

סדר הזכרת נשמות • מהדורת קורן

THE KOREN YIZKOR



WITH PREFACE AND TRANSLATION BY

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KOREN PUBLISHERS JERUSALEM

CONTENTS

מבוא	7	Preface
סדר הזכרת נשמות	9	YIZKOR
תפילות לבית הקברות	21	PRAYERS TO BE SAID AT THE CEMETERY
פרקי תהלים	21	Selected Psalms
אזכרה	51	Memorial Prayer
קדיש יתום	55	Mourner's Kaddish
אל מלא רחמים	57	God, Full of Mercy
קדיש יתום באותיות לועזיות	60	Mourner's Kaddish Transliterated

Note to Reader

For the accompanying essays,
please turn to the other end
of this volume.

PREFACE

One of the most important halakhic responses to tragedy is the act of remembering, *Yizkor*. More than it has history, the Jewish people has memory. Yet in the biblical Hebrew of Tanakh there is no word for history, and modern Hebrew had to borrow one, *historia*. Instead Tanakh uses the root *zakhor*, meaning “memory,” which occurs no fewer than 169 times in the Hebrew Bible.

There is a fundamental difference between history and memory. History is “his story,” an account of events that happened sometime else to someone else. Memory is “my story.” It is the past internalized and made part of my identity. That is what the Mishna in *Pesahim* (116b) means when it says, “Each person must see himself as if he (or she) went out of Egypt.” History is the story of a past that is dead. Memory is the story of a future.

There is the specific Jewish way of remembering. Most cultures’ memories are about the past, but whenever the word *yizkor* is mentioned in the Torah, it refers not to the past, but to the present and to renewal. “*VaYizkor Elokim et Noah* – God remembered Noah” (Gen. 8:1). “*VaYizkor Elokim et Avraham* – God remembered Abraham” (Gen. 19:29). “*VaYizkor Elokim et Raḥel* – God remembered Rachel” (Gen. 30:22). “*VaYizkor Elokim et berito* – God remembered His Covenant” (Ex. 2:24). In each case it was about the future, not about the past. God remembered Noah and brought him out to dry land. God remembered Abraham and saved his nephew Lot. God remembered Rachel and gave her a child. God remembered His Covenant and began the process of rescuing the Israelites from Egypt. In Judaism, memory itself is future oriented.

This is neither accidental nor marginal. Judaism gave two majestic ideas their greatest religious expression: *memory* and *hope*. Memory is our living connection to those who came before us. Hope is what we hand on to the generations yet to come. Those we remember live on in us: in words, gestures, a smile here, an act of kindness there, that we would not have done had that person not left their mark on our lives. That is what *Yizkor* is: memory as a religious act of thanksgiving for a life that was, and that still sends its echoes and reverberations into the life that is. For when Jews remember, they do so for the future, the place where, if we are faithful to it, the past never dies.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

סדר הזכרת נשמות

The service is said on the last day of פסח, the second day of שבועות (first day in Israel), Yom Kippur and Shemini Atzeret. In some communities, those who have not been bereaved of a parent or close relative do not participate in the service, but leave the בית כנסת and return at the end of הזכרת נשמות.

תהלים קמד יהוה מה־אדם ותִדְעֶהוּ, בְּאֲנוּשׁ וְתַחֲשְׁבֵהוּ:
אָדָם לִהְבֵּל דָּמָה, יָמָיו כְּצֵל עוֹבֵר:
תהלים צ בִּבְקֶרֶת יִצְיָן וְחֶלֶף, לְעָרֵב יְמוֹלֵל וַיִּבֶשׁ:
לְמִנּוֹת יָמֵינוּ בֶּן הַזְּדֵעַ, וְנִבְאָ לִבֵּב חֲכָמָה:
תהלים לו שְׁמֵר־תָּם וְרֹאֵה יֵשֶׁר, כִּי־אֲחֻרִית לְאִישׁ שָׁלוֹם:
תהלים מט אֲך־אֱלֹהִים יַפְדֶּה נַפְשִׁי מִיַּד שְׂאוּל, כִּי יִקְחֵנִי סֶלָה:
תהלים עג כָּל־הַשָּׁאֵרִי וְלִבִּי, צוֹר־לִבִּי וְחֶלְקִי אֱלֹהִים לְעוֹלָם:
קהלת יב וַיֵּשֶׁב הָעָפָר עַל־הָאָרֶץ כְּשֶׁהָיָה
וְהָרוּחַ תָּשׁוּב אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר נָתַנָּה:

