INTRODUCTION TO MOURNING

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Who Is a Mourner

A mourner is defined in *halacha* as someone mourning during the 12-month mourning period for parents or the 30-day mourning period for the other five relatives (spouse, brother, sister, son, daughter). After 30 days, one is no longer a mourner for anyone but one's parents.

Mourners' Restrictions

If the mourner goes about business as usual, it may show he or she doesn't care about the close relative who died. The mourner should ideally not want to do these things. The mourner honors the dead person by refraining from pampering him/herself and refraining from going about his or her life as usual.

Public Meals

A mourner may not attend a public meal for any purpose. For example, if the mourner attends a lecture or *Torah* class at which food is being served, he or she may not eat the food. This only applies to sit-down meals; snacking is permitted.

Siyum/*Brit*/*Bar Mitzva*

After 30 days after a parent's burial, a mourner may:

- Attend a *siyum* or *bar mitzva* and eat there.
- Attend a *brit* but not eat there.

NOTE If there is music (live or recorded), the mourner must leave.

Weddings

A mourner may not eat at a wedding and may not even be in the wedding hall after the ceremony took. The mourner may also not hear the music at a wedding.

EXCEPTIONS

- If the mourner is the parent of someone getting married, the mourner can fully participate in the wedding.
- If the mourner is the bride or groom, he or she must normally wait to get married until after *shloshim* /30 days.

NOTE If it is after *shiva*, but still during *shloshim*, consult a *rabbi*.

Kiddush and *Shabbat* or Festival Meals

A mourner may not publicly (noticeably) mourn on *Shabbat* or festivals so he or she may attend *Shabbat* or festival meals and kiddushes if he or she would be expected to attend. If the mourner always or routinely invites some person or a lot of different people on *Shabbat* or festivals, it is still permitted. If the mourner does not routinely invite some person or a lot of different people to a *Shabbat* or festival meal, then he or she may not, for his or her own enjoyment, invite guests for meals. However, the mourner is permitted to do so for other purposes (for the benefit of the invited person or people), such as *kiruv* or *hachnasat orchim*. There is no limit to how many guests the mourner may host.

The mourner may attend or host a *sheva brachot* in his/her home.

A mourner should not be invited to meals, even for *Shabbat* or festivals; but if he/she was invited, he/she may go.

A mourner does eat at a *Purim* or *Jewish festival* seuda, since there is no mourning on *Purim* nor on any festival (except *Chanuka*).

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