

Prayer for the Welfare of soldiers in the Israel Defence Forces

May He who blessed our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, bless the soldiers of the Israel Defence Forces who keep guard over our country and cities of our Lord from the border with Lebanon to the Egyptian desert and from the Mediterranean Sea to the approach to the Arava, be they on land, air or sea.

May the Almighty deliver us our enemies who arise against us, may the Holy One, blessed be He, preserve them and save them from all sorrow and peril, from danger and ill.

May He send blessing and success in all their endeavours, may He deliver to them those who hate us and crown them with salvation and victory, so that the saying may be fulfilled through them, "For the Lord, your God, who walks with you and to fight your enemies for you and to save you", and let us say, Amen.

YOM HAZIKARON

What is it?

Israel's Day of Remembrance for Fallen Soldiers. The day is the national remembrance day observed for all military personnel who lost their lives in the struggle that led to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and for those that have been killed subsequently while on active duty in Israel's armed forces.

The day is recognised as a solemn day and memorial candles are lit in homes, army camps, schools, synagogues and public places and all flags are lowered to half mast. There are guards of honour at all war memorials and families of the fallen participate in ceremonies at military cemeteries.

National memorial services are held in the presence of Israel's top leadership and military personnel. The day opens with a siren the proceeding evening. The siren is heard across Israel and lasts for one minute, during which Israelis stop everything, including driving on highways, and stand in silence, commemorating the fallen and showing respect.

While Yom Hazikaron is viewed as a secular national character, there is a religious component to the day. There is a special Yizkor (memorial prayer) and "El Maleh Rachamim" prayer for members of the defence forces recited.

When is it?

Yom Hazikaron is commemorated on the 4th Iyar, the day before Israel Independence day.

Customs

- Lighting a Yahrzeit (Memorial) Candle
- Poem by Natan Alterman pre War of Independence December 1947
- Lowering an Israeli flag
- Holding a minutes' silence
- Prayer for Welfare of Israeli Soldiers – see left hand column

