

Unveiling Service

ההמת מצבה

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הקמת מצבה

In Western European countries and in America, it has become the custom to mark the setting of the tombstone with a service. In America, the tombstone or marker is covered with a cloth which is removed by the family during the service, so the ritual is called the “unveiling.”

The unveiling usually takes place near the first yahrzeit, or twelve months after the death, but it may take place as soon as thirty days after the death or after the twelve-month mark. While there is no

traditional basis for this service, except for the custom of visiting the grave on the day of the yahrzeit, it has become an accepted practice, offering the family an additional opportunity to pay tribute to their loved one together.

The ceremony does not require the presence of a rabbi or cantor; a family member or friend may lead the service in Hebrew or in English. There is no set liturgy for an unveiling. You can follow the service in this booklet, or you can substitute or add other psalms, poems, or readings as well as personal reflections or reminiscences.

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- Begin the service with one or more of the following readings, in Hebrew or English or with other psalms, poems, or readings that you have chosen.

PSALM 23

מִזְמֹר לְדֹד

ה' רְעֵי לֹא אָחָסֶר :

בְּנֹאות דָשָׁא יְרֵבִיצֶנִי

עַל-מַיִם מִנְחֹות יְנָהָלֶן :

נִפְשֵׁי יְשׁוּבָב

יִנְחַנֵּי בְמַעְגֵלִי-צָדָה לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ :

גַם כִּי-אָלֶר בְּגַיאָ צְלָמֹות

לֹא-אִירָא רָע כִּי-אַתָּה עַמְדִי

שְׁבַטְךָ וּמְשֻׁעַטְתָּה הַמָּה יִנְחַמְּנֵי :

תְּעַרְךָ לִפְנֵי שְׁלָחֵן נִגְדָּצָרִי

דְּשִׁנְתָּה בְשָׁמְךָ רָאשִׁי

פּוֹסִי רְוִיהָ :

אָרֶתֶב וּחָסֵד יַרְדָּפּוּנִי

כָּל-יְמִי חַי

וּשְׁבָתִי בְבִתְתָּהָה

לְאַזְרָה יְמִים :

A Psalm of David.
Adonai is my shepherd;
I shall not want.
God makes me lie down in
green pastures.
God leads me beside the still
waters.
God restores my soul.
God leads me in the paths of
righteousness
for God's name's sake.
Though I walk through the
valley of the shadow of Death,
I will fear no evil: for You are
with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they
comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my
enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy
shall follow me all the days of
my life,
and I will dwell in the house of
Adonai forever.

PSALM 121

שִׁיר לְמַעַלּוֹת

אֲשֶׁר עַיִן אֶל-הַהֲרִים מִאֵין יָאָעָזֶר :

עַזְרִי מִעַם ה' עָשָׂה שְׁמִים וְאָרֶץ :

אֶל-יִתְןֵן לְפָוֹת רְגָלֶךָ אֶל-יְנוּם שְׁמָרֶךָ :

הָנָה לְאֶנוּם וְלֹא יִשְׁן שְׁמָרֶךָ יִשְׁרָאֵל :

ה' שְׁמָרֶךָ ה' אֶלְךָ עַל-יָד יְמִינֶךָ :

וּמְמַחְמַשׁ לְאִיְכָה וַיָּרֶת בְּלִילָה :

ה' יִשְׁמַרְךָ מִכְלִרְעָ יִשְׁמַר אֶת-גְּפָנָךָ :

ה' יִשְׁמַר-צַאֲתָךְ וּבָאָךְ מַעֲתָה וְעַד-עוֹלָם :

A song for ascents.
I turn my eyes to the
mountains; from where will
my help come?
My help comes from
Adonai, maker of heaven
and earth.
God will not let your foot
give way; your guardian
will not slumber;
See, the guardian of Israel
neither slumbers nor
sleeps!
Adonai is your guardian,
Adonai is your protection
at your right hand.
By day the sun will not
strike you, nor the moon
by night.
Adonai will guard you from
all harm; God will guard
your life.
Adonai will guard your
going and coming now and
forever.

