



Galaxies Evening Service 15 April 2007

Service by Pete Cowley



Welcome:

Welcome to our service tonight

Tonight we are remembering the Holocaust and learning about Yom Hashoah - the Holocaust Remembrance day which, for the Jewish people, falls on this very day.



Prisoners in Buchenwald

Call to togetherness and sharing:

Leader: God, we are all part of you, your creation, your life and your love.

As we gather together to remember this one particular horror from our past, may your loving support be with us as we empathise with the 11 million victims of the Holocaust, 6 million of which were Jewish.

All: **May we forever remember that evil lurks just beneath the surface. Our propensity to malice, often just in our thoughts, but is that not where all action begins, whether good or evil? Today we see evil in many places around the world, even in those places that consider themselves "advanced", "civilised", "free" and "just". May we not delude ourselves that we are immune to evil. May your love help us to love others, to see the good in others that may be hidden.**

Least we forget

Leader: Oh loving God, how can we be so cruel to each other still?

All: Help us to image the unimaginable, to feel just a fraction of the horror that not only the Jews but many others, particularly gays, experienced at the hands of the Nazis. Help us oh God to treat each other only with love and loving kindness.



First they came

First they came for the communists,
and I did not speak out because I was not a communist.
Then they came for the socialists,
and I did not speak out because I was not a socialist.
Then they came for the trade unionists,
and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came for the Jews,
and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for me,
and there was no one left to speak out for me.
(Pastor Martin Niemoeller, victim of the Nazis.)

Lighting of the six candles

Each of these candles represents one million Jews who died in the holocaust.

(Different members light a candle and say:)

We light this candle in memory of all people, each known to you by name, who perished as a result of human action. We light it as a sign of our determination to dispel darkness wherever we may find it, and of our commitment to live for the establishment of the kingdom of heaven on earth.

Yom Hoshuah - Holocaust Remembrance Day

The Holocaust, also known as *Ha-Shoah* (see [etymology](#)), is the term generally used to describe the killing of approximately [six million](#) European [Jews](#) during [World War II](#), as part of a program of deliberate extermination planned and executed by the [National Socialist \(Nazi\)](#) regime in Germany led by [Adolf Hitler](#).^[1]

Other groups were also persecuted and killed by the regime, including some 220,000 [Sinti](#) and [Roma](#) (see [Porajmos](#)), as well as the disabled (see [Action T4](#)), [homosexuals](#), [Communists](#) and other [political prisoners](#), [Jehovah's Witnesses](#), [Polish citizens](#), and [Soviet POWs](#) ([Ukrainians](#), [Russians](#) and [Byelorussians](#)).^{[2][3]} Many scholars do not include these groups in the scope of the Holocaust, defining it as the genocide of European Jewry, or what the Nazis called the "[Final Solution of the Jewish Question](#)" ("*Die Endlösung der Judenfrage*"). Taking into account

all of the victims of Nazi persecution, the death toll rises considerably: estimates generally place the total number of victims at 9 to 11 million.[\[4\]](#)

The persecution and genocide of the Nazi regime's victims was accomplished in stages. [Legislation to remove the Jews from civil society](#) was enacted years before the outbreak of World War II. Where the [Third Reich](#) conquered new territory in [eastern Europe](#) and Russia, [ghettos were established](#) to contain and marginalize the victims. Specialized units, the [Einsatzgruppen](#), murdered large numbers of Jews and political opponents in mass shootings, and in mobile gassing units. In [western European](#) countries occupied by the Nazis, Jews were [interned](#) before being deported to the death camps, often being transported hundreds of miles by rail, crammed into freight cars. Finally, the machinery of the state was used to kill massive numbers of Jews and others in [extermination camps](#)

International Holocaust Remembrance Day which is on designated as January 27 is an annual international day of remembrance designated by an official resolution of the United Nations General Assembly on November 1, 2005.

The resolution urges every member nation to honor the memory of [Holocaust](#) victims and encourages the development of educational programs about Holocaust history as part of the resolve to help prevent future acts of [genocide](#).

