

Only years after the Holocaust did Yom HaShoah ritual and liturgy begin to emerge. Only after years of debate in Israel's Knesset was the 27th of Nisan, marking the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, identified as the most appropriate date on the calendar for a day of collective mourning. It was as if the Jewish People had been struck dumb, unable to respond to the Holocaust, let alone pray to a God who seemed to have abandoned them. Until a common liturgy is established, the following is offered with humility, to remember the Six Million and to address the God of History.

אַחִים, בְּעִירָה שְׂרָפָה,
עִירְתָנוּ בּוֹעֵרָה בְּלָה.

עס ברענט, ברידערלעך,
עס ברענט!
אוי, אונדזער אָרעם שטעטל
נעבעך ברענט!

"Es Brent" by
Mordecai
Gebirtig

בְּה רוּחוֹת שְׁחוּרוֹת יִסְעָרוּ,
לְהַבּוֹת־חֶרֶבֶן יִבְעָרוּ,
עֲקֹבוּתִיחַ לֹא נִשְׁאַרוּ,
הִיא עוֹלָה בְּאֵשׁ.

ביזע ווינטן מיט ירגזון רייסן,
ברעכן און צעבלאזן,
און די ביזע ווינטן הוזשען,
אלץ אַרום שוין ברענט.

*Adonai our God
and God of our
ancestors, grant
that none may
hate us, and
let hatred for
others never
enter our hearts.*
(Rabbi Eliezer,
Jerusalem Talmud,
B'rachot 4:2)

וְאַתֶּם חוֹבְקִים יָדַיִם
בְּלִי הוֹשִׁיט עֲזָרָה,
בְּלִי כְבוֹת אֶת אִשׁ־הַלְהָב,
אֵשׁ הָעִירָה.

און איר שטייט און קוקט
אַזוי צו
מיט פאַרלייגטע הענט;
ווי אונדזער שטעטל ברענט.

It's burning, brothers, it's aflame!
Our little, poor, beloved town's aflame!
Brutal winds, in fury growing,
Keep on tearing, breaking,
blowing,
While the furious winds are
wailing, everything's aflame!

And with folded arms you
watch it,
As if you were lame,
And with folded arms you
watch it,
While our town is aflame!

All peoples have suffered cruelty, and we weep with them, too.

But this day we think especially of the pain suffered by the House of Israel. Exile and oppression, expulsion and ghettos, pogroms and death camps: the agony of our people numbs the mind and turns the heart to stone.

We can only wonder at the fortitude of our forebears who said, not once but many times: "Though You slay me, I will yet trust in You." And we can only pray to be blessed with a measure of the faith that enabled them to remain true to God and Torah, even when the Eternal One seemed remote from them, and life itself might have lost all meaning.

From Job 13:15a

A voice is heard in Ramah,
lamentation and bitter weeping!

*Rachel is weeping for her children,
refusing to be comforted for them,
for they are no more.*

Is it nothing to you, all you
who pass along the road?

*Look and see: is there any pain
like that which has befallen me?*

To what shall I liken you, how to
comfort you, O innocent daughter
of Zion? Truly, your ruin is as vast
as the sea! Who can heal you?

How long, O God?

*Will we be forgotten forever? How
long will Your face be hidden from us?*

All this has befallen us, yet we have
not forgotten You, nor have we been
false to Your covenant.

*It is for Your sake that we have been
slain all the day long, and accounted
as sheep for the slaughter.*

קול בְּרָמָה נִשְׁמָע,

נְהִי בְּכִי תִמְרוּרִים!

רָחַל מִבְּכָה עַל-בָּנֶיהָ, מֵאַנָּה
לְהַנְחֵם עַל-בָּנֶיהָ, כִּי אֵינָנּוּ:

לֹא אֵלֵיכֶם, כָּל-עַבְרֵי דֶרֶךְ?

הֲבִיטוּ וּרְאוּ אִם-יֵשׁ מִכְּאוֹב
כְּמִכְּאֹבִי אֲשֶׁר עוֹלַל לִי?