תהלים צא יֵשֶׁב בְּסֻתֵּר עֲלִיּוֹן, בְּצֵל שְׁדֵי יִתְלוֹנֵן: אָמַר לַיהוָה מַחְסִי וּמְצוּדָתִי,
אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹטְחָתִי: כִּי הוּא יִצְיִלְךָ מִפַּח יָקוֹשׁ, מִדְּבַר הָוֹת: בְּאֲבָרְתוֹ
יִסְךָ לְךָ, וְתַחַת־כַּנְפָּיו תִּחְסֶה, צָנָה וְסוּחָרָה אֲמַתּוֹ: לֹא־תִירָא מִפְּחַד
לַיְלָה, מִחֶץ יְעוֹף יוֹמָם: מִדְּבַר בְּאֶפֶל יֶהְלֶךְ, מִקְטָב יִשׁוּד צִהָרִים:
יִפֹּל מִצַּדְּךָ אֶלֶף, וְרִבְבָה מִיְמִינְךָ, אֵלֶיךָ לֹא יָגֵשׁ: רַק בְּעֵינֶיךָ תִּבְטֹחַ,
וְשִׁלַּמְתָּ רְשָׁעִים תִּרְאֶה: כִּי־אֲתָה יְהוָה מַחְסִי, עֲלִיּוֹן שְׁמֹת מְעוֹנֶיךָ:
לֹא־תֵאָנֶה אֵלֶיךָ רָעָה, וְנִגַּע לֹא־יִקְרַב בְּאֶהְלֶךְ: כִּי מִלֵּאכֹו יִצְוֶה־לְךָ,
לְשִׁמְרֶךָ בְּכָל־דְּרָכֶיךָ: עַל־כַּפַּיִם יִשְׁאוּנֶךָ, פֶּן־תִּגַּף בְּאֶבֶן רְגְלֶךָ: עַל־
שַׁחַל וּפְתָן תִּדְרֹךְ, תִּרְמָס כַּפִּיר וְתַנְיִן: כִּי בִי חָשַׁק וְאֶפְלָטָהוּ, אֲשַׁבְּהוּ
כִּי־יִדַּע שְׁמִי: יִקְרָאנִי וְאֶעֱנֶהוּ, עֲמוּ־אֲנֹכִי בַצָּרָה, אֲחַלְצֵהוּ וְאֲכַבְּדָהוּ:
אֲדַךְ יָמִים אֲשַׁבְּעֵהוּ, וְאֲדַאֲהוּ בִישׁוּעָתִי:
אֲדַךְ יָמִים אֲשַׁבְּעֵהוּ, וְאֲדַאֲהוּ בִישׁוּעָתִי:

YIZKOR

The Yizkor service is said on the last day of Pesah, the second day of Shavuot (first day in Israel), Yom Kippur and Shemini Atzeret. In some communities, those who have not been bereaved of a parent or close relative do not participate in the service, but leave the synagogue and return at the end of Yizkor.

LORD, what is man that You care for him, a mortal that You notice him? Ps. 144
Man is like a fleeting breath, his days like a passing shadow.
In the morning he flourishes and grows; Ps. 90
in the evening he withers and dries up.
Teach us to number our days, that we may get a heart of wisdom.
Mark the blameless, note the upright, for the end of such a person is peace. Ps. 37
God will redeem my soul from the grave, for He will receive me, Selah. Ps. 49
My flesh and my heart may fail, Ps. 73
but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.
The dust returns to the earth as it was, Eccl. 12
but the spirit returns to God who gave it.

Ps. 91 He who lives in the shelter of the Most High dwells in the shadow of the Almighty. I say of the LORD, my Refuge and Stronghold, my God in whom I trust, that He will save you from the fowler's snare and the deadly pestilence. With His pinions He will cover you, and beneath His wings you will find shelter; His faithfulness is an encircling shield. You need not fear terror by night, nor the arrow that flies by day; not the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the plague that ravages at noon. A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only look with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. Because you said, "the LORD is my Refuge," taking the Most High as your shelter, no harm will befall you, no plague will come near your tent, for He will command His angels about you, to guard you in all your ways. They will lift you in their hands, lest your foot stumble on a stone. You will tread on lions and vipers; you will trample on young lions and snakes. [God says:] "Because he loves Me, I will rescue him; I will protect him, because he acknowledges My name. When he calls on Me, I will answer him; I will be with him in distress, I will deliver him and bring him honor. With long life I will satisfy him and show him My salvation. With long life I will satisfy him and show him My salvation.