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הקמת מצבה

A LITANY OF REMEMBRANCE

by Rabbi Sylvan Kamens and Rabbi Jack Riemer

At the rising sun and at its going down, we remember them.
At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter, we remember them.
At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring, we remember them.
At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer, we remember them.
At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of the autumn, we remember them.
At the beginning of the year and when it ends, we remember them.
As long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us, as we remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength, we remember them.
When we are lost and sick at heart, we remember them.
When we have decisions that are difficult to make, we remember them.
When we have joy we crave to share, we remember them.
When we have achievements that are based on theirs, we remember them.
For as long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us, as we remember them.

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Unveiling Service

הקמת מצבה

- Remove the cloth and read what is written on the marker out loud. Then continue the service:

In the name of the family of _____ and in the presence of his/her family (and friends), we consecrate this marker to his/her memory, as a token of our love and respect.

FOR A MAN

תְּהִי נִשְׁמָתוֹ צְרוּה בָּצְרוֹר הַחַיִּים. אָמֵן.

T'hi nishmato tz'rurah bitzror ha-hayim. Amen.
May his soul be bound up in the bond of life. Amen.

FOR A WOMAN

תְּהִי נִשְׁמָתָה צְרוּה בָּצְרוֹר הַחַיִּים. אָמֵן.

T'hi nishmatah tz'rurah bitzror ha-hayim. Amen.
May her soul be bound up in the bond of life. Amen.

Almighty God, eternal Creator, we are thankful for the life of _____, for the years which he/she was granted, and for the privilege of having shared those years. May the memory of his/her _____ [mention characteristics like:]

• Devotion to family & friends	• Integrity	• Courage	• Dedication to his/her work	• Intellectual curiosity
• Thoughtfulness	• Patience	• Loyalty	• Sense of humor	• Love of nature

continue to inspire us, so that we may live better lives. O Adonai, help us all honor _____'s memory through our daily lives. Comfort us, and grant us strength, for You are our Rock and Redeemer. **Amen.**

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הקמת מצבה

- If you wish, invite family members and friends to share reflections. They may like to talk about their experience of mourning or share a memory of the person whose marker is being unveiled. These reflections are optional and the service is still complete without personal reflections. After this time for sharing, continue the service:

הרופא לשׁבורי לב וכְּחַבֵּשׁ לְעַצּוֹתֶם:

Ha-rofeh li-shvurei leiv u-m'habeish l'atzvotam.

Adonai heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds.

Psalm 147:3

Almighty God, Master of mercy, whose compassion endures forever, let neither death nor sorrow have dominion over us. Grant comfort, strength and consolation to those who mourn _____, as it is written: “Adonai shall be your enduring light, and the days of your mourning shall come to an end.”

Bless this family with love and peace, that they may serve You with a perfect heart.

Accept our act of devotion, Adonai, as we consecrate this monument to the memory of _____ with love and respect.

FOR A MAN

תְּהִי נִשְׁמָתוֹ צְרוּה בָּצָרָר הַחַיִם. אָמֵן.

T'hi nishmato tz'rurah bitzror ha-hayim. Amen.
May his soul be bound up in the bond of life. Amen.

FOR A WOMAN

תְּהִי נִשְׁמָתָה צְרוּה בָּצָרָר הַחַיִם. אָמֵן.

T'hi nishmatah tz'rurah bitzror ha-hayim. Amen.
May her soul be bound up in the bond of life. Amen.

