MOURNING

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.

Holidays

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

MOURNING: WHO MUST MOURN

Mourning: Who Must Mourn: Seven Categories

There are seven categories of relatives for whom mourning is required: father; mother; spouse; son; daughter; brother; sister.

Mourning: Who Must Mourn: Before Burial/Onen

From the time of death until burial, the seven relatives are called *onen* (*onenim*). One is only an *onen* if he or she will participate in the funeral or make decisions related to the funeral. This could be even if you will be involved only in deciding who will speak at the hesped. If someone is completely uninvolved in the funeral arrangements, one is an aveil.

Mourning: Who Must Mourn: No Onenut on Shabbat and Jewish Festivals

One is not an *onen* whenever a body may not be buried, such as on *Shabbat* and *Jewish festivals*, and so there is no *onenut* on *Shabbat* or *Jewish festivals*. An *onen* says blessings and does *mitzvot* on those days.

Mourning: Who Must Mourn: After Burial/Avel

After burial, any of the seven close relatives are called *avel* (*aveilim).*

MOURNING: HOW LONG TO MOURN

Mourning: How Long To Mourn: Parents or Others

Mourning for parents lasts one year. Mourning for others lasts only 30 days.

MOURNING: HOW TO MOURN

BEING AN ONEN

Onen Restrictions

An *onen* is prohibited from doing positive *mitzvot* so as not to be distracted from taking care of the dead body.
An *onen* may not:

- Do any positive commandment (no blessings, prayers, *shema*…).
- Eat meat or drink wine (until after the burial).
- Work or operate a business.

NOTE Before the relative dies, if possible, the *onen* should sell his business for whatever days he or she will be an *onen* and in *shiv'a*. Otherwise, the owner may have to close the business until *shiv'a* is over.

NOTE If there will be a large financial loss, consult a *rabbi*. A large loss is subjective to the individual's actual wealth and also to that person's perception of what is a large loss. Consult a *rabbi* for how much constitutes a large loss.

Onen Traveling with Body

An *onen* who accompanies a body to a foreign country for burial may have two extra days (or more) of *onenut.* If the *onen* then returns home and joins other mourners in the *shiv'a* house, the *onen* may end *shiv'a* with the other family members. (For more details, see When *Shiv'a* (and *Shloshim*) Starts: Normal Days .)

Being an Onen: Saying Kaddish

Some communities have the custom of an *onen*'s saying *kaddish*.

NOTE When a person's parent dies on or just before (*erev*) *Shabbat* or a *Jewish festival*, a daughter of any age should not be told until after *Shabbat* or the festival is over. A son should only be told if he is 6 years old and above and the custom in that community is to say *kaddish* as an *onen*.

KRI'A: TEARING THE CLOTHES

KRI'A: WHO TEARS

Children and Kri'a

When a parent has died, the children must tear "*kr'ia*," that is, tearing any garments that they wear during *shiv'a*.

Women and Kri'a

Women do *kri'a*. To avoid exposing her body when tearing, a woman may wait until she is in a private place. After tearing, she might need to pin the torn area closed for *tzni'ut* (modest attire).

KRI'A: ON WHAT TO TEAR

What To Tear for Kri'a

When tearing *kri'a*, do not tear underwear, a coat or sweater worn for warmth, or *talit katan*. To avoid ruining good or expensive clothing, you may change to other clothes before doing *kri'a*.
You may tear the same garment more than once if you need to do *kriya* for more than one dead person or for seeing the *Temple* mount more than once (in more than 30 days).

KRI'A: WHEN TO TEAR

Tear at News or Funeral Home

Do the tearing/*kri'a* when you hear the news of a death. If not, tear at the funeral home before the funeral.

KRI'A: HOW TO TEAR

How To Tear Kri'a

If you are in mourning for a parent, whether you are a *man* or woman, tear a vertical tear 4 inches (10.2 cm) long on your outermost garments (shirt and jacket, if you wear one) at the neck on the left side. The bulk of the tear must be made by hand, not with scissors or a knife, although you may start the tear with a sharp implement.