For one's father:

יִזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים נִשְׁמַת אָבִי מוֹרִי (פלוני בן פלוני) שְׁהֲלַךְ לְעוֹלָמוֹ, בְּעִבּוֹר
שְׂבָלִי נָדַר אֶתֶן צְדָקָה בְּעֵדוֹ. בְּשִׁכְרוֹ זֶה תְּהֵא נִפְשׁוֹ צְרוּרָה בְּצָרוֹר
הַחַיִּים עִם נִשְׁמוֹת אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וַיַּעֲקֹב, שָׂרָה רַבְקָה רַחֵל
וְלֵאָה, וְעַם שְׂאֵר צְדִיקִים וְצְדִיקוֹת שְׂבָגוּ עֵדוֹ, וְנֹאמְרוּ אָמֵן.

For one's mother:

יִזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים נִשְׁמַת אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי (פלונית בת פלוני) שְׁהֲלָכָה לְעוֹלָמָהּ,
בְּעִבּוֹר שְׂבָלִי נָדַר אֶתֶן צְדָקָה בְּעֵדָהּ. בְּשִׁכְרוֹ זֶה תְּהֵא נִפְשָׁהּ
צְרוּרָה בְּצָרוֹר הַחַיִּים עִם נִשְׁמוֹת אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וַיַּעֲקֹב, שָׂרָה
רַבְקָה רַחֵל וְלֵאָה, וְעַם שְׂאֵר צְדִיקִים וְצְדִיקוֹת שְׂבָגוּ עֵדוֹ,
וְנֹאמְרוּ אָמֵן.

תפילה לשלום המשפחה

אָבִינוּ שְׁבַשְׂמִים, מוֹדָה / מוֹדָה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ בַּיּוֹם קָדוֹשׁ זֶה עַל
[אָבִי / אִמִּי / אִשְׁתִּי / בְּעָלִי / אַחִי / אַחִי / אַחֹתִי / אַחֹתִי / אַחִיוֹתִי /
בְּנִי / בְּנֵי / בָתִּי / בָּנוֹתִי / נְכֵדִי / נְכֵדִי] אֲשֶׁר עִמָּנוּ חַיִּים הַיּוֹם,
וְלֵהֲתַמְּדַת בְּרִיאוֹתָם אֲנִי מִתְפַּלֵּל / מִתְפַּלֵּלָת. אֲנָא בְּרַכֶּם, וְהִיָּה
עִמָּם בַּיָּמִים וּבְחַדְשֵׁי הַבָּאִים עָלֵינוּ לְטוֹבָה, הֲגַן עָלֵיהֶם וְהַצִּילֵם
מִכָּל צָרָה וְצוּקָה וּמִכָּל נֶגַע וּמַחֲלָה, וּפְרֹשׁ עָלֵיהֶם סֶפֶת שְׁלוֹמֶךָ
וְהַשְׂרֵה שְׂכֵנֵינֶךָ בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יָדֵיהֶם. יֵאָרְכוּ יְמֵיהֶם בְּטוֹב וּשְׂנוֹתֵיהֶם
בְּנִעְוָמִים, וַיִּזְכְּרוּ לְרְאוֹת בָּנִים וּבְנֵי בָנִים עוֹסְקִים בַּתּוֹרָה וּבְמִצְוֹת.
יְהִיו לְרָצוֹן אִמְרֵי פִי וְהִגְיוֹן לִבִּי לְפָנֶיךָ, יְהוּה צוּרִי וְגֹאֲלִי:

For one's father:

יִזְכֹּר May God remember the soul of my father, my teacher (*name*
son of *father's name*) who has gone to his eternal home, and to this
I pledge (without formal vow) to give charity on his behalf, that
his soul may be bound in the bond of everlasting life together with
the souls of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and
Leah, and all the other righteous men and women in the Garden
of Eden, and let us say: Amen.

For one's mother:

יִזְכֹּר May God remember the soul of my mother, my teacher (*name*
daughter of *father's name*) who has gone to her eternal home,
and to this I pledge (without formal vow) to give charity on
her behalf, that her soul may be bound in the bond of everlasting
life together with the souls of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah,
Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, and all the other righteous men and
women in the Garden of Eden, and let us say: Amen.

