

# ***Eileh Ezkerah***

## ***Eileh Ezkerah: Introduction***

Rabbi Leon A. Morris

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This is a great opportunity to study one rubric of the Yom Kippur service that we editors of the *machzor* haven't yet tackled, and to do so with colleagues joining us on the phone and with three very gifted scholars who will be teaching us today. And it seems especially appropriate to be doing this on Yom HaZikaron.

When we think about *Eileh Ezkerah*, it raises many questions for us, and in addition to the very concrete questions that we may have about its origins and its function, there's also a great deal of conceptual questions that we bring to the table, conceptual in the sense of exploring really what's the meaning of the link between Yom Kippur and remembering the rabbis who were martyred in Roman times. In what ways is this an expression of *z'chut avot*, meant to elicit God's compassion for us? In what ways is recalling the courage of these rabbis meant to be an inspiration or a model to us? And in what ways does the martyrdom of our sages represent a kind of substitution for the sacrifices that existed in the days of the Temple, the most important one, of course, on Yom Kippur itself, as part of the *Avodah*?

There will be two parts to this call, an initial presentation on a different facet of *Eileh Ezkerah* by each of our three teachers, and then we'll do a

second round in which we'd like to provide an opportunity for each of our three teachers to share how they might approach this liturgy for a twenty-first-century *machzor*.