

**The *Nizkor* of the Mayor of Jerusalem****A play****Yosef Bar Yosef****Translated by Binyamin Shalom****All rights reserved**e-mail : [yoss7@013.net](mailto:yoss7@013.net)

A play of ideas on the subject of faith that plainly deals with one of the central roots of the Israeli experience and its existence, in which regard it is dramatically different from anything else that I have ever written. When I wrote it, it did not even occur to me to present it to a theater to be performed.

I have just re-read it and I felt that it spoke to me much more than I had previously assumed, if only because behind the ideological struggle there lie two types of human suffering that it is difficult not to identify with, despite, or perhaps due to the very fact that both contain signs of madness.

**Characters**

The Mayor of Jerusalem

Eliezer-David Yarden

The Master of Ceremonies

The Voice of Feivel, a senior member of the party, along with voices in the crowd

**Location**

The office of the Mayor of Jerusalem, as well as a stage in a large banquet hall

**Time**

On the eve of the Six-Days' War

### Scene One

(It is raining outside, and the only light in the room comes through the window, and it is rather grey at that. The Mayor sits at his desk, assailed by severe pains. In the opening moments one of the phones on the desk keeps ringing non-stop, pausing only for a moment and then beginning to ring again. He leans over the intercom on the desk, as if to say something, or call for help, but then stops and sits straight up once again).

The Mayor: (Picks up the telephone despite himself, listens a moment and then whispers:) No! (Puts down the receiver)  
(The phone rings once more)

The Mayor: (Picks up) No! (Listens) What don't you understand? Not a single soul! (Puts down the receiver and says to himself) Now just don't lose it!  
(The phone rings once more)

The Mayor: (Speaking into the receiver, with a certain restraint, speaking slowly) I can't see him now, give him my apologies, tell him I'm sorry and make an appointment with him for tomorrow, for an hour. Set aside an entire hour for him tomorrow. (Puts the phone down, breathes deeply, and says to himself) That's better, but it's still a little off.  
(The phone rings once more)

The Mayor: (Into the phone) What do you mean what should you do?! Drink it! Drink the water, what do you think I mean, my blood?! Flood waters are just as good as any other water. What's with all the questions? Take care of it! It's not the first winter flood in Jerusalem. It's not like the pipes were never backed up before. (Puts the phone down then picks up again) Hold all my calls. No, definitely not, don't let anyone in to see me, not a soul! He came down specially from Tel-Aviv? Tell him I came all the way from Jerusalem. (Puts the phone down, breathes deep and feels a little looser in the chest) I've never been sick. I don't even have my own doctor.

(Outside the sun suddenly shines through the heavy cloud cover, and orange-violet rays of light shoot through the window into the room).

The Mayor: (Studying the light) Huh? (Stands up) Sunlight. (Goes over to the window) I need a little air, it's too tight in here. Just a little fresh air and... (his gestures are heavy as he reaches the window and throws it open, as wind and rain whip his face) A sun-shower. (Retreats a step then immediately fights his way back through the wind and closes the window) Even so, it's better than before. I think it's really over now. (Looks himself over) I'm soaked. (Stares at the door to his office) No one needs to know a thing. You only really get sick when people know you're sick.

(There is an extremely hesitant knock at the narrow back door which is repeated a second time with a certain insistence. The Mayor does not move an inch from his spot next to the window).

Yarden: (Enters, a little shamefacedly, wearing a large overcoat, leaving the door open behind him, walks in, stops, takes another step forward, then stops again, until he is finally standing facing the empty desk of the Mayor. He is talking to himself in a sort of murmur, dryly. As he speaks, the clouds return to hide the sun and the light in the room)

dims). Remember him, O Lord, so that he won't be lost, so that it won't be like he never lived. What are my own memories worth? Even that... where will I be in just a few years? Remember him. He fell in the war for the redemption of the Jewish people, he fell in Jerusalem, and after all, what are the Jewish people and Jerusalem if not Your promise and the glorification of Your name, like the very breath of God. Lift him up and sustain him beneath Your wings, You who have no physical form, let them rest with You.

(The Mayor moves away from the window to some corner in the room).

Yarden: (Goes over to the window, and begins to murmur again in the same dry tone) Give me strength, Lord. They must have made a mistake, he's not just some nobody, he's the honorable Mayor of Jerusalem, Jerusalem Your holy city, he'll definitely understand that they made a mistake and he'll fix it right away. Grant me a clear head to explain it to him, and give me strength, Lord. Just this once, give me strength, that I shouldn't get frightened and immediately run away. It's just pride that makes me retreat to my little hole in the wall.

The Mayor: Who are you talking to?

Yarden: Him. If only He would give me the strength to converse with human beings.

The Mayor: Him?

Yarden: The Good Lord, if only He would give me the strength to talk to human beings the way that I talk with Him. With people I have to beg, human beings are alive, as it says in Psalms, the dead shall not sing the Lord's praises. (Bows to the Mayor).

The Mayor: What are you doing? Stop it!

Yarden: His honor is the Mayor of Jerusalem, he...

The Mayor: If you don't mind, you can refer to God as 'He' but you can refer to me with a simple 'you', got it?

Yarden: Of course, it's just that...

The Mayor: I don't stand on circumstance. How'd you get in here anyway? Where'd you come from?

Yarden: Jerusalem, I was born within the Old City walls.

The Mayor: How'd you get in *here*?

Yarden: From over there, the back stairs, the fire escape, with apologies to His Honor.

The Mayor: Forget His Honor – apologize to me! Even that's too much! How'd you get to the fire escape?

Yarden: I'm from here, I work for His Honor, that is, I'm a municipal employee, in the Accounting Department of the Welfare Office, they didn't have any space in the hall so they gave me a pot and a room, all to myself, right at the entrance to the back stairs.

The Mayor: (Sitting down) What's your name?

Yarden: Yarden, Eliezer-David Yarden, with apologies to His Honor, to you, that is. I couldn't get an appointment through the usual means, I wrote several letters, I even asked the Executive Secretary personally.

The Mayor: What's the issue? Did you refer to it in your letters?

Yarden: No, I didn't, I just requested a face-to-face meeting concerning a very important matter.