מָה אֲשׁוּהָ-לָךְ וְאֲנַחְמָךְ,
בְּתוֹלַת בַּת-צִיּוֹן? כִּי-גְדוֹל
כַּיִם שְׁבָרְךָ, מִי יִרְפָּא-לָךְ?

עַד-אָנָּה, יְהוּזָה?

תִּשְׁכַּחֲנִי נִצְחָה עַד-אָנָּה
תִּסְתִּיר אֶת פְּנֵיךָ מִמֶּנִּי?

כָּל-זֹאת בָּאַתָּנוּ וְלֹא
שָׁכַחְנוּךָ, וְלֹא-שָׁקַרְנוּ
בְּבְרִיתֶךָ:

כִּי-עָלֶיךָ הִרְגָנוּ כָּל-הַיּוֹם,
נֶחְשָׁבְנוּ כְּצֹאן טִבְחָה:

Jeremiah 31:14

Lamentations
1:12a

Lamentations
2:13

Psalms 13:2

Psalms 44:18

Psalms 44:23

And there was silence! How many stood aside, mute and callous,
forgetting the Divine command: “You shall not stand idly by while your
neighbour bleeds!”

Leviticus 19:16

*For the sin of silence,
For the sin of indifference,
For the secret complicity of the neutral.
For the closing of borders,
For the washing of hands,
For the crime of indifference.
For the sin of silence,
For the closing of borders—*

*Whoever destroys
a single life,
it is as if that
person has
destroyed an
entire world.
And whoever
saves a single
life, it is as if
that person has
saved an entire
world. (Mishnah
Sanhedrin 4:5)*

Adonai, You see it: You see that none comes to help, none to intervene.
Only the winds come to carry our dust to the four corners of the earth.

“And I shall make your descendants
as the dust of the earth.”

וְשִׁמְתִי אֶת־זֶרְעֶךָ כְּעֹפֶר הָאָרֶץ.

Genesis 13:16

*As dust of the earth extends from
one end of the world to the other, so
will your children be scattered from
one end of the world to the other.*

מָה עֹפֶר הָאָרֶץ? מִסּוֹף הָעוֹלָם
וְעַד סוּפוֹ, כִּךְ בְּנֵיךָ יִהְיוּ
מִפְּזָרִים מִסּוֹף הָעוֹלָם
וְעַד סוּפוֹ.

Midrash Genesis
Rabbah 41:9

As the dust of the earth can be
blessed only through water, so too
can Israel only be blessed through
the Torah, which is to the thirsty
soul what water is to the body.

וּמָה עֹפֶר הָאָרֶץ? אֵינּוּ
מִתְבָּרֵךְ אֱלֹהִים בְּמַיִם, אֶף
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵינֶן מִתְבָּרְכִים
אֱלֹהִים בְּזִכּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה,
שֶׁנִּמְשָׁלָה לְמַיִם.

“for the sin of silence”

If a flame has fallen among the cedars
What will the wall moss say?
If danger lies in wait for those who sleep
What will they who watch in silence say?
If the weary are dying to sit down
What will they who go on standing up say?
If in Oran plague has broken out
What will distant neighbours say?
If the hand is writing on the walls
What will they who have the last laugh say?

If even the innocent are scourged
What will they who cling to God say?
If the woman in love has wept into her pillow
What will the ancient ballads say?
If judgment pierces the mountains
What will the skeptics say?
If in the street darkness breathes
What will the glowing candles say?
(Hayim Gouri)

And as dust is made to be trampled upon, so too will Your children be made for kingdoms to trample upon.

And as dust wears away vessels of metal, but itself endures forever, so it is with Israel. All your enemies will come to nothing, but the People Israel will endure.

Under the Polish green trees,
no more at play Moishelach,
Shloimelach.
No more at play Sorele and Leahle.
Not in the grass and not in the snow.

No longer are heard the voices of Jewish children, of the mischievous Motelach and Shimelach, whose bodies contort as they practise their tricks and heroics.

