

Meditations for Lighting the Yahrzeit Candle

The following may be read before lighting the candle. This candle should be set in a place where it will not be disturbed for its duration and where you may wish to spend time in meditation or appropriate reading.

I haven't forgotten you, even though it's been some time now since I've seen your face, touched your hand, heard your voice. Yet you are with me all the time.

I sometimes thought you left me. I know better now. You come to me. Sometimes in fleeting moments I feel your presence close by. But I still miss you. And nothing, no person, no joy, no accomplishment, no distraction, not even G_d, can fill the gaping hole your absence has left in my life.

But mixed together with my sadness, there is a great joy for having known you. I want to thank you for the time we shared, for the love you gave, for the wisdom you spread.

Thank you for the magnificent moments and for the ordinary ones, too. There was beauty in our simplicity and holiness in our unspectacular days. And I will carry the lessons you taught me always.

Your life has ended, but your light can never be extinguished. It continues to shine upon me even on the darkest nights and illuminates my way.

I light this candle in your honor and in your memory. May G_d bless you as you have blessed me with love, with grace and with peace. Amen.

The following may be read after lighting the candle.

You are remembered in love. You are part of the now in me. All the good, all the love, all the comfort a person can give is remembered, and repeated, for your sake. Time changes, everything passes, but love. May peace abide you.

Source of Strength, You are my Shepherd—I shall not want. You guide me to green pastures; You lead me beside still waters. You restore my soul and renew my life. You calmly conduct me to paths of righteousness, for that is Your nature. And even though I have continued to walk through the valley of the shadow of this death, I need no longer fear—for You remain with me. Your rod and Your staff—they do comfort me. You have prepared table after table before me even while I was in the presence of deep sadness; You yet anointed my head with oil. My cup overflows. Surely goodness, love and compassion will follow me all the days of my life—for I shall continue strive to dwell in Your house, dear G_d, forever.

Zich-ronechal/Zich-ro-nech liv-ra-cha. Your memory continues to be a blessing.

Sources: "I haven't forgotten you..." Naomi Levy, *Talking to God*, p. 221, adapted by Rabbi J.B. Sacks. "You are remembered..." Gerald Dicker, appears in Anita Diamant, *Saying Kaddish*, p.152. "Source of Strength..." Psalm 23, devotional translation by Rabbi J.B. Sacks. "Zich-ronecha..." Rabbi J.B. Sacks.