KRI'A: HOW OFTEN TO TEAR

Kri'a: How Often for a Parent

When mourning for a parent, you must tear *kri'a* throughout the *shiv'a* week whenever you change shirts, so it is best to change garments as little as possible! You must wear the torn garment during the entire week of *shiv'a*. Coats do not require *kri'a*.

NOTE Wearing a torn black ribbon pinned to a garment does not fulfill the requirement of *kri'a*.

Kri'a: How Often for Non-Parents

When mourning for any of the five categories of people other than parents (spouse; son; daughter; brother; sister), tear only one time and only the outermost garment (but not coats) and tear on the right side.

SHIV'A

SHIV'A: PURPOSE

Shiv'a: Purpose

The purpose of *shiv'a* is to honor the dead person and the mourners.

SHIV'A (AND SHLOSHIM): TIMING

WHEN SHIV'A (AND SHLOSHIM) STARTS

When Shiv'a (and Shloshim) Starts: Normal Days

*Shiv'a (*and *shloshim)* starts for a mourner who:

- Attends funeral: After the burial.
- Will not attend funeral and is a(n):
    - Non-*Onen*: Immediately upon hearing news of the death.
    - *Onen*: As soon as the *onen* has nothing (more) to do with the funeral.

NOTE Family members may observe *shiv'a* at different starting and ending times.

When Shiv'a (and Shloshim) Starts: Jewish Festivals

For someone who dies during *Rosh Hashana*, *Yom Kippur*, or any of the three *Jewish festivals*, the mourning period does not start until after the holiday has ended.

HOW LONG SHIV'A (AND SHLOSHIM) LASTS

Duration of Shiv'a (and Shloshim)

Shiv'a lasts seven days. *Shloshim* lasts 30 days, beginning with Day 1 of *shiv'a*. There may be some exceptions if *shiv'a* occurs before or during festivals.

NOTE Any part of the first day is considered to be one full day. On the final day after *shacharit*, the mourners finish *shiv'a*, so *shiv'a* can actually last as little as 5 ½ calendar days.

WHEN SHIV'A RESUMES

When Shiv'a Resumes: Shabbat

Shiv'a that is interrupted by *Shabbat* resumes Sunday morning.

When Shiv'a Resumes: Jewish Festival

Shiv'a that is interrupted by a *Jewish festival* does not resume after being interrupted.

When Shiv'a Resumes: Purim

Shiva is interrupted for *Purim* and resumes (except on *shiv'a's* 7th day) after *Purim* (or, in Jerusalem, after *Shushan Purim*).

When Shiv'a Resumes: Chanuka

Shiva is not interrupted for *Chanuka*.

When Shiv'a Resumes: Rosh Chodesh

Shiva is not interrupted for *Rosh Chodesh.*

WHEN SHIV'A ENDS

When Shiv'a Ends: Onen

An *onen* ends *shiv'a* (and *shloshim)* with the household head ("*gadol ha'bayit*"--whoever controls the money in that household)—even if the household head begins *shiv'a* before burial and the *onen* joins the *shiv'a* house after burial.

When Shiv'a Ends: Non-Onen Who Finds Out Later

If you do not hear about someone's death for 30 days after the person died, observe just one day of *shiv'a*. If you hear in less than 30 days, observe the regular seven-day *shiv'a*.

SHIV'A: LOCATION

Ideal Location of Shiv'a

The ideal place to sit *shiv'a* is the home of the dead person, but any practical location is permitted.

Shiv'a in Several Locations

There may be more than one shiv'a house for one dead person. There is no requirement for people to all join for one shiv'a house, especially if the mourners live in different cities.

SHIV'A: LEAVING THE HOUSE

Mourners' Leaving the Shiv'a House

Mourners should not leave the *shiv'a* house even if they do not have a *minyan* there.

NOTE There are some exceptions for extreme conditions, including medical reasons. A *rabbi* should be consulted.

Shiv'a and Going Elsewhere To Sleep

If there is not enough space for