E. Midrash Tanhuma, where it is written: "That is why we are accustomed to mention the dead on Shabbat, so that they do not return to Gehinnom [purgatory]" (Parashat Ha'azinu). The lighting of memorial candles is also linked to the custom of Hazkarat Neshamot. The practice was first noted explicitly in the Shulchan Aruch (16th century).

• The "Anthropologist"

- Before the film is screened – instruct the participants to think like anthropologists studying an unfamiliar culture, and to compile as many questions as possible based on the ceremony viewed and every custom that is new/foreign to them, e.g.:
 - **Why do people stand at attention when they hear the siren? How did this custom develop?** (Answer: The minute of silence is not a Jewish

custom. It is a practice that was observed for the first time in Cape Town, South Africa, on May 14, 1918 – exactly 30 years before the State of Israel was founded. On that day, the mayor of Cape Town, Sir Harry Hands, called upon the city's residents to stand for two minutes in the afternoon, to remember those who fell in World War I and to thank those who returned from the horrors of war. In Cape Town, at that time, it was customary to fire a cannon every day at 12:00, so that the ships in the harbor could set their clocks. The cannon fire indicated the start of the two-minute silence. Once the urban din had hushed, a trumpeter played a melancholy tune outside City Hall. When the cannon fired the next day, the city residents again stood silent, as they did on the following days, until January 17, 1920, a year and two months after the war ended in November 1918.

In London, as the anniversary of the war's end approached, preparations got underway for an annual day of remembrance for the fallen. Sir James Percy FitzPatrick, a South African businessman, author, and politician, heard about the initiative and sent a message to King George V, proposing that the two-minute silence observed in Cape Town be instituted on this day. His proposal was approved, and on November 11, 1919, the first Armistice Day was observed throughout the British Empire and included a two-minute

silence at 11:00, the hour when the armistice went into effect.

Armistice Day came to Mandatory Palestine only in 1925, when Field Marshal Herbert Plumer became High Commissioner of Palestine. That November, the Mandate authorities organized Armistice Day ceremonies in the big cities, and the Mandate subjects were called upon to participate in them and, in particular, to observe the two-minute silence, which in Jerusalem was marked by three shooting barrages and in Tel Aviv by a siren. The Chief Rabbinate composed a special prayer that was read in the synagogues. Armistice Day was observed in Palestine for over 20 years and became fixed in the minds and hearts of the 1948 generation as the proper way of recognizing and remembering those fallen in war. Israel's War of Independence ended shortly before the first Independence Day; consequently, no memorial day was held to honor the fallen that year. In its stead, recognition of the fallen was incorporated in the Independence Day festivities. This mix of joy and sorrow in a single day seemed appropriate to the state leadership, and it was therefore decided to continue that form of observance on the next Independence Day, in 1950. After the second Independence Day, however, bereaved families complained about the memory of their loved ones being eclipsed by the general celebration. It was

then decided to institute a day of remembrance for the war fallen, on a different date. A committee was charged with determining the date and its observance practices, but the consultations dragged on and no date had been chosen as the third Independence Day approached. As time was running out, it was decided that Yom HaZikaron would be observed on the day before Independence Day 1951. Nearly all of the Yom HaZikaron traditions now familiar to us were already present on the first Yom HaZikaron. That day featured two two-minute silences – one in the morning and one in the evening – which were inaugurated by the siren system that had been created in order to warn of enemy attacks.

- **Why do we put stickers with red flowers (Blood of the Maccabees) on lapels? How did this custom originate?** (Answer: Schools started holding Yom HaZikaron ceremonies in 1955. That year also witnessed the introduction of the custom of wearing Blood of the Maccabees flowers on lapels – later replaced by stickers with pictures of the flower. This custom was also borrowed from the British Armistice Day. From 1921 on, the poppy came to symbolize the day of mourning, and the custom spread of wearing a real or paper poppy on one's lapel. The practice was inspired by the poem "In Flanders Fields," written in 1915

by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, a Canadian physician, about the red poppies growing in the battlefield where his comrades had fallen. Inspired, apparently, by this song, botanist Ephraim Hareuveni gave the Blood of the Maccabees flower its name, recalling the fields where the blood of the Maccabees was shed. The flower's association with the ancient combatants and their heroism made it a perfect substitute for the poppy, and a natural Yom HaZikaron symbol.)

- Why is the flag lowered to half-mast? (Answer: Lowering flags to half-mast is a mourning custom that originated in Great Britain in the 17th century.)
- **What is the El Maleh Rachamim prayer?**

The prayer is a mourning practice. It is said at gravesites after burial, at azkara (memorial services on the anniversary of a person's passing), in synagogues as part of Hazakarat Neshamot (Yizkor) during the three pilgrimage festivals (seventh day of Passover, Shavout, and Simchat Torah), and on Yom Kippur. In our time, it has also been incorporated into state memorial ceremonies, including those of Holocaust Day and Memorial Day for the Fallen Soldiers of Israel and Victims of Terrorism. El Maleh Rachamim appears to have been composed in 17th century Poland, in the wake of the pogroms of 1648-1649.

- The kaddish and El Maleh Rachamim texts are meant to have a calming effect, to prevent anger and guilt feelings, and to give the mourner social support. It conveys a plea and hope that, by virtue of prayer (or tzedakah, charity) "the deceased will find peace in Gan Eden, and that "the All-Merciful One will shelter him (her) with the cover of His wings forever, and bind his (her) soul in the bond of life." The prayer concludes with the plea that the deceased "rest in his (her) resting-place in peace; and let us say: Amen."
- o After the film screening
 - One option is to gather everyone in a circle, and distribute before the participants questions you thought about in advance, and their answers. In this round, each participant raises the questions they have, and you can decide what can be answered then and there, and what requires further study.
 - You can discuss ceremony and mourning customs in the participants' communities, and compare them with what they saw in the ceremony. Ask them to share how ceremonies are observed in the communities, how their practices are similar to, or differ from, what they viewed in the film. (For the activity leader: The more universal the bereavement experience appears, the more marked it is by cultural patterns. Every culture shapes its own mourning patterns:

not only special ceremonies but also emotional and conceptual attitudes toward death and the trauma of bereavement. It is worth trying to highlight the cultural differences.)