

Yom HaShoah 2017: Remembering those killed in the Nazi Holocaust

Required Annotations	Student-Created Annotations	Summary / Questions / Reflection
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Comprehension	Comments
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Background

"When the war was over and the mind-boggling scope of the Final Solution was fully grasped — the Germans and their collaborators had annihilated 6 million Jews from every corner of Europe, wiping out more than one-third of the world's Jewish population — the moral imperative to remember grew even more intense." (from Jeff Jacoby's commentary: 'Never forget,' the world said of the Holocaust. But the world is forgetting)

On Sunday, Jewish communities across the world came together to **commemorate** those who died at the hands of Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany during World War II during Yom HaShoah.

What is Yom HaShoah?

Yom HaShoah, or by its full name Yom HaShoah Ve-Hagevurah, is the Hebrew name for Holocaust (Shoah) Memorial Day, literally translated as 'Day of the Holocaust and the Heroism.'

The day serves as a memorial of those who died during the Holocaust, giving families time to reflect on the lives lost and educate future generations against anti-semitism.

Yom HaShoah is different from International Holocaust Memorial Day [established by the UN], which is held on January 27 every year to mark the date of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest of the Nazi concentration camps.

When is Yom HaShoah? When does it start and when does it end?

The date is always held on the 27th day of the month of Nissan (April/May) on the Hebrew calendar – one week after the end of Pesach (Passover) and one week before Yom Hazikaron, the memorial day for Israel's fallen soldiers.

The 27th day in Nissan also marks the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

On the Gregorian calendar, this year Yom HaShoah 2017 started on the evening of Sunday, April 23 and ends in the evening of Monday, April 24th.

Yom HaShoah rituals, prayers and events

As Yom HaShoah is a fairly recent memorial date, there are no specific **established** rituals.

However, typically synagogues¹ hold memorial services across the globe, where six candles are lit by families of the dead – one for each of the six million victims – and the names of those who died are read out.

Sometimes these ceremonies are held in graveyards or Holocaust memorials as well.

This year in the UK, there will be a memorial service for Yom HaShoah held on May 8th at 2pm at the Barnet Copthall Stadium in London.

¹ The building where a Jewish assembly or congregation meets for religious worship and instruction.

How Yom HaShoah is commemorated in Israel

The sound of a siren is blasted across Israel, stopping traffic and pedestrians in their tracks for a two-minute silence.

This usually happens twice during Yom HaShoah – once at 11am and once at sunset – a way of commemorating the dead established in the 1960s.

All theaters, cinemas, pubs and other public entertainment **venues** are closed throughout Yom HaShoah.

Remembering the Holocaust

- **Yom HaShoah** (Holocaust Remembrance Day) is observed as Israel's day of commemoration for the approximately six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust as a result of the actions carried out by Nazi Germany. In Israel, it is a national memorial day. It was **inaugurated** in 1953. It is held on the 27th of Nisan (April/May), unless the 27th would be adjacent to Shabbat, in which case the date is shifted by a day. Yom HaShoah is also observed by many Jewish communities in the United States and elsewhere in the world. The date relates both to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising which began 13 days earlier, and to the Israeli Independence Day which is eight days later.
- Some other countries have different commemorative days for the same event. In 1979, the U.S. Congress established Days of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust (DRVH) as an 8 day period for remembrance programs and ceremonies, from the Sunday before Yom Hashoah to the Sunday after Yom Hashoah.
- **International Holocaust Remembrance Day** is on January 27 every year and marks the liberation of Auschwitz – the Nazi death camp – in 1945. It was designated by a United Nations General Assembly Resolution in 2005. The resolution came after a special session was held earlier that year, on January 24, 2005 during which the UN General Assembly marked the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps and the end of the Holocaust. This day is also a national event in the United Kingdom and in Italy.
- **Yad Vashem** (“Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority”) is Israel’s official memorial to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust established in 1953. The origin of the name is from a Bible verse: “And to them will I give in my house and within my walls a memorial and a name (Yad Vashem) that shall not be cut off.” (Isaiah 56:5).

Questions

1. What does Yom HaShoah mean?
2. When is Yom HaShoah? What is the purpose of Yom HaShoah?
3. How is YomHaShoah commemorated in Israel? (For how many minutes do all people come to a stop? When was this established?)
4. How is the United Nations’ International Holocaust Remembrance Day different from Yom HaShoah?
5. How many Jews were murdered by the Nazis during WWII?
6. Look through some of the links under “Resources” below (links are below the video). Why do you think it is vital for Holocaust Remembrance Day to be commemorated in the U.S. and around the world?
7. Circle all headings. How do headings help you understand this article.
8. Circle the bulleted list. Why do you think the author used this formatting style at the end of the article?