וּמָה עֶפְרָה עֶשְׂוֵי דַיִשׁ,
אֶף בְּנֵיךָ עֶשְׂוִיִן דַיִשׁ
לְמַלְכוּיּוֹת.

וּמָה עֶפְרָה מְבַלֶּה אֶת כְּלֵי
מִתְכּוֹת וְהוּא קַיָּם לְעוֹלָם,
כִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל. כָּל עוֹבְדֵי
כּוֹכָבִים בְּטִלִּים, וְהֵם קַיָּמִים.

אונטער די פוילישע
גרינינקע ביימעלעך
שפילן זיך מער ניט קיין
משה'לעך, שלמה'לעך,
שפילן זיך מער ניט קיין
שרה'לעך, לאה'לעך,
ניט אויף קיין גרעזעלעך,
ניט אויף קיין שנייעלעך.
ס'הילכן שוין מער ניט די
ידישע שטימעלעך,
פון די קונדסימ'לעך,
מאָטעלעך, שימעלעך,
מיט די צעקרעלטע,
צעדראַפעטע צורה'לעך,
פונעם באַווייזן וואונדיררים
און גבורה'לעך.

“Moishelach,
Shloimelach” by
J. Papiernikow,
lyricist; Israel
Alter, composer

וְהוּא קַיָּם לְעוֹלָם (“but itself endures forever”) Master of the Universe: You are doing much to make me desert my faith. But I assure You that—even against the will of... Heaven, a Jew I am and a Jew I shall remain. And neither the sufferings that You

have brought upon me, nor that which You shall yet bring upon me, will be of any avail. (Hebrew prayer of a Jew exiled from Spain in 1492 after he was “put ashore in some uninhabited place,” and witnessed the deaths of his wife and two children)

Now the little Polish trees
are mourning.
Jewish homes are dead.
The streets are dead, their
houses destroyed.
Some children hide there
now like mice.

Jewish children with wide black
eyes, shrouded in darkness.
Eyes full of fear of the impact
of the catastrophe.

ס'טרויערן אַצינד, די
פוילישע ביימעלעך.
טויט זענען יידישע היימען
און היימעלעך,
טויט זענען געסעלעך,
חרוב די הייזעלעך—
וואו עס פאַרשטעקן זיך
קינדער, ווי מייזעלעך.
יידישע קינדער מיט גרויסע
אויגעלעך,
שוואַרצע אַזוי ווי מיט חושך
פאַרצויגענע,
אויגעלעך פולע, מיט פחד
פאַרלאָפענע,
אונטער דעם אומגליק
דעם ברוינעם געטראָפענע.

*I believe in the
sun even when
it is not shining.
I believe in love
even when
feeling it not.
I believe in God
even when He is
silent. (Found on
a cellar wall in
Köln, Germany,
written by a
person in hiding)*

מיט פחד פאַרלאָפענע ("fear of the impact ...")
Without Jews, no Jewish God.
If, God forbid, we should quit
this world, Your poor tent's light
would out.
Abraham knew You in a cloud:
since then, You are the flame
of our face, the rays
our eyes blaze,
our likeness
whom we formed:
in every land and town
a stranger.
Shattered Jewish skulls,
shards of the divine,
smashed, shamed pots—
these were Your light-bearing vessels,
Your tangibles,
Your portents of miracle!
Now count these heads
by the millions dead.

Around You the stars go dark.
Our memory of You, obscured.
Soon Your reign will close.
Where Jews sowed,
a scorched waste.
... Who will dream You?
Remember You?
Deny You?
Yearn after You?
Who will flee You,
only to return
over a bridge of longing?
No end to night
for an extinguished people.
Heaven and earth, wiped out.
Your tent void of light.
Flicker of the Jews' last hour.
Soon, Jewish God,
Your eclipse.
(Jacob Glatstein, translated from the Yiddish
by Cynthia Ozick)

In the presence of eyes
 which witnessed the slaughter,
 which saw the oppression
 the heart could not bear,
 and as witness the heart
 that once taught compassion,
 until the days came to pass
 that crushed human feeling,
 I have taken an oath: To remember
 it all,
 to remember, not once to forget!
 Forget not one thing to the last
 generation
 when degradation shall cease,
 to the last, to its ending,
 when the rod of instruction
 shall have come to conclusion.
 An oath: Not in vain passed over
 the night of the terror.
 An oath: No morning shall see me
 at flesh-pots again.
 An oath: Lest from this we learned
 nothing.