There can be no reversing the unique tragedy of the Holocaust. It must be remembered, with shame and horror, for as long as human memory continues. Only by remembering can we pay fitting tribute to the victims. Millions of innocent Jews and members of other minorities were murdered in the most barbarous ways imaginable. We must never forget those men, women and children, or their agony." — [United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, January 27, 2006](#)

[Yom Hashoah](#)

Yom HaShoah was established by Israeli law in [1959](#), and was signed by [David Ben-Gurion](#) and [Yitzhak Ben-Zvi](#), then [Prime Minister of Israel](#) and [President of Israel](#), respectively. It was originally proposed to be commemorated on the 15th of Nisan, the anniversary of the [Warsaw ghetto uprising \(April 19, 1943\)](#), but this was deemed problematic, it being the first day of Pesach ([Passover](#)). Instead, the 27th was chosen, being eight days before [Yom Ha'atzma'ut](#), or [Israeli Independence Day](#).

Most of the Jewish community consider the day a Jewish religious holiday. [Anti-Zionist](#) religious Jews do not, instead remembering the victims on days that were already days of mourning before the [Holocaust](#), such as [Tisha b'Av](#) in the summer, and the Tenth of Tevet, in the winter.

Most Jewish communities hold a solemn ceremony on this day. [Orthodox Rabbi Avraham \(Avi\) Weiss](#) has created a ritual for the holiday. The [Masorti \(Conservative Judaism\)](#) movement in Israel has created *Megillat HaShoah*, a scroll and liturgical reading for Yom HaShoah, a joint project of Jewish leaders in Israel, the United States and Canada. It was written by [Hebrew University](#) professor Avigdor Shinan. In 1984, Conservative [rabbi David Golinkin](#) wrote an article in [Conservative Judaism](#) journal suggesting a program of observance for the holiday,

including fasting. [Ismar Schorsch](#), former Chancellor of the [Jewish Theological Seminary](#) suggested, however, that Holocaust commemoration take place on the Jewish holiday of [Tisha b'Av](#). In 1988, the [Reform Judaism](#) movement published a book called *Six Days of Destruction*, co-authored by [Elie Wiesel](#) and [Rabbi Albert Friedlander](#).

Commemoration

Those Jews in the Diaspora who observe Yom HaShoah may observe it within the synagogue, as well as in the broader Jewish community. Commemorations range from synagogue services to communal vigils and educational programs. Many Yom HaShoah programs feature a talk by a Holocaust survivor, recitation of appropriate psalms, songs and readings, or viewing of a Holocaust-themed film. Some communities choose to emphasize the depth of loss that Jews experienced in the Holocaust by reading the names of Holocaust victims one after another — dramatizing the unfathomable notion of six million deaths. Many Jewish schools also hold Holocaust-related educational programs on, or towards Yom HaShoah.

On the eve of Yom HaShoah in Israel, there is a state ceremony at [Yad Vashem](#), the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes Authority. At 10:00am on Yom HaShoah, throughout Israel, air-raid sirens are sounded for two minutes. Public transport (including virtually all highway vehicles) comes to a standstill for this period, and people stop and stand silent. During Yom HaShoah, public entertainment and many public establishments in Israel are closed by law. Israeli television and radio channels broadcast mourning songs and documentaries about the Holocaust, without commercials. All flags on public buildings are flown at [half mast](#).

Also during this day, tens of thousands of Israeli high-school students, and thousands of Jews from around the world, hold a memorial service in [Auschwitz](#), in what became known as "[The March of the Living](#)", in defiance of the Holocaust [Death Marches](#). This event is endorsed and subsidized by the Israeli Ministry of Education and the [Holocaust Claims Conference](#), and is considered an important part of the academic studies--a culmination of several months of studies on World War II and the Holocaust.

Departure blessing

God, you created us all in your own likeness.

We thank you for the wonderful diversity of races and cultures in your world.

Enrich our lives by ever-widening circles of fellow feeling and understanding;

show us your presence in those most different from us, so that in all our relationships,

both by what we have in common and by things in which we differ, we may come to know you more fully in your creation;

AMEN

[Notices](#)