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Establishment of the Holiday

The full name of the day commemorating the victims of the Holocaust is "Yom Hashoah Ve-Hagevurah"— in Hebrew literally translated as the "Day of (remembrance of) the Holocaust and the Heroism." It is marked on the 27th day in the month of Nisan — a week after the end of the Passover holiday and a week before Yom Hazikaron (Memorial Day for Israel's fallen soldiers). It marks the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.

The date was selected in a resolution passed by Israel's Parliament, the Knesset, on April 12, 1951. Although the date was established by the Israeli government, it has become a day commemorated by Jewish communities and individuals worldwide. The day's official name - Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day - was made formal in a law enacted by the Knesset on August 19, 1953; on March 4, 1959, the Knesset passed another law which determined that tribute to victims of the Holocaust and ghetto uprisings be paid in public observances.

Yom HaShoah in Israel

In the early 1950s, Israeli education about the Holocaust (Hebrew: Ha-Shoah, The Catastrophe) emphasized the suffering inflicted on millions of European Jews by the Nazis. Surveys conducted in the late 1950s indicated that young Israelis did not sympathize with the victims of

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the Holocaust, since they believed that European Jews were "led like sheep for slaughter." The Israeli educational curriculum began to shift the emphasis to documenting how Jews resisted their Nazi tormentors through "passive resistance" — retaining their human dignity in the most unbearable conditions — and by "active resistance," fighting the Nazis in the ghettos and joining underground partisans who fought the Third Reich in its occupied countries.

Since the early 1960's, the sound of a siren on Yom Hashoah stops traffic and pedestrians throughout the State of Israel for two minutes of silent devotion. The siren blows at sundown and once again at 11:00 A.M. on this date. All radio and television programs during this day are connected in one way or another with the Jewish destiny in World War II, including personal interviews with survivors. Even the musical programs are adapted to the atmosphere of Yom Hashoah. There is no public entertainment on Yom Hashoah, as theaters, cinemas, pubs, and other public venues are closed throughout Israel.