עַל דַּעַת עֵינַי
 שָׁרְאוּ אֶת הַשְּׁכוּל
 וְעַמְסוּ זַעְקוֹת
 עַל לְבַי הַשְּׁחוּחַ,
 עַל דַּעַת רַחֲמֵי
 שֶׁהוֹרֵנִי לְמַחֵל,
 עַד בָּאוּ יָמִים
 שֶׁאֵיֵמוּ מִלְּסֻלָּח,
 נִדְרָתִי הִנְדָּר: לְזַכֵּר אֶת הַכֹּל.
 לְזַכֵּר-וְדַבֵּר לֹא לְשִׁכְחָה.
 דַּבֵּר לֹא לְשִׁכְחָה-עַד דּוֹר
 עֲשִׂירִי,
 עַד שֶׁךְ עֲלֻבוֹנִי,
 עַד כְּלָם, עַד כְּלָהֶם,
 עֲדֵי יִכְלוּ כָּל שְׁבִטֵי מוֹסְרֵי.
 קוֹנָם אִם לָרִיק
 יַעֲבֹר לַיִל הַזֶּעֶם,
 קוֹנָם אִם לְבִקָּר
 אֶחָזֵר לְסוּרֵי
 וּמֵאוֹם לֹא אֶלְמֹד
 גַּם הַפְּעֵם.

"A Vow" by
 Avraham Shlonsky,
 translated by Rabbi
 Herbert Bronstein

*Memory is the key
 to morality. (Rabbi
 Irving Greenberg)*

עַל דַּעַת ("as witness")

Written in Pencil in the Sealed Railway-Car

here in this carload	cain son of man
I am eve	tell him I
with abel my son	(Dan Pagis)
if you see my other son	

Six candles are lit by the families of survivors.

I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah. And even if he be delayed, nevertheless, I believe. Nevertheless, I will await him, until that day, yet to come.

אָנִי מֵאֲמִין בְּאַמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה
בְּבִיאַת הַמָּשִׁיחַ. וְאֵף עַל פִּי
שִׁיתְמַהֲמָהּ, עִם כָּל זֶה אָנִי
מֵאֲמִין, עִם כָּל זֶה אֲחַפֶּה לוֹ
בְּכָל יוֹם שְׂיָבוֹא.

From "The
Thirteen
Principles of
Jewish Faith"
by Rambam

All rise.

O God, full of mercy, who dwells on high, grant perfect rest in Your sheltering Presence and in the lofty heights where the holy and pure shine like the brightness of the firmament, unto the souls of the Six Million. These men, women, and children were all holy and pure, yet for the sanctification of God's name they were killed, murdered, and slaughtered by the hands of the Nazi oppressors and those who aided them, may their names be obliterated. May their resting place be the Garden of Eden. May the Merciful One let them find eternal refuge beneath the shadow of Your wings, and let their souls be bound up in the bond of life everlasting. The Eternal One is their inheritance. May they rest in peace. And let us say: *Amen*.