- The Mayor: Comrade Yarden, if everyone would decide what very important matter the Mayor of Jerusalem has to address and sneak in using the back stairs, then... You can go back the way you came, I won't make an issue of it this time, like you never even came in.
- Yarden: If His Honor would just hear me out I'm sure he would agree to meet with me. Sorry, I'm referring to His Honor again in the... (giving up) Right, I get it. (Turns to go)
- The Mayor: (Feels a sudden pain, grinds his teeth, then says to himself) Again! (Immediately) Seems a bit better though, no?
- Yarden: (Stops) Excuse me? Is His Honor talking to me?
- The Mayor: (Stares at him for a moment) You know what? Have a seat.
- Yarden: You want me to sit down?
- The Mayor: What else? You're already standing, right?
- Yarden: (About to sit down) If His Honor doesn't mind, that is, if you don't mind, I'd rather stand.
- The Mayor: Fine, I don't mind. So what's the matter?
- Yarden: It's the monument.
- The Mayor: Comrade Yarden, my time is precious, there are many people waiting for me out there, there are all sorts of things that have nothing to do with me...
- Yarden: His Honor himself is erecting the monument, I mean the municipality is. It's a memorial monument for the fallen soldiers in the War of Independence, which the Municipality of Jerusalem intends to erect in the heart of the city.
- The Mayor: Yes, we're responsible for that.
- Yarden: The wording that they are going to inscribe on the monument, I read it in the papers, it reads, "*Nizkor* – We shall remember". That must be a mistake, perhaps His Honor simply failed to notice it, you, that is, you have so many issues to tend to, the entire city rests on His Honor's shoulders, so perhaps he failed to notice that there was this mistake. Night after night I can't get any sleep but I've been telling myself to calm down, that it's just a mistake, that's all.
- The Mayor: I don't follow. What could the mistake possibly be?
- Yarden: (Shocked) ""*Nizkor*? We shall remember?", "We"?
- The Mayor: What's the mistake?
- Yarden: But we have "*Yizkor* – God shall remember" – God's the one who should remember, He's the only one who can, the Children of Israel have prayed throughout their history that "God should remember" their departed, it must be a mistake.
- The Mayor: An entire committee debated the matter and that's what they decided.
- Yarden: And they... they were aware of the wording of the prayer – "*Yizkor* – God shall remember"? Did they recall the prayer?
- The Mayor: I would assume so. Sometimes you have to remind them, but once you remind them, they remember it. We're all Jews after all.
- Yarden: (As though slapped in the face, begins to retreat) You mean to say: it wasn't an error, there was no mistake? They did it on purpose? Intentionally?
- The Mayor: Why does that concern you so much?
- Yarden: My son... but regardless...

- The Mayor: So that's it? (Stands up) I understand now, and I'm sure that you're a religious man, but you have to take into consideration that it's a memorial being erected by the municipality, the elected officials, on behalf of the city, and the city is not religious. (Approaches Yarden) The monument is going to stand in the square, and by way of this monument the entire city is letting it be known that they intend to remember the fallen, their own citizens, and they are going to say explicitly, "*Nizkor* – We shall remember". All of us shall remember all the fallen – including your son.
- Yarden: The citizens. Us. But the fallen are gone and we're still here, how can we? (Retreats in the direction of the back door, ashamed, almost shocked) Can we really remember? Can we? It's an inscription that's full of... full of... (He opens the door)
- The Mayor: Just a moment, please.
- Yarden: It's full of pride. (Exits and closes the door behind him)
- The Mayor: (Laughs suddenly, from within, a soft laugh) Only in Jerusalem. Someone tries to see you and gets turned away, writes letters and gets no response, enters through the back door, bows and scrapes, stutters through all his respect and fear, then runs away right in the middle of the conversation and the Mayor of Jerusalem tries to pull him back in, His Honor the Mayor... (Begins laughing again then stops all at once) Something's happening to me. Enough! (Sits down at his desk and picks up the phone) Malka! Get me an appointment with the doctor. Whichever one you want. I don't have one, you can check with my insurance. Make it in the afternoon, it's not urgent. That's the first thing. Second – check if we have an employee named Yarden, Eliezer-David Yarden. No, no need to check, he's definitely an employee, just bring me his file. (Feeling another pang) Fine, then! No, not the file, Rabinovitch – we've already taken care of the file, now let's take care of Rabinovitch. Didn't you tell me Rabinovitch was waiting? So send him in!

## Scene Two

(In the Mayor's office. Two to three weeks after the first scene. It is a bright day outside and the room is full of light. The Mayor is sitting in his chair and Yarden is sitting across the desk from him. The scene opens in mid-conversation).

- The Mayor: (After a brief pause) Let's do this, Mr. Yarden. (Stands up)  
(Yarden stands up as well)
- The Mayor: (Approaches Yarden and lightly takes him by the arm) Come with me. Come, come, I'm not going to bite. (Leads Yarden to his own chair)  
Here, have a seat here, if you will.
- Yarden: What? No! Why?
- The Mayor: Let's pretend for a moment that you are the Mayor of Jerusalem, the elected high official.
- Yarden: (Aghast) I can't. It's your chair.
- The Mayor: It's just a chair after all, you can sit down on it, it's more comfortable than the others because I have to sit on it all day, but it's still just a chair. Sit down, I'm begging you.  
(Yarden sits down)
- The Mayor: Now let me sit down over here, facing you, on the other side of the desk. (Sits down) Imagine that I represent the citizens, the residents of Jerusalem that elected you, two-thirds of the people I represent are not religious and the other third is religious. You should know they're always here in this room, their presence is more real than my own, or yours, that is, for the sake of our little experiment. So what have you decided?
- Yarden: No. I can't do it. His Honor is the Mayor of Jerusalem, I can't ridicule him like this. (Gets up)
- The Mayor: (Emphatically, a little angrily) They didn't anoint me with holy oil, Mr. Yarden, whatever I am capable of – you're capable of too. Please, go ahead.  
(Yarden sits down once more)
- The Mayor: So, what have you decided?
- Yarden: (After a moment of silence) "*Yizkor* – God shall remember".
- The Mayor: Who?
- Yarden: God, He's the only one who can remember.
- The Mayor: I'm not a believer.
- Yarden: We're Jews, you're...
- The Mayor: That's a fact, and I'm not a believer.
- Yarden: You're wrong. You're gonna believe one day.
- The Mayor: That's not how the Mayor speaks to the citizens who elected him, he's one and same as them. If they never made any mistakes – let's assume it was a mistake – then they wouldn't have elected him to begin with.
- Yarden: I can't do this anymore.
- The Mayor: Let's give it a shot all the same.
- Yarden: Even if you and yours aren't believers, what would it bother you to have the name of God inscribed on the monument? It wouldn't take anything away from you at all, whereas...
- The Mayor: No! Not that! It's a municipal monument, the city's monument, my city, it's as if the entire city wrote the inscription, and if you go ahead and inscribe something that the city does not believe in it would be a

lie, hypocrisy. What would I tell my children when they ask me one day: you're not a believer, you don't keep the commandments, why did you write the name of God on the monument?