PRAYER FOR LIVING RELATIVES

אָבִינוּ שְׁבַשְׂמִים Our Father in heaven: On this holy day, I give You thanks
for my [father / mother / husband / wife / brother(s) / sister(s) / son(s)
/ daughter(s) / grandchild(ren)] who are with me in life, and for whose
continued health and blessing I pray. Be with them, I pray You, in the days
and months to come. Protect them from harm and distress, sickness and
affliction, trouble and misfortune. Spread over them Your canopy of peace
and may Your spirit live in the work of their hands. Prolong their days in
goodness and happiness and may they and we have the privilege of seeing
children and grandchildren occupying themselves with Torah and the life of
the commandments. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my
heart find favor before You, my Rock and Redeemer.

Rabbi Norman Lamm

MEMORY AND MEANING



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The Michael Scharf Publication Trust
RIETS/YU Press
Koren Publishers Jerusalem

Contents

Editor's Introduction ix

Foreword xv

A Hespel for Sara Lamm Dratch, z"l xix

YOM KIPPUR

Everybody Is a Somebody 3

On Doing Right by Yourself 13

All the King's Men 21

The God-Man Credibility Gap 29

Happy though Hungry 39

SHEMINI ATZERET

Which Way the Wind Blows 47

Reworking the Past 55

PASSOVER

<i>Those Who Live and Those Who Live On</i>	65
<i>Creative Remnants or Leaven from Heaven</i>	73
<i>A Song of Longing</i>	79
<i>Furthermore</i>	85
<i>Creative Nostalgia</i>	91
<i>The Old Man</i>	99
<i>To a Hundred and Twenty</i>	105
<i>Harmony without Homogenization</i>	111

SHAVUOT

<i>A Previous Engagement</i>	121
<i>Sinai – Burden or Blessing?</i>	127
<i>The Quiet after the Storm</i>	135
<i>A Kind Word for the Living</i>	141

יום כיפור

Yom Kippur

Everybody Is a Somebody

I would like to center my message to you this morning on a story which apparently has nothing to do with Yom Kippur, but which in fact captures the whole essence of this sacred day. It is an episode in the life of King David that we normally read in the synagogue as the *haftara* for the Shabbat before Rosh Hodesh.

The incident took place in the time when King Saul, the first king of Israel, was half-crazed by jealousy of the young hero David, whose popularity he considered a threat to his throne. Saul was so embittered at David that he wanted to kill him. David did not know whether or not it was safe for him to appear in the palace and whether or not to flee. Now, the eldest son of Saul and heir-apparent to the throne was Jonathan, who was the dearest friend of David. Torn between loyalty to his royal father and affection for his cherished friend, Jonathan was ultimately

Yom Kippur

to give up his own claim to the throne in order to allow David to become the successor to his father, King Saul.

At a particularly critical period, David asks Jonathan what to do. Jonathan tells him that he will sound out his father and see if he really intends to harm David. “Meanwhile,” says Jonathan, “go into hiding. Tomorrow, after the Rosh Hodesh feast in the palace, I will come out into the field ostensibly to practice my archery. You hide behind the big stone, David, and wait there. I will have with me a *naar katan*, a boy or servant. I will shoot three arrows in your direction and send the boy after them. If I shoot the arrows so that they fall short of where you are, you will know that all is well, and you can come out of hiding. But if I shoot them beyond where you are hiding, then that is the signal that my father seeks to destroy you, and you must quickly flee in order to save your life. Keep your eye on the boy, to see where the arrows fall.”

In the palace that next day, things did not go well. Saul created a terrible scene in which he accused Jonathan of plotting with David, and he condemned David to death as a traitor. So Jonathan left and he took the young boy with him. He aimed his arrows well beyond where David was secretly stationed. He called to the boy and said, “Go farther, hurry, the arrow is still farther on.” When David saw the lad running, he knew the bad news. Only David and Jonathan knew the meaning of all this; the lad knew nothing. And so David and Jonathan bade each other farewell, and David went into hiding, to emerge eventually as the man upon whose head was placed the crown of Israel.

Such is the beautiful story of a noble friendship in a time when our nation was young. Yet the moral of loyalty is not the

Everybody Is a Somebody

reason I have chosen to repeat it to you this morning. My reason is quite different. Allow me to explain.