אֵל מְלֵא רַחֲמִים, שׁוֹכֵן
בְּמִרוֹמִים, הַמְצִיא מְנוּחָה
נְכוֹנָה תַּחַת כַּנְּפֵי הַשְּׁכִינָה,
בְּמַעְלוֹת קְדוּשִׁים וְטְהוּרִים
כְּזֹהר הַרְקִיעַ מְזֻהָרִים,
לְנַשְׁמוֹת רַבּוֹת אֲלֵפֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל,
אֲנָשִׁים וְנָשִׁים, יְלָדִים וְיְלָדוֹת,
כֻּלָּם קְדוּשִׁים וְטְהוּרִים,
שֶׁנֶּהְרְגוּ וְנִשְׁחָטוּ וְנִשְׂרְפוּ
וְשִׁנְחָקוּ וְנִקְבְּרוּ חַיִּים עַל
קְדוּשַׁת הַשֵּׁם, עַל יְדֵי הַצּוֹרְרִים
הַנָּאֲצִים וְעוֹזְרֵיהֶם, יְמַח
שְׁמֵם וְזִכְרָם, בְּעֵבֹר שְׂאֲנוּ
מִתְפַּלְלִים לְעֹלָם נִשְׁמוֹתֵיהֶם.
בְּגֵן עֵדֶן תִּהְיֶה מְנוּחָתָם. לְכֵן,
בְּעַל הַרְחָמִים יִסְתַּרְם בְּסֶתֶר
כַּנְּפֵיו לְעוֹלָמִים, וְיִצְרֹר בְּצִרּוֹר
הַחַיִּים אֶת נִשְׁמוֹתֵיהֶם. יְיָ הוּא
נִחַלְתָם, וְיִנְוְחוּ בְּשָׁלוֹם עַל
מִשְׁכַּבּוֹתֵיהֶם. וְנֹאמַר: אָמֵן.

Mourner's Kaddish

קדיש יתום

Magnified and sanctified be the great name of the One by whose will the world was created. Amen. May God's sovereignty govern our lives, and the life of the whole House of Israel, and let us say: Amen.

May God's great name be praised for all eternity.

Blessed and praised; glorified, exalted, and extolled; lauded, honoured, and acclaimed be the name of the Holy One, who is ever to be praised, far above all the blessings and songs of praise and consolations which human lips can utter, and let us say: Amen.

May the blessing and the promise of life come to us and all Israel, and let us say: Amen.

May the One who causes peace to reign in the high heavens cause peace to descend on us, and let us say: Amen.

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ
רַבָּא. אָמֵן. בְּעֶלְמָא דִּי-בְרָא
כְּרַעוּתָהּ, וְיִמְלִיךָ מַלְכוּתָהּ
בְּחַיִּיכוֹן וּבְיָמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי
דְּכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעֶגְלָא
וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעֹלָם
וּלְעֹלְמֵי עֲלְמֵיָא.

From Psalm
113:2,
Daniel 2:20

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר
וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא, וְיִתְהַדָּר
וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ
דְּקוּדְשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ הוּא, לְעֵלְא
מִן כָּל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא,
תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנִחַמְתָּא דְּאִמְרֵן
בְּעֶלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמֵיָא
וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו, הוּא
יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל
יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

יְתוּס קַדִּישׁ יְתוּס ("mourner's Kaddish")

In the Jewish Synagogue at Newport

Our softened voices send us back again
But mournful echoes through the empty hall:
Our footsteps have a strange unnatural sound,
And with unwonted gentleness they fall.

The weary ones, the sad, the suffering,
All found their comfort in the holy place,
And children's gladness and men's gratitude
Took voice and mingled in the chant of praise.

The funeral and the marriage, now, alas!

We know not which is sadder to recall;
For youth and happiness have followed age,
And green grass lieth gently over all.

Nathless the sacred shrine is holy yet,
With its lone floors where reverent feet once trod,
Take off your shoes as by the burning bush,
Before the mystery of death and God.

(Emma Lazarus)

Yit-ga·dal ve-yit-ka·dash she·mei ra·ba. A·mein.
Be-al·ma di·ve·ra chir·u·tei, ve-yam·lich mal·chu·tei
be·cha·yei·chon u·ve·yo·mei·chon u·ve·cha·yei
de·chol Beit Yis·ra·eil, ba·a·ga·la u·vi·ze·man ka·riv,
ve·im·ru: A·mein.

Ye·hei she·mei ra·ba me·va·rach le·a·lam u·le·al·mei al·ma·ya.