- Yarden: They can go to other places, they've got plenty of places to go, if the name of God really bothers them and makes them out to be liars, let them go somewhere else!
- The Mayor: It's going to stand in the city square so that we can all see it.
- Yarden: (Lowers his head and says loudly) After all, Jerusalem isn't just any old city, though it may be smaller than Tel-Aviv or Haifa. I mean it's...
- The Mayor: There's no such thing as not being just any old city. It's a city and that's it, that's enough.
- Yarden: But it's the city of God, the seat of the Lord, I mean He...
- The Mayor: You're getting back to the same point, Mr. Yarden, and I'm not a believer.
- Yarden: But it's been the capital city for the Children of Israel for generations, the entire people, every last Jew since King David has felt like he was a resident of this city.
- The Mayor: It's a memorial monument for the fallen, Mr. Yarden, and they are no longer with us, but the monument is made of stone, living people are the ones who carve it out and set it up, and living people are the ones who take the chisel to the stone to inscribe their words there so that other living souls can see it. The people who came before had their time, and when they did we were still in the earth, but now it's the living's turn and they have the right to live the way that they see fit until they too...
- Yarden: They are preventing us from offering a proper prayer on behalf of those who need it. That's what every heart desires for the dead, that the Good Lord above should remember them.
- The Mayor: And if they were to do what you're asking it would prevent a whole lot of other people from expressing what they have in their hearts and people, in all their innocence and simplicity, just want to say, "*Nizkor* – We shall remember", and they have the right to say it, "We shall remember".
- Yarden: If they write, "*Yizkor* – God shall remember" – then everyone has a part in it, He has enough room for everyone, but if we write, "*Nizkor* – We shall remember" – then it's nothing at all, I mean we, we... we're just flesh and blood, what are we after all?
- The Mayor: You're repeating yourself. Don't you see? It's not all that easy. But please, by all means, go ahead.
- Yarden: (Gets up) No. I can't. Everything you're saying seems to be true, but it really isn't true at all, it's not at all true, not in any way, shape or form, no...
- The Mayor: Prove it to me. Sit back down and prove it to me.
- Yarden: No. There's no way. His Honor is the Mayor of Jerusalem and I can't sit here speaking to him in reverse. His Honor, His Honor must excuse me for saying so, but like this he seems somewhat diminished in my eyes.
- The Mayor: You have my permission, I'm the one who asked you to sit in my chair after all.

- Yarden: Don't make me do this anymore, please don't make me do this anymore. His Honor should just let me stand before him and make my request, that's all I'm asking, to make my request, more than that I can not do, just let me put in my request, all I'm asking for is the memorial monument. His Honor has the entire city at his feet, the entire land of the living, just let him give me this one little piece. Let him inscribe the name of God on the monument. Nobody is going to accuse him of having told some big lie, I'm sure that he has plenty of battles to wage in the land of the living, let him just remove this one minor matter from the field, let him go beyond the call of justice, let him do it and I will thank him in any way that I can for the rest of my days, even...
- The Mayor: (Stands up. This appeal strikes a chord in him and he responds almost softly) Stop, Mr. Eliezer-David Yarden. You're asking me for a personal favor and it is as though you are asking me to abuse my powers. A nation, even the nation of Israel, is not some cloud in the sky, a nation is composed of law and order that must be observed in all honesty, I just can't do it.
- Yarden: It's my final comfort. I'm going to go to the monument every day, and if they write "*Nizkor*" there I won't be able to visit, I won't even be able to raise my eyes and look other people in the face for fear that they'll have seen what's written there. The medal of honor that I received in '48 in my son's name, I've kept it all these years in my *tallis* and *tefillin* bag, but I'll have to return it.
- The Mayor: (After a moment of silence) Forgive me for asking, but where is your son buried?
- Yarden: He was killed within the old city walls, that's where he gave his life, they didn't have time to bury them and they just hid them in a corner of the poor house yard.
- The Mayor: And since then they haven't transferred the...?
- Yarden: They transferred the bodies from Latrun and all sorts of other places, but in Jerusalem – no. If they were to ask for the bodies to be returned it would be as if they were giving up on the place – the bodies are a sort of guarantee for Jerusalem, and I agreed.
- The Mayor: (After a pause, with goodwill) Mr. Yarden, let me give your request some more thought. Perhaps we could find some sort of solution that would satisfy all the parties involved.  
(The direct line rings. Yarden is flustered by the sound and retreats to the other side of the desk).
- The Mayor: I asked them to hold all my calls, but that's the direct line. (He goes over to his seat and picks up the receiver) Yes. Oh, of course, hello Dr. Bloch. Everything's fine, I feel fine. You got the results? I'm glad. I should work as usual, eat, the whole nine yards. No, I don't smoke. What do you mean only if I feel any further pain? I see, okay, thank you, goodbye. (Hangs up)  
(Silence. The Mayor sits down and places his hands on the desktop, then looks Yarden straight in the face, as he stands facing the Mayor. He stares at Yarden for an extended moment. Then some feeling washes over his features)
- The Mayor: (In a quiet, courageous voice, that nevertheless reveals something choked up, he extends his hands and spreads them out over the

desktop) You see these hands? In 1931, with these very hands, I cut stones for new buildings in Jerusalem, until they bled, me and a bunch of other young men and women just like me, yes, all of us cut stones until our hands bled. And Jerusalem back then, she was a small, sorry city, full of Yeshiva *bochurs*, from "Sha'arei Shamayim" Yeshiva in the Old City and others, and when they would see us sitting on the ground and cutting stones like that they would try to avoid us and cross over to the other side of the street – we weren't Torah observant, a bunch of young people of both sexes, we were impure in their eyes. The fact that we were cutting stones for new buildings in Jerusalem wasn't of any importance in their eyes, they figured the Arabs ought to be the ones to cut the stones. Why? Because for them Jerusalem was the City of God, just the way you put it, and that's the important thing in your opinion. But what exactly is the City of God? What was the Old City of Jerusalem back then? Do you remember? Not just the big beautiful stones, but do you remember what life was like back then? The poverty. The filth. The lepers and the charity collectors who gathered all that money from wealthy Jews abroad and then oppressed the poor and the orphaned alike. Or the pale children with that suffering look in their eyes – do you remember all that? Is that... is that the City of God? What do you want here altogether?

Yarden: Even so, what are we without God? What is the New Jerusalem without the Jerusalem of the Temple Mount? Just some suburb without a city, some severed, forgotten arm.

The Mayor: No, Mr. Yarden, no! (Gets up and goes over to the window) Look at Jerusalem, can you see her?

Yarden: (Does not move from his spot in the middle of the room facing the desk, with his head bowed) Yes, always.