Yom Kippur seems to impose an impossible burden upon us. By bidding us to confess to our sins, as we do when we recite the *al het* and the *ashamnu*, the Jewish tradition drives home the awesome theme of responsibility. We are responsible for every one of our moral and ethical failings. We are responsible for the neglect of Torah and Judaism. We are responsible too for the low spiritual and moral estate of our families. Even more, we are in some measure responsible for the sins of society: for the Bomb and its threat of mass-death, for the corruption that festers in government and in business, for the filth that inundates our libraries and newsstands and theaters, for lethal dust that chokes our children, for brutality in Vietnam.

What a huge load to carry! In defense we sometimes feel like saying: *Ribbono shel Olam!* What do You want from us? We are humble people. We work as hard and as honestly as we can just to keep our families going and leave something for the children. We are not famous, we have no great power, we are not in authority. If You have complaints about the Bomb, talk to the famous physicists and engineers and the international diplomats. Corruption? Speak to the president and the judges and the heads of the great corporations. Immorality? Address yourself to the giant publishers and attorneys general and movie magnates. But we are without influence to change the course of events. We are small people. We may make some money, but can have no lasting effect on our own destinies, let alone that of the world. We can do nothing.

If that thought has occurred to you, friends, as a way out of the terrible responsibility urged on us by Yom Kippur; if you

Yom Kippur

have had the feeling that we are just numbers, just puny statistics, just a series of holes punched on an IBM card, just helpless and anonymous blobs of protoplasm, pushed and pulled and crowded by the impersonal forces of society and nature; if you have concluded that life nowadays is such that you, as the “ordinary” man or woman, can do nothing about the really great and momentous issues in the world in general and in the Jewish community in particular; if, in other words, you are willing to proclaim your irresponsibility and to issue a declaration of impotence – then the story of David and Jonathan sharply reminds you that such excuses are not only unbecoming and undignified and un-Jewish, but false and malicious!

Remember that in the biblical story of David and Jonathan there are not two but three main characters. Remember that not only the noble and loyal Prince Jonathan is important, and not only the young David, who is to ascend the throne and change Jewish history forever. The *naar katan*, the young lad, the ignorant boy who knew nothing of the great drama in which he was taking part – he too is a protagonist, he too deserves credit for the succession of David, for enthroning that man who was to unite the *shivtei Yisrael*, the Israel of his day, and become the ancestor of the *melekh hamashiah*, the Messiah of the future.

How prone we are to recall only the famous names and ignore the little people, without whom nothing significant ever happens! Imagine if that young, anonymous boy, about whom we know nothing else other than that he was the servant or archery-caddy of Jonathan – imagine if he had said to himself: What do I count? What responsibility do I have to anyone for anything? And since I have no real importance in the world,

why bother with such ideas as duty and loyalty? I might as well sleep late, or fail to show up, or go wandering off in a different direction! Imagine if he had been derelict in his simple duties – like so many waiters who don't wait, and repairmen who don't repair, and cleaners who don't clean! How different – and how much worse – history might have been!

Little did that youngster realize that a pair of eyes were secretly watching him that fateful day; that upon the proper accomplishment of his duty depended the future of his whole people and ultimately all the world; that his little task well done assured the safety of David, and the political and religious and spiritual destiny of thousands of his contemporaries and thousands of generations thereafter.

It is not only the princes and the heroes who play a role in history. It is not only the great and the famous upon whom the world rests. It is even a *naar katan*, a young lad who, by carrying out his tasks loyally, briefly emerges from obscurity and helps redirect the course of history. He remains anonymous – but so very important!

Of such stuff is the story of all mankind made. History is the accumulation of thousands upon thousands of lads who know not the significance of their own deeds. The great issues are decided, in the long run, not by those in the headlines but by the thousand “little people” who do or do not follow the dictates of conscience. David could not have become the great king he was without this little boy who signaled him, without another helpful stranger who gave him bread when he was starving, without a prophet who challenged him and a wife who inspired him and countless nameless soldiers who were ready to give their lives for him.

Yom Kippur

The State of Israel was not built alone by the Ben-Gurions and Sharets and the Eshkols. It was built as well by young men who died on the battlefield, and old mothers who let their sons and daughters leave the Russian Pale for the malarial swamps of Palestine, students of Talmud, loyal religious Jews who never gave up the dream and vision of *geula*, and anonymous hundreds who invested in Israel and the thousands who once collected coins for the JNF and the millions who contribute whatever they can to UJA. Everyone who did his best played a role in Israel.