Yit·ba·rach ve-yish·ta·bach ve-yit·pa·ar ve-yit·ro·mam ve-yit·na·sei
ve-yit·ha·dar ve-yit·aleh ve-yit·ha·lal she·mei de·Ku·de·sha, be·rich Hu,
le·ei·la min kol bir·cha·ta ve-shi·ra·ta tush·be·cha·ta ve·ne·che·ma·ta
da·a·mi·ran be-al·ma ve·im·ru: A·mein.

Ye·hei she·la·ma ra·ba min she·ma·ya ve·cha·yim a·lei·nu
ve·al kol Yis·ra·eil, ve·im·ru: A·mein.

O·seh sha·lom bim·ro·mav, Hu ya·a·seh sha·lom a·lei·nu
ve·al kol Yis·ra·eil, ve·im·ru: A·mein.

All are seated.

Words of Testimonial and Music of Memory may be included.

וּבְחַיֵּי דְרַבֵּי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל ("the life of the whole House of Israel") If the 614th commandment [i.e., Thou shalt not hand Hitler a posthumous victory] is binding upon the authentic Jew, then we are, first, commanded to survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish. We are commanded, second, to remember in our very guts and bones the martyrs of the Holocaust, lest their memory

perish. We are forbidden, thirdly, to deny or despair of God, however much we may have to contend with Him, lest Judaism perish. We are forbidden, finally, to despair of the world as the place which is to become the Kingdom of God, lest we help make it a meaningless place in which God is dead or irrelevant and everything is permitted. (Rabbi Emil Fackenheim)

“Take comfort, take comfort, My people,” says your God.

This I call to mind, and therefore do I have hope.

God will swallow up death once and for all! The Eternal God will wipe the tears from every face and remove from all the earth the reproach laid upon our People.

Thus says the Eternal: “Hold back your voice from weeping, your eyes from tears! For your labour shall have its reward,” says Adonai. “There is hope for your future,” says the Eternal God.

You must not say that you now walk the final way,
Because the darkened heavens hide the blue of day.
The time we’ve longed for will at last draw near,
And our steps, as drums, will sound that we are here!

From land all green with palms to lands all white with snow,
We now arrive with all our pain and all our woe.
Where our blood sprayed out and came to touch the land,
There our courage and our faith will rise and stand.

יֵשׁ תִּקְוָה (“there is hope”) God lives, and so does religion, so long as there whispers that “still small voice” within, which no mortal tyrant or fiendish ruler can ever really stifle, that unquenchable, irresistible, undying voice

נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי, יֹאמֶר
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

Isaiah 40:1

זֹאת אָשִׁיב אֶל-לְבָבִי, עַל-כֵּן
אוֹחִיל:

Lamentations
3:21

בְּלַע הַמּוֹת לְנֶצַח, וּמָחָה
אֶדְנִי יְהוָה דְּמָעָה מֵעַל
כָּל-פָּנִים. וְחָרַפַת עִמּוֹ יָסִיר
מֵעַל כָּל-הָאָרֶץ, כִּי יְהוָה דִּבֶּר:

Isaiah 25:8

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה: מְנַעֵי קוֹלְךָ
מִבְּכִי, וְעֵינֶיךָ מִדְּמָעָה!
כִּי יֵשׁ שָׂכָר לַפְּעֻלָּתְךָ,
נְאֻם-יְהוָה: וְיִשְׁתַּקְּוָה
לְאַחֲרֵיתֶךָ, נְאֻם-יְהוָה:

Jeremiah
31:16a,17a

זאָג ניט קיינמאָל אז דו גייסט
דעם לעצטן וועג,
ווען הימלען בלייענע
פאַרשטעלן בלוייע טעג.
ווייל קומען וועט נאָך אונדזער
אויסגעבענקטע שעה,
ס'וועט אַ פויק טאָן אונדזער טראַט:
מיר זיינען דאָ!