The Mayor: And what do you see?  
(Yarden remains silent)

The Mayor: (Facing the window) 35 years ago this entire area was just a bunch of naked mountains, no more than stones. Now look at it: great, tall buildings, rising up over the trees, full of people. Living people raised up the faces of these mountains, they didn't grow on their own. It was the City of God for two thousand years, desolate, destitute, ruled by Arabs. I intentionally gave permits for them to build so densely and I even issued permits for buildings not made of stone. The British wouldn't allow it when they ruled here, but they didn't live here and I want people to live here and stone buildings are just too expensive for the average person living in Israel – all the refugees from Europe, the refugees from Arab countries who now fill its borders. (After a pause) You can pray facing the east, towards the City of God, but can you live that way? Look which way the city grew – towards the west, towards the lowlands, towards the sea with its population centers and economic opportunities. I have a dream. At the entrance to the city for years now there has been a mental institution on the right and an old age home on the left and I... I want to see them surrounded by neighborhoods, I want to just ride right past them, on and on, to crown them, to stamp them with our own imprint. Westward, that's the truth, that's this city's true desire and that's what it truly needs. And don't tell

me any fairy tales, I hate lies, I hate fear and I hate hypocrisy. (He suddenly turns to face Yarden) A man suddenly gets sick. No, it doesn't happen all of a sudden. People like me get sick before it's their time and... sure, why not just put it out there? We die before our time. And when a person suddenly gets sick he starts to think thoughts that he never thought before, he tends to get softer, he experiences fear, he starts to long for things and he almost says to himself: oh, let there be a God, maybe He really exists all the same. Why not? Who knows? It would be much more pleasant, and it's tradition, after all, the return to his parents' warm home. (Raising his voice) Lies! I don't believe in Him. No matter how much I try to put my head through the wall, no matter how much I grovel in the dust – I don't believe in Him. So should I go calling His name just because things are so rotten without Him? (Softly) I'm not gonna hide from my illness and I'm not gonna hide from any other truth either – truth, that's the final source of pride, and I still have the strength to bear it, to live, to live. (After a moment) I'm not going to change a thing, Mr. Yarden, it's going to remain "*Nizkor* – We shall remember".

Yarden: Why did His Honor call me in to see him today?

The Mayor: To talk it over, to explain it to you, you came to me.

Yarden: But His Honor had no intention of changing his mind, I saw them putting up the stone this morning.

The Mayor: Yes, they've begun work on it.

Yarden: And the inscription?

The Mayor: They've begun preparing the font for the stonecutters.

Yarden: (With tremendous courage – that is, with great trepidation) His Honor, he, he – he called me in to play the fool before him, he put me in his chair just to play the fool – he made a fool of me.

The Mayor: (Ashamed) No. That wasn't at all my intention.

Yarden: (Looking straight at the Mayor) I have to tell His Honor the following in advance, because I work for him – from this point on I will be obligated to go to war with him over this matter.

The Mayor: You're already fighting me right here.

Yarden: Not directly – at this point I will be obligated to turn to the Prime Minister, the President, and, if need be, I will even turn to the nation at large through the news media.

The Mayor: But it's a municipal matter that only concerns Jerusalem.

Yarden: Jerusalem is the right hand of every man in this country.

The Mayor: There's no end to it, Mr. Yarden.

Yarden: There's no end to Jerusalem, and I will be obligated to file a complaint against His Honor's decision. He decided the matter of the inscription all by himself, he didn't even ask the committee to decide, he did it all by himself. His Honor must forgive me but he has no right to do such a thing.

The Mayor: The committee heads and the entire coalition, including religious members, all gave their approval concerning the decision.

Yarden: (With a bowed head and hidden fever, slowly and softly but in a clear voice) All these years I have sat hidden away in my spot, some little hole in the middle of a ruin. In a cave. I hoped that time would make me forget him. But I can see him right before my very eyes as though

he were still alive, just eighteen years old and I can almost hear his dying gasps as he lies there wounded. It's bad. I didn't long for him in my hole but I was bound to him in shackles, there was no escaping him there, it was like I loved my own mourning – so I left the world behind, I left the world behind while still living, and that's forbidden, it's bad, very bad, and bitter too – and it's a sin. And all my prayers were there. They were like a dog that runs back to its little hole, gnawing and gnawing – yes – and the bone dries up, sure, and in the end he drinks his own spit to quench his thirst. I've had it, I've had it with living like this, I can't take it any more – this isn't the way I was meant to remember him. I have to do battle in the city streets over the name of God – that is what I have to do – he also fell in the city streets, not in some hole, not in some cave, he fell right in the city's central square.

The Mayor: (In fear) You're trembling, Mr. Yarden, there's no need. You're gonna make yourself sick.

Yarden: (Looking straight at the Mayor) His Honor... His Honor is the sick one. (Shocked by what he has said, he retreats but continues all the same) His Honor is sick. (Retreats in the direction of the back door).

The Mayor: (For a moment it seems he wants to give vent to some outburst but then he restrains himself) Today you came in through the front door, so you can leave that way too, the office won't understand where you disappeared to, they'll think I swallowed you up.  
(Yarden exits through the back door).

### Scene Three

A Municipal Board meeting, at night, some three months later. The Mayor sits at his table and there is another table connected to it. The members of the board are not present on the stage and only their voices can be heard. The Mayor's words and the voices of the board all proceed at a rather rapid pace. The Mayor has changed since the previous scene – his face is darker, greyer, and his movements are sharper – he also looks much more exhausted than before.

The Mayor: The meeting is now in session. This is an extraordinary session of the Municipal Council of Jerusalem, as per the majority request of the members of the Council, and we are gathered here today in order to decide, all of us together now, what the inscription should be on the memorial monument that we – that is, the Municipality – are going to be erecting in the town square – "*Nizkor* – We shall remember" or "*Yizkor* – God shall remember".

Voice 1: (A thick, emotional voice) Without tradition there is nothing! Just a yawning abyss!

The Mayor: Just a moment, Mr. Zimmerman, slowly now, we'll get to the abyss. (Continues with his opening words) We are all familiar with the question, the senior members of the Council already decided, in accordance with the conclusions of the Board specifically assembled to decide in this matter, and we were on the verge of completing it and proceeding with the inscription when, at the last moment, right before execution, one of our citizens came forward, himself a father who lost his child, for whom I have great respect and esteem.

Voice 2: Even if you respect him and hold him in high esteem – you can't admit that, you're on the other side.

The Mayor: (Stares at the speaker, then, after a brief pause) That is true. (Continues) He challenged our decision and turned to the President, the Prime Minister, the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Religious Affairs, the Minister of Public Health, all the ministers, in short (after a brief pause) even the Chief of Staff, as well as the newspapers. As a result, the members of the Council, including members of my own party, were taken aback and decided to raise the issue once again.

Voice 1: (Cuts the Mayor off and addresses the members of the Council) Don't you hear him? (Addressing the Mayor) You have no right! We weren't taken aback! We did it of our own free will! It's a matter of tradition! The abyss!

The Mayor: So we decided to raise the issue once more in an extraordinary session, and I would like to recommend that we proceed at once to the matter at hand, since, with your permission, of course, I decided to include a few other matters in our discussion here today, including the issue of the sewage pipe to the south, as well as the plan for the razing and reconstruction of the Seven Gates neighborhood in the heart of the city, which matters have been postponed from session to session and the Council has not had a chance to turn its full attention to these matters.

Voice 3: That wasn't just the fault of the Council.