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הקמת מצבה

- Recite the following prayer in Hebrew and/or English:

FOR A MAN

אל מלא רחמים שוכן במרומים,
המצא מנוחה נכונה על כנפי השכינה,
במעלות קדושים וטהורים
כבוד הרקיע מזהירים
את נשמת בן בנ
שלה לעוֹלָמוֹ,
בנו עדן תהא מנוחתו.
אנא, בעל הרחמים, הסתירנו
בסטר כנפיו לעולמים,
וצרור בצרור החיים את נשמתו.
ה' הוא נחלתנו וננום בשלום על משכנו.
ונאמר אמן.

FOR A WOMAN

אל מלא רחמים שוכן במרומים,
המצא מנוחה נכונה על כנפי השכינה,
במעלות קדושים וטהורים
כבוד הרקיע מזהירים
את נשמת בַת בָּת
שלה לעולמה,
בגנו עדן תהא מנוחתה,
אנא, בעל הרחמים, הסתירנה
בסטר כנפיו לעולמים,
וצרור בצרור החיים את נשמתה.
ה' הוא נחלתנה ותנום בשלום על משכנה.
ונאמר אמן.

El maleh rachamim,
O God, exalted and full of compassion,
grant perfect peace in Your sheltering Presence,
among the holy and pure, to the soul of

who has gone to his/her eternal home.
Master of mercy, we beseech You,
remember all the worthy and righteous deeds
that he/she performed in the land of the living.
May his/her soul be bound up in the bond of life.
Adonai is his/her portion.
May he/she rest in peace.
Let us say: **Amen.**

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הקמת מצבה

- If there is no minyan (ten Jews over the age of bar/bat mitzvah), the service ends here. If a minyan is present, conclude the service with the Mourner's Kaddish:

MOURNERS

Yitgadal v'yitkadas sh'meih raba
b'alma di v'ra kiruteih,
v'yamlikh malkhuteih,
b'haveikhon u-v'yomeikhon
u-v'havei d'khol beit yisrael,
ba-agala u-vizman kariv, v'imru amen.

ALL TOGETHER

Y'hei sh'meih raba m'varakh l'alam u-l'almei almaya.

MOURNERS

Yitbarakh v'yishtabah, v'yitpa-ar v'yitromam, v'yitnasei, v'yit-hadar v'yitaleh v'yit-halal sh'meih d'kudsha, b'rikh hu, l'eila min kol birkhata v'shirata, tushb'hata v'nehamata da-amiran b'alma, v'imru **amen**.

Y'hei sh'lama raba min sh'maya v'hayim aleinu v'al kol yisrael, v'imru **amen**.

Oseh shalom bimromav hu ya-aseh shalom aleinu v'al kol yisrael, v'imru **amen**.

תִּתְגַּדֵּל וַיִּתְהַדֵּשׁ שְׁמָה רְبָא.
בָּעַלְמָא דִּי בָּרָא כְּרֻעָותָה,
יִמְלִיכָה מֶלֶכְוָתָה
בְּחִיבָּכָו וּבְיוֹמִיכָו
בְּתִימָא דְּכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזָמָן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

הִיא שְׁמָה רְבָא מְבָרָה לְעַלְמָם וְלְעַלְמִיאָה.

תִּתְבֹּרָה וַיִּשְׁתַּבְּחָה וַיִּתְפָּאֵר וַיִּתְרוֹמֵם וַיִּתְנַשֵּׁא
וַיִּתְהַדֵּר וַיִּתְעַלֵּה וַיִּתְהַלֵּל שְׁמָה דָקְדָשָׁא. בָּרִיךְ הוּא,
לָעַלָּא מִן כָּל בְּרִכְתָּא וּשְׁירִתָּא תְּשִׁבְחָתָא וּנְחַמְתָּא,
דָאָמְרוּ בָעַלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

הִיא שְׁלָמָה רְבָא מִן שְׁמִיאָה, וְחַיִים עַלְיָנוּ
וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

עוֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם בְּמַרְוּמִיוֹ, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם עַלְיָנוּ
וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

- Some people have the custom to ritually wash their hands as they leave the cemetery.



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WITH YOU ON YOUR JEWISH JOURNEY

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