“Partisan’s Song”
by Hirsch Glik

פון גרינעם פאַלמען-לאַנד
ביז ווייסן לאַנד פון שניי,
מיר זיינען דאָ, מיט אונדזער
פיין, מיט אונדזער וויי.
און וווּ בעפאַלן ס'איז אַ
שפּריץ פון אונדזער בלוט,
וועט אַ שפּראַץ טאָן אונדזער
גבורה, אונדזער מוט.

of true religion which so softly, yet so sternly enjoins: “Let justice flow forth as water and righteousness as a never-failing stream.”
(Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath)

A hundred generations of victims and martyrs and still their blood cries out from the earth, from the unmarked graves at Dachau, at Buchenwald, at Babi Yar, at Auschwitz. . . .

What can we say? What can we do? How to bear the unbearable, or accept what life has brought to our people? They lived with faith. Not all, but many. And, surely, many died with faith: faith in God, in life, in the goodness that even flames cannot destroy. May we now find a way to the strength of that faith.

They have left their lives to us: let a million prayers rise whenever Jews gather; let a million candles glow against the darkness of these unfinished lives.

Please rise.

The Legacy (*read by descendants of survivors*)

WE TAKE THIS OATH! We take it in the shadow of flames with tongues that scar the soul of our People. We vow in the name of dead parents and children; we vow with our sadness tucked away, our faith renewed; we vow, we shall never let the sacred memory of our perished Six Million be scorned or erased.

WE SAW THEM hungry and afraid. We saw them rush to battle. We saw them in the loneliness of night, true to their faith. At the threshold of death, we saw them. We heard their silence, merged their tears with our own. Deportations, executions, mass graves, death camps; mute prayers, cries of revolt, desperation, torn scrolls; cities and towns, villages and hamlets; the young, the old, the rich, the poor; ghetto fighters and partisans, scholars and messianic dreamers; ravaged faces, fists raised. Like clouds of fire, all have vanished.

WE TAKE THIS OATH! Vision becomes word, to be handed down from father to son, from mother to daughter, from generation to generation. REMEMBER and BLOT OUT what the Nazi killers and their accomplices did to our People. Remember them with rage and contempt. Remember what an indifferent world did to us and to itself! Remember the victims with pride and with sorrow. Remember also the deeds of the righteous Gentiles, who are forever a blessing to humanity.

Adapted from
*The Legacy and
Acceptance*,
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Yiddish by Elie
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concluding
ceremony of the
World Gathering
of Jewish
Holocaust
Survivors at
the Kotel in
Jerusalem, 1981

REMEMBER the miracle of the Jewish rebirth in the land of our ancestors. In the independent State of Israel, pioneers and fighters returned to our people the dignity and majesty of nationhood. From the ruins of their lives, orphans and widows built homes and old-new fortresses. We are indebted to those who realized our lofty dream of freedom in a land redeemed.

WE TAKE THIS OATH! Let our legacy endure as stone of the Temple Wall. For here prayers and memories burn. They burn and burn and will not be consumed.

The Acceptance *(together)*

WE ACCEPT the obligation of this legacy.

WE ARE BORN after the darkness. Through our parents' memories and silences, we are linked to that annihilated Jewish existence. The echo permeates our consciousness.

WE DEDICATE this pledge to you, our parents who suffered and survived; to our grandparents, who perished in the flames; to our vanished brothers and sisters, more than one million Jewish children; to all Six Million whose unyielding resistance exemplifies our People's commitment to life.

WE PLEDGE to remember!

WE WILL TEACH our children to preserve that Jewish spirit which cannot be destroyed.

*WE WILL SHOUT to the world, "Look how far humanity can fall!
And see the heights which were reached, even in hell itself!"*

WE WILL FIGHT anti-Semitism and all forms of hatred wherever they may fester.

WE AFFIRM our commitment to the State of Israel and to the continuity of Jewish life in our homeland and in our own homes.

WE PLEDGE ourselves to the oneness of the Jewish People, and to the One God in heaven and on earth.

WE ARE YOUR CHILDREN!

WE ARE HERE!

WE WILL NOT FORGET!

Please leave the sanctuary in silence.