For that is indeed all that is demanded of us by God – not that we do more than we can, but that we do all that it is in our power to do. On that and on that alone are we judged. Sometimes we are called upon to make the supreme sacrifice. Usually all that Judaism demands is that we sacrifice just a little of our comfort, a little of our convenience and time and money and thought and consideration and energy. When the great Book of Life is opened in Heaven, as we read in the *U'Netaneh Tokef*, it may be true that sublime angels rush about and create a stir, but in the Book of Life, each man's own personal, individual signature is recorded therein. Each has his own mission. That he must do: no more – but no less. When we do what God requires of us and what is required of us by the sum and substance of the teachings of Judaism, we have fulfilled our goals and we are important – whether or not our names are inscribed on great monuments or in history books.

That is the theme of responsibility taught to us by Yom Kippur. We each of us could have done more in our own little way; it is when we fail that we must say *al het* and confess our failure. When we do that in all earnestness, we are responsible human beings. To be convinced that I am unimportant, that

I simply don't count, is to be dead even though I breathe. To strive to fulfill my mission and purpose in whatever way God has allowed me – whether by raising a worthy family, charity, study, teaching, Israel, service to a great cause – is to live on and have my influence survive my own limited life.

Do you think you are without influence? Then remember that how you act toward your husband or wife at home is witnessed silently by your impressionable children who incorporate your acts into their character and will someday act likewise. Like David, watched by the *naar katan*, your conduct can be the signal that will change a life. How you as a Jew act in your business or profession can have the greatest effect on some non-Jew or on some young Jewish person who is wondering whether it is worth remaining a Jew. Never underestimate it! A kind word to a person who is lonely, a smile to someone who is friendless, a compliment to someone who lacks confidence, a bit of encouragement to a child unsure of himself – you may not realize it, but it is from such little things that the future is manufactured! All the more reason, therefore, to feel personally responsible when we forget to offer that word, that smile, that encouragement!

The sainted Hafetz Hayyim told of the first time he saw a train. Who, he wondered, guides this train? Who drives it? At first he saw very busy and official-looking people with big red caps carrying things to and from the baggage cars. Surely, he thought, these important people are the masters of the train. Then, when he discovered they were merely porters, “red caps,” he noticed a big, dignified-looking gentleman in an impressive uniform collecting tickets from people. No doubt, he thought, this official owns the train – how important and solemn he

Yom Kippur

appears. But when he learned he was only the ticket-collector, he turned to the man in resplendent uniform and of bushy mustache and booming voice who came marching stridently through the cars blowing a whistle. Certainly he guides the train. But no, he was merely the conductor. Perhaps, then, it is collectively owned and operated by all those aristocratic people in the parlor car who are so well dressed and smoke expensive cigars? No, they are only passengers.

Then he came to the front car, the engine room. There he saw a man in overalls, one who seemed bedraggled, who needed a shave, who looked impoverished and insignificant, who appeared to be a manual laborer and shoved coal into the fire and pulled a few rusty switches. And he – this inconspicuous, anonymous, obscure fellow – he was the master of the train; upon him depended the safety of the whole train and all its passengers! The *naar katan* often plays the great roles!

That, my friends, is the nature of the message of Yom Kippur. And that is my plea to you this holy day. Do not imagine that only the great and dramatic events are significant. In the eyes of God and in the eyes of history we too are important if we but do all we can. For nobody is a “nobody.” And everybody is a “somebody” – unless, of course, we choose to abdicate that role, that function, that responsibility.

The people we shall soon memorialize in the Yizkor may not have been famous people. Maybe they did not shake worlds. But each and every one in some measure, whether large or small, has influenced the world or some part of it. They influenced us. We influence our children, or others’ children. And they, in turn, will influence others. The fact that we are here today is a tribute to them; had one link in the chain of

Everybody Is a Somebody

generations been severed, we would not be Jews congregating in this *makom kadosh* today.

We must, then, watch our step. Whether we like it or not, we cannot journey through life without leaving footprints. Others will follow where we go because we have marked the way. That influence, that direction of our footprints, will be spelled out not in wealth, not in power, not in worldly fame. It will be exercised in the manner and the responsibility with which each of us carries out his assigned tasks in life. Whether we are anonymous lads, playing a supporting role in some great drama, or shabbily dressed train conductors, directly guiding the destiny of hundreds of fellow-passengers through life, we must be aware of our importance in the eyes of God and those who shall come after us.

Thus, and only thus, shall we emerge from death to life, from oblivion to significance. For everybody is a somebody.