The Mayor: (After a brief pause) I was only in the hospital for eight days – if that is what you were referring to – well, these matters, which include construction and sewage and would mean hundreds of new jobs for the

- unemployed, well, these issues have been dragging on for half a year now and there hasn't been an extraordinary session to address them.
- Voice 3: Those are matters that concern the physical city but we're here today to discuss the soul of the city.
- The Mayor: Certainly, certainly, we'll only turn to the physical aspects of the city when we'll have finished with the soul.
- Various: What kind of way is that to talk? – You're ridiculing the very sanctity... - You have no right!
- The Mayor: (Bangs on the table) Members of the Council! Let's turn to the matter at hand. All of the parties, not just the religious parties – even my own party – decided to distance themselves today from their obligations to the coalition.
- Voice 3: It's a matter of ethics. We'll let our consciences decide.
- The Mayor: Your consciences? What's that supposed to mean? The rest of the time you don't act in accordance with your conscience? What are you, a bunch of schoolkids or members of a Municipal Council?
- Various: I told you: it's an abyss... a scandal! – That's over the line! – Easy with the hatred, friends, easy with the hatred!
- The Mayor: An agreement – that's where your consciences should be! You know how to take in accordance with an agreement: you've got seven streets closed on the Sabbath, two deputies drawing full pay, millions for the Yeshivas. Oh, you know how to take, but when it comes time to give suddenly you get cold feet and you wrap yourselves in your consciences? But you already agreed! What, just because there was a public outcry? In secret you can agree to it but when it becomes public then it's a problem? What do you think the Municipality is, some sort of dumping ground?
- Various: That's over the line – there you have it, that's what happens when there's no respect for tradition! – Enough! – It's a scandal! – Easy with the hatred, friends, easy with the hatred!
- The Mayor: But it wasn't just the religious parties, everyone... I told you already, even in my own party they've turned on me.
- Voice 4: Not exactly! I think we need to reach a compromise, I recommend we write, "*Nizkor*" right alongside "*Yizkor*".
- The Mayor: One beneath the other? Which one's gonna go on top?
- Voice 4: You can write it top to bottom.
- The Mayor: I offered him all that already, sure, in a moment of weakness I recommended that, and you know what he said to me? "If God is your Lord – go with him – and if Ba'al is your master, go with him."
- Various: That's right – God is the truth and true stability – that's right –
- The Mayor: There you have it, now you know who rules Jerusalem.
- Voice 5: Easy with the hatred, friends! You can write "We" but you can make it look like "God" – you just leave it all unclear, let every man see what he wants in the inscription.  
(The light goes out or the curtain closes).

**Scene Four**

(The office of the Mayor, following the Council session. There is a lamp lit on his desk and he is sitting there not doing a thing, leaning on his elbows on the desk, staring off into space, looking extremely tired. He raises his head).

The Mayor: Come in.  
(Silence).

The Mayor: Come in.  
(There is a knock at the back door).

The Mayor: Come in already.  
(Yarden enters).

The Mayor: How many times do I have to tell you to come in?  
Yarden: I hadn't even knocked yet when His Honor was already...  
The Mayor: I already know when you're gonna knock even before you raise your hand. Yup, that's how far we've come! And so what if you hadn't knocked yet? I told you to come in, didn't I?

Yarden: I have to knock before I enter.  
The Mayor: What's going on? Speak up.  
Yarden: All the Council members left already, so I wanted to know what they decided.  
(The Mayor remains silent).

Yarden: "*Yizkor* – God shall remember"? Is that what they decided?  
(The Mayor remains silent).

Yarden: Yes. I can see it in His Honor's face – "*Yizkor*"!  
The Mayor: Just like that?  
Yarden: (Joyously) It had to turn out that way. God wouldn't have it any other way.

The Mayor: (With no joy) I'm sorry, but all the same it gives me a certain pleasure to tell you: (after a brief pause) "*Nizkor* – We shall remember".  
Yarden: (In shock) I don't get it. How? I mean, it's impossible, His Honor is making fun of me.

The Mayor: No, that's the last thing that I would want to do.  
Yarden: But it doesn't add up. I spoke with the Council members, and the majority assured me explicitly that they wouldn't change their minds.

The Mayor: You made a great effort, but I'm more experienced. The decision has been made by a majority of one.  
Yarden: A majority of one?  
The Mayor: With a majority of one you can go to war or retreat.  
Yarden: Even Mr. Vered?  
The Mayor: He voted in favor of a compromise: he said we should write "We" in such a way that it looks like "God".  
Yarden: And Dr. Ne'eman?  
The Mayor: He insisted on a personal recommendation that we write: "These souls shall be remembered", which is also a part of the tradition that he holds so dear, and it's a rather original recommendation. An experienced mayor has many ways of getting what he wants.

Yarden: (After a moment, in a strange voice that is neither strong nor high but sounds like a shriek all the same) "*Nizkor* – We shall remember"...? It's an orphaned word, it's shabby, it has no father or mother, it's a

shameful word, it's a scarecrow... No! Their decision has no weight, it's not possible. They don't have the authority.

The Mayor: It's the elected Municipal Council of Jerusalem, they are the citizens of Jerusalem.

Yarden: No! They were misguided – they're traitors.

The Mayor: First you claimed that I don't have the authority to decide on my own and you raised holy hell so that the entire Council would come together and discuss the matter and reach a new decision. When it comes to what you want, then they do have the authority to decide, but if they reject your proposal then they don't – is that it?

Yarden: They lost their... by reaching such a decision they lost all their authority.

The Mayor: You're refusing the Council the right to reach a decision of their own free will, which means that they would have had to decide in favor of your request, otherwise they have no right to exist.

Yarden: It's the same with criminals. Until they commit a crime they're free, but afterwards...

The Mayor: Aren't you getting a little carried away?

Yarden: It's my son. His friends. All of them. The holy martyrs, they're dead and can't say: No, and you all come along and string them up naked, without any divine remembrance and without any human spirit, stuck up there on some Tower of Babel, cast upon an altar of vermin right in the middle of Jerusalem.

The Mayor: (After a moment, quietly) Enough, Mr. Yarden.

Yarden: You have no authority. Here, look at this stone. (He removes a stone from his pocket) Since I started coming here I have been carrying a piece of Jerusalem stone in my pocket. It's a stone, you all walk on it, but it has more honor than you do. It's just a stone but its might is greater than yours and its intelligence is greater than yours too. I'm not afraid of you. I'll tell you right now: You're not the Mayor of Jerusalem. You're a pauper king of a lowly suburb, preening himself with a title that doesn't belong to him. A pauper king! And those men, the members of the Council, your friends, they're just a bunch of eunuchs, castrated, puffed-up chickens. (He falls silent, is taken aback by what he has said, takes a deep breath, and then immediately follows up with) No. I won't take it back, no.

The Mayor: (Suddenly, quietly) What are you?

Yarden: (Surprised, embarrassed) I don't understand. Does His Honor mean to ask: who...

The Mayor: Not who! What, what, what are you?

Yarden: My name? Has His Honor forgotten my name?

The Mayor: You... are you like any other man? You... do you pay taxes?

Yarden: At the beginning of every month, I make sure of it.

The Mayor: Do you get sick sometimes?

Yarden: I suffer from stomach pains, I, I drink special teas. I don't understand – His Honor is making fun of me.

(The Mayor gets up and approaches Yarden slowly. Yarden takes a step back as though he is afraid, but then he immediately steps back up and moves in to face up to the Mayor. They stand there toe to toe).

- The Mayor: (Quietly, trying to hide his emotions) You're just flesh and blood, that's what you are. You're a little bit older than me, isn't that right? You're probably supposed to retire soon and you, you live alone, isn't that right? I'm sure of it. I know the type. I often feel bad for you, I'd like to be able to do something for you, I'd like to give you some sort of pleasure, do something for you. But what? What could I give you? What would make you happy? Is there anything I could give you? I could promote you a level.
- Yarden: No.
- The Mayor: I looked at your file, you've been a level thirteen for ten years now, they even forgot to promote you when the entire staff was promoted. I'll raise you two levels, no, three, I can do it, you know.
- Yarden: There is something that His Honor could do for me.
- The Mayor: What's that?
- Yarden: His Honor could reverse his decision in the matter of the inscription.
- The Mayor: (Stays silent, then quietly proceeds) Do you know what I just did as I remained silent? I screamed, deep down inside I screamed and roared: (silently, but with emphasis) Oy! Oy! The inscription! Again with the inscription! You're flesh and blood and then again you're not! You've been seized by some evil spirit – the inscription! Just the inscription! The one thing that I can't give you is the one thing that you want me to give you, is that it? Just knowing that fact, nothing else, just that fact alone is enough to drive a man insane. The inscription! You'll starve, you'll lie there dying but you'll still be saying: the inscription! The way that it stands now – there's absolutely no way! To accept that now would be to give in to something inhuman, to give in to... to give in to the abyss, to lose all human respect, to lose everything, everything, every last little thing. No! I have many more important things to take care of, and I'll forget about all of them, but I won't give in. I'll lose office, I'm already losing control of myself with you, I'll lose it, fine, but I won't give in.
- Yarden: (Retreats in the direction of the main door) I'll keep fighting, yes, I'll keep on. Now I'll have to take the fight to His Honor personally, in every... every way possible. I'll hang posters throughout the country.
- The Mayor: In Judea and Samaria too, huh? Sure, that was clear all along.
- Yarden: I feel it has the taste of... a *Kiddush Hashem* – honoring the Lord.
- The Mayor: *Kiddush Hashem*?
- Yarden: Eighteen years ago I sacrificed my son, the time has come to... even if it's just a taste!
- The Mayor: (In amazement) You... you sacrificed him?
- Yarden: (Choked up) Don't even say it! You won't take that from me! No! That's the one thing – no! (Exits through the front door).
- The Mayor: (To himself) Right – not that. All the same, the inscription – absolutely not!  
(The phone rings).
- The Mayor: (On the phone) That's right, someone left, what's the matter? Yes, that's right, he never came in but he left. Could be! He did – there you have it! (Hangs up).  
(The intercom buzzes)
- The Mayor: (Into the intercom) Feivel? At this hour?

Feivel: (We hear his voice through the intercom) We work all hours.

The Mayor: You already received a full report.

Feivel: Yes, they tell me you were excellent, you brought your carrot and your stick, and three different compromise solutions to divert votes, all of which you came up with on your own, you haven't been on top of your game like that for years.

The Mayor: Stop buttering me up. I'm listening.

Feivel: Why don't you just give it to him?

The Mayor: I can't, I don't have what he wants, he wants the very fire of God.

Feivel: I don't understand you. Who needs this? You want to fight with bereaved parents over something like this? It doesn't even have anything to do with the municipality anymore. It's going to divide the coalition, it'll break up the government. Now, just a year before the elections? I mean we spoke about this! You're building a monument for us – *for us*.

The Mayor: I handed you guys the city of Jerusalem.

Feivel: It belongs to us, you have no right to destroy it.

The Mayor: That's it, it's done.

Feivel: You just recently got out of the hospital, give yourself some time to rest, get better first.

The Mayor: What are you trying to take from me now? What'll I be left with? The burial society?

Feivel: That's your religious deputy's area.

The Mayor: You're fine, Feivel, just fine. Take what you want, give it all to Mishka, just leave the... (falls silent)  
(Church bells begin ringing).

Feivel: Hello! What's that?

The Mayor: The church bells are ringing, you know what? They're the one thing that reminds us we're Jews, it's hard for us to remember it on our own – it's the damnedest thing but we don't have any bells, we just have old beggars clanging around with their collection boxes crying: charity will save your soul! Charity will save your soul! It's their bells that remind us we're Jews, but our own bells just remind us that we're gonna die one day. (Changing topics in midstream) Just leave me health and sanitation and this one issue. There's anyway nothing to be done now, it would look even worse if we retreated at this point.

Feivel: It's gonna cost us dearly. (Hangs up).  
(The phone rings).

The Mayor: (Into the phone) My patronage for a beauty pageant? I'm the Mayor of Jerusalem, do you know what that means? I'm the Mayor of Jerusalem, don't you get it?! (Hangs up, in pain) It's coming back. There's no light without darkness, and every night this damn pain returns. (Knocks his head against the desk).

**Scene Five**

(The stage of the "National Hall" is illuminated at the close of the beauty pageant, about a week after the previous scene. The Mayor sits at a table to one side of the stage, wearing a uniform. The Master of Ceremonies stands center-stage, before a microphone, facing the crowd. Rhythmic applause rises from the hall).

Master of C.: (Without any exaggeration) Okay, ladies and gentlemen, okay now! That's it, the evening has come to a close. No, no we can't call all the beauties back out onto the stage. Why? They're cold. At night in Jerusalem it doesn't matter if it's summer or winter – it's just plain cold. The singers? They're done, they're all done. And the musicians are completely finished. Oh my, you people here in Jerusalem, you're just starving for it, aren't you – why do you stay here? Why don't you come to Tel Aviv! Okay, okay, my dear people of Jerusalem, we'll bring out one last performer to close out this wonderful evening.  
(Shouts from the crowd: Hey, hey)

Master of C.: Shhh! Shhh – quiet now! Just a moment, give me a second to take another sip of my tea. (He sips from the cup on the ground).  
(Laughter rises through the hall).

Master of C.: Okay then, to conclude this wonderful evening in which Jerusalem had the honor for the first time in its history to host the Miss Israel Beauty Pageant, along with the city's representatives, of course, under the patronage of the Honorable Mayor of the City – to conclude this wonderful evening, then, we would like to present you with a surprise: a declaration of outrage protesting this very evening. Our program's artistic director met a humble, retiring man outside who has become rather famous in the country recently, and this man was standing there distributing his posters when our artistic director managed to convince him that the best way to get his point across would be... (Calls out) Mr. Eliezer-David Yarden!  
(The sound of drums, Yarden enters along the edge of the stage, with his bundle of posters in his hand, quite scared. The Mayor, upon seeing him, begins to rise)

Master of C.: (Softly addresses the Mayor) With your understanding, Mr. Mayor, by your leave!  
(The Mayor sits down. Yarden continues walking hesitantly towards center-stage. The orchestra begins to play loudly. Yarden stops, scared, and begins to retreat. Laughter rises from the hall).

Master of C.: (To the orchestra) Stop! Stop! Mr. Yarden is not participating in the pageant.  
(The orchestra falls silent).

Master of C.: (Approaches Yarden, takes him by the arm, and leads him to the microphone at center-stage) Please, Mr. Yarden, go ahead.  
(Addressing the crowd) Quiet please, dear citizens of Jerusalem!

Yarden: (With his head bowed, reading from a poster in his hands in a whisper, as his voice trembles) To the people of Jerusalem! Behold!  
(Cries from the crowd: We can't hear you! Louder!)

Master of C.: Just a moment! (To Yarden) You have to raise your head up to the microphone, like this, straight up.

- Yarden: (Raises his head, is blinded by the lights, and retreats) No. I can't. It's better if I don't.
- Master of C.: You can't, Mr. Yarden, we already promised the crowd. (Takes him by the arm and leads him back to the microphone, turning meanwhile to address the crowd) Just another moment, my dear ladies and gentlemen of Jerusalem, just another moment! (He lowers the microphone beneath Yarden's chin) Please, Mr. Yarden, go ahead. Now you can just talk like you're all by yourself, but speak up, of course. (To the crowd) Quiet!
- Yarden: (In a silent monotone, though his voice is amplified by the microphone) Residents of Jerusalem, behold! The Mayor of Jerusalem has been struggling and twisting for months now as he refuses to inscribe the holy word "*Yizkor* – God shall remember" on the memorial monument to be erected in honor of the fallen soldiers who died liberating the Land of Israel. Instead, he stubbornly insists with his last remaining strength to inscribe...  
(The Mayor is about to get up, but the Master of Ceremonies turns to him and stares him down silently, at which point The Mayor sits back down).
- Yarden: ...a sorry orphan of an inscription that will read: "*Nizkor* – We shall remember". Who are we to remember? Man born of woman, whose days are short and filled with anger – as Job said – can we be the ones to remember the fallen? Such an inscription does not simply rob those in need of comfort of their final solace, such an inscription turns the memorial monument into a foul altar of vain, heretical pride out of spite!  
(Dissatisfied cries rise from the crowd: Hey, cut it out!)
- Master of C.: Patience, ladies and gentlemen! We'll hand out candies in a moment, just another moment!
- Yarden: Behold, dear residents of Jerusalem: who is our Mayor?! In this city of Jerusalem, divided and downtrodden as she is, her holy martyrs violated, in this month of Tammuz, when the cries of mothers rise from the earth over their young children dying of starvation in the besieged biblical city of Jerusalem, and the heart of every Jew can see the fires rising from the burning Temple by the red sunset light, and every ear can hear the screams of the young daughters of the Priests as they leap into the fires, in this very place and at this most sacred time of year the Mayor of the City of Jerusalem has decided to pledge his body's patronage to a Miss Israel beauty pageant!  
(Laughter rises from the crowd).
- Master of C.: (With evident pleasure, in a whisper) Shhh – quiet! There's more.  
(The Mayor begins to rise once more to leave).
- Master of C.: Keep an open heart, Mr. Mayor, keep an open heart!  
(The Mayor sits down and laughter rises once more from the crowd).
- Yarden: Every Sabbath Jerusalem sings "Charm is a lie and beauty is vanity, only a woman who truly fears the Lord shall be praised", but here we have the Mayor of Jerusalem gathering before him all the beautiful virgin girls of Jerusalem...  
(A shout rises: Where? Followed by general laughter)

- Yarden: ...and he commands them to prance before him with and without their clothes on, and once he has examined them carefully down to the very last detail, he is to choose the most beautiful among them like King Ahasuerus in his time, and finally – in accordance with the sacred rules of the pageant – he will kiss her on her blushing cheeks and red-painted lips.  
(Laughter from the crowd. The Mayor rises and goes backstage).
- Master of C.: (Calling after the Mayor) Mr. Mayor! (To the crowd) Quiet, ladies and gentlemen, let us continue.
- Yarden: Behold, dear residents of Jerusalem: with the aged, worn mouth that he intends to kiss the cheek of the beauty queen, with this very mouth he is preventing and forbidding a holy inscription from being chiseled into the face of the memorial monument for those who fell in the prime of their lives, those whose youth is crying out from the midst of their crushed bones: "God shall remember us"!  
(At this point someone calls to the Master of Ceremonies from backstage, and from the Master of Ceremonies' hand gestures we can tell that he is ignoring the call. The curtain begins to fall, but the Master of Ceremonies waves his hands to re-open it, so the curtain rises once more, then begins to close, and so on, back and forth).
- Yarden: (Continues) Residents of Jerusalem! Sacred souls in a holy city! This is not your Mayor, this pauper king, this hollow soul, this fool's fool, sticking his wooden proboscis into places where it doesn't belong...  
(The curtain closes on him and he is taken aback, not understanding what is happening around him, and gets caught up in the curtain, ending up outside it facing the crowd, as he tries to get back behind the curtain unsuccessfully. From the crowd we hear a loud mixture of applause, catcalls and laughter, until the Master of Ceremonies sticks out his hand and pulls Yarden behind the curtain).
- Master of C.: (Stepping before the crowd) With that, ladies and gentlemen, our wonderful evening has finally come to a close. (He steps back behind the curtain).

**Scene Six**

(The stage is the same one as before, immediately following the previous scene. The stage is now almost completely dark and Yarden is standing center-stage, with his face raised now).

- Yarden: (Quietly, speaking to the air) I can't see you yet. (Without lowering his gaze he begins to cry silently and says) Just another day or two. He is going to order the inscription. Then I can return. I'll go back home, home. (He continues crying silently).
- The Mayor: (Enters from backstage, spots Yarden and approaches him slowly, coming to a stop right behind his back). You're still going, huh? The empty hall is still full, is that it? Who's out there now? Pharisees? Sadducees? Or maybe you're calling up the ancient zealots to draw their daggers and... (assailed by pain) Ahh! (Continues at once through the pain, groaning, but speaking loudly) The Holy Temple is still burning! The Priests' daughters are jumping into the flames! Which Temple? The first or the second? Or maybe... maybe both at the same time? (Falls silent, takes a deep breath, feels another wave of pain, and continues, almost screaming now) Fire, gold, gold, fire, decide what it is already: fire or gold, you can't have both at the same time! And where are the people supposed to live in the midst of all this fire and gold? (Falls silent, takes a deep breath).
- Yarden: (Facing the hall) Yes, the hall is full, all the halls are full, everything is full, just the soul remains.
- The Mayor: How can you do anything when the Holy Temple is still in flames? How can you pave roads? Build classrooms? Clean up the city? It's a terrible thing. It's a sin! You oughtta run and put out the flames.
- Yarden: Let it be done, but you must recall the name of God in everything you do.
- The Mayor: What kind of god is that? He doesn't do a thing and He couldn't care less about anything, but you better remember His name, His name, and if not – He'll bring a pogrom.
- Yarden: I am the Lord your God – that's the first commandment, and then...
- The Mayor: So in His name you tear my life to pieces, in His name you declare me a pauper king. Did I ever claim to be some sort of king? Did I ever preen like royalty?
- Yarden: His Honor is the Mayor of Jerusalem, he should be like a... he could be like a...
- The Mayor: No! Not that! Just don't ever crown me! All this crowning, just to toss me down into the pit afterwards! You even stuck me with a wooden proboscis...! What's my proboscis got to do with it? What did it ever do to you? And why a proboscis of all things? I don't have a proboscis, I've got a nose, that's enough for me, it's plenty, plenty – and... (assailed by a sharper pain than usual) Ah... (He sticks his fist in his mouth so as not to scream. He bends down, writhes, falls/bows to his knees) No! (In a whisper) I won't let you see me like this. (Makes every effort to get up).
- Yarden: (Turns around to face the Mayor, sees him on the ground, is shocked) What? Let His Honor give me his hand, I'll help him up.

- The Mayor: (To himself) Not you! (Gets up, takes a deep breath, feels just a little bit better, and proceeds to speak heavily, taking long breaths between) Now if... now if... let's say that I give you what you want, that I agree and make it "*Yizkor* – God shall remember"?
- Yarden: (In disbelief) I don't understand.
- The Mayor: Here, let's assume I've agreed. We'll write "*Yizkor*", what would you do then about everything that you said against me? Would you take it all back? Would my proboscis go back to being a nose?
- Yarden: Definitely. I would be, would be forever indebted to His Honor for my entire life. Does His Honor really mean it? Is His Honor repenting?
- The Mayor: And what... what would happen in the city? Let's say that... let's say that there is a memorial monument up with "*Yizkor*" written on it, just like that! Let's say that we've got all of Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount, everything, what would happen then? Would we become different people? Perhaps we wouldn't die then?
- Yarden: We could call on God from much closer. Does His Honor really mean it?
- The Mayor: All that because of one little word? All that – just by changing "We" to "God"?
- Yarden: A man can die over that one little word, it's a holy, living word. (Returns to the question that truly concerns him) Will His Honor really change it? Will he inscribe "*Yizkor*"?
- The Mayor: (Assailed by severe pain) No! No! No! (Bends over from the pain) No. Not here, not now! (Drags himself with all his might over to the table and grabs hold of it and manages to pull himself into a sitting position on the chair). No!  
(The sounds of a chisel knocking against stone can be heard from rather close by. Yarden turns aside from the Mayor and listens worriedly).
- The Mayor: (Feeling a little better, continuing almost in a whisper, heavily) We shall remember, we shall. "A man born of woman whose days are numbered and filled with anger". Sure! "Like a bud that blossoms and dies", definitely! And then, then the emptiness – no, not emptiness, just darkness – no, not even darkness, just nothing – no, not nothing either, there... there aren't even any words to describe it, but we shall remember, we shall. However much time we've got – that's all we have – us. We'll put all the words we have in that "we" – we, we, we. With all our might we'll hold on to... (assailed by pain, throws his hand out and balls it up tightly into a fist) we, we, we.
- Yarden: (Referring to the sounds he hears) What is that? (Approaches the Mayor worriedly) What is that?
- The Mayor: What's what?
- Yarden: His Honor can't hear it?  
(A train whistle begins to blow in the meantime, coming closer and closer, then coming to a sudden stop).
- The Mayor: It's the train to Jerusalem, that's what it is! That's Jerusalem. It's not the big train stations where we were born, where the trains come in and travel on, no, not at all! That's the Jerusalem train station, at the edge of the world, in the middle of nowhere, there's no thru traffic, the train comes in and that's it, that's it!

Yarden: No it isn't, that's not it.

The Mayor: (Listening now) Yeah, sure. (His face lights up) They're doing it already, I gave them the order to start right away, this very evening. There's a phone backstage, and when you stuck me with a wooden proboscis I... I wish I could be there, I bet they have lanterns and everything.

Yarden: They're inscribing His Honor's "*Nizkor*"?

The Mayor: (As though he didn't hear) I wish I could be there, I would take the hammer and chisel myself. There's a house on Jaffa Street, at the corner of Rose. We worked in three shifts, chiseling away all through the night.

Yarden: (Crying) Don't do it! I'm begging His Honor. Let him go out to the workers, it's right here nearby, let him go out there and ask them to stop. I'm begging.

The Mayor: (It is difficult to tell if he means what he says or is being sarcastic) You want me to go out there? You want me to ask them to...? Me? can't you see? I can't move, I... I can barely breathe, and even if... it wouldn't help, it has to stay "We" – it just has to.

Master of C.: (Enters from backstage, looking for someone, spots the two of them and comes over to greet them) Hello there, excuse me, perhaps you know how to get out of here? They closed the main entrance and I... I'm with a girl. (Recognizing them) Oh, sorry, Mr. Mayor. (He bows slightly) And you, Mr. Eliezer-David... the two of you together? You look like friends now. Great, beautiful, I'm glad, that whole thing was just a show for the crowd, huh?

The Mayor: (Makes an effort to get up and is assailed by extreme pain) Ahhhh!

Master of C.: (Shocked) What's that?

The Mayor: (Facing the hall, noticing now how large and empty it is) No! Close the curtain, please, close it, please – the curtain.

Master of C.: (Goes over to the edge of the stage) But there's no one there, the hall has been empty for some time now.

The Mayor: (With difficulty) It's too... too big... it's cold... I feel cold.

Master of C.: Please...  
(The curtain falls and the Master of Ceremonies jumps out to the front of the stage, facing the hall).

**Final Scene**

(The Master of Ceremonies is standing onstage, speaking to the crowd).

Master of C.: Our Mayor has, in fact, died. The new Mayor, a younger and more practical individual, decided to pacify Eliezer-David Yarden and his supporters and ordered the workers to inscribe "*Yizkor* – God shall remember" on the other side of the memorial monument. He sent his personal driver to bring Yarden down, and the latter looked at the monument for a moment and ran off. Afterwards he said that the earlier inscription, "*Nizkor* – We shall remember", cuts through the stone and can still be seen on the second side, obscuring "God", and that it's even worse than before. But that's all ancient history. In the meantime little, old Jerusalem has turned into the large, unified city that was joined together – the true Jerusalem. Who was responsible for that? No one knows the answer. And Yarden found himself once more within the old city walls, he found his son's bones and brought them up to be buried on the Mount of Olives where his ancestors are also buried. And as for our memorial monument, everyone, absolutely everyone forgot about it – completely.