

UNVEILING SERVICE הקמה 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, that is, twelve months after the death, but it may be as soon after as thirty days, or after a year has passed. 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.



UNVEILING SERVICE

הקמח מצבה

- 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.

מזמור לדוד

PSALM 23

מזמור לדוד
 יי רעי לא אֶחָסֵר:
 בְּנֵאוֹת דָּשָׁא יִרְבִּיצֵנִי
 עַל־מֵי מְנַחֹת יִנְהַלֵּנִי:
 נִפְשִׁי יִשׁוּבֵב
 יִנְחֵנִי בְּמַעְגְלֵי־צֶדֶק לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ:
 גַּם כִּי־אֵלֶךְ בְּגֵיא צַלְמוֹת
 לֹא־אִירָא רָע כִּי־אַתָּה עִמָּדִי
 שְׁבֹטְךָ וּמִשְׁעַנְתְּךָ הִפְמֵה יִנְחֵמֵנִי:
 תַּעְרֹךְ לִפְנֵי שְׁלֹחַן נֶגֶד צָרָרִי
 דִּשְׁנֹת בְּשֶׁמֶן רֹאשִׁי
 בּוֹסִי רִוְיָה:
 אַף, טוֹב וְחָסֵד יִרְדְּפוּנִי
 כָּל־יְמֵי חַיִּי
 וְשִׁבְתִּי בְּבֵית־יְהוָה
 לְאָרְךָ יָמִים:

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.

שיר למעלות

PSALM 121

אֲשָׂא עֵינַי אֶל־הַהָרִים מֵאֵין יְבֵא עֲזָרִי:
 עֲזָרִי מֵעַם יִי עֲשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ:
 אֶל־יִתֵּן לְמוֹט רַגְלִיךָ אֶל־יְנוּם שְׁמֹרֶךָ:
 הִנֵּה לֹא יְנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן שׁוֹמֵר וְשָׂרְאֵל:
 יִי שְׁמֹרֶךָ יִי צִלְךָ עַל־יַד יְמִינֶךָ:
 יוֹמָם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לֹא־יִכְבֶּה וַיָּרַח בַּלַּיְלָה:
 יִי יִשְׁמְרֶךָ מִכָּל־רָע יִשְׁמַר אֶת־נַפְשֶׁךָ:
 יִי יִשְׁמַר־צִאֲתֶךָ וּבּוֹאֶךָ מֵעַתָּה 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.

UNVEILING
SERVICE
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 הקמח 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 נִשְׁמַתָּה צְרוּרָה בְּצִרוּר 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 נִשְׁמַתוֹ צְרוּרָה בְּצִרוּר 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.**

UNVEILING SERVICE

הקמח 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:

הַרֹפֵא לְשִׁבוּרֵי לֵב וּמְחַבֵּשׁ לְעֵצְבוֹתָם:

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 נִשְׁמַתָּה צְרוּרָה בְּצִרּוֹר 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 נִשְׁמַתּוֹ צְרוּרָה בְּצִרּוֹר הַחַיִּים. אָמֵן.

T'hi nishmatah tz'rurah bitzror ha-hayim. Amen.

May her soul be bound up in the bond of life. **Amen.**

UNVEILING
SERVICE
הקמח מצבה

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

FOR A MAN

אל מלא רחמים, שוכן במרומים,
המצא מנוחה נכונה תחת כנפי השכינה,
במעלות קדושים וטהורים
כזהר הרקיע מזהירים,
את נשמת _____ בן _____ וְ
שְׁהַלֵּךְ לְעוֹלָמוֹ,
בגן עדן תהא מנוחתו,
אָנָּה, בְּעַל הַרְחָמִים הַסְתִּירָהוּ
בְּסִתְרֵי כְּנָפֶיךָ לְעוֹלָמִים,
וְצָרוֹר בְּצָרוֹר הַחַיִּים אֶת נִשְׁמָתוֹ,
יֵי הוּא נִחְלָתוֹ, וְתַנּוּחַ בְּשָׁלוֹם עַל מִשְׁכָּבוֹ.
וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

FOR A WOMAN

אל מלא רחמים, שוכן במרומים,
המצא מנוחה נכונה תחת כנפי השכינה,
במעלות קדושים וטהורים
כזהר הרקיע מזהירים,
את נשמת _____ בת _____ וְ
שְׁהַלֵּכָה לְעוֹלָמָהּ,
בגן עדן תהא מנוחתה,
אָנָּה, בְּעַל הַרְחָמִים הַסְתִּירָהּ
בְּסִתְרֵי כְּנָפֶיךָ לְעוֹלָמִים,
וְצָרוֹר בְּצָרוֹר הַחַיִּים אֶת נִשְׁמָתָהּ,
יֵי הוּא נִחְלָתָהּ, וְתַנּוּחַ בְּשָׁלוֹם עַל מִשְׁכָּבָהּ.
וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

El maleh rahamim,
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.**

UNVEILING SERVICE הקמח 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 Mourner's Kaddish:

MOURNERS

Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'meih raba
b'alma di v'ra kiruteih,
v'yamlikh malkhuteih,
b'hayekhon u-v'yomeikhon
u-v'hayei 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'yshtabah, 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**.

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא,
בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ,
וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ
בְּחַיֵּיכוּן וּבְיָמֵיכוּן
וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,
בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמֵי עֵלְמֵינָא.

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא
וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְקֻדְשָׁא בְרִיךְ הוּא,
לְעֵלְמָא מִן כָּל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנִהַמְתָּא,
דְאִמְרִין בְּעֵלְמָא, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא, וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ
וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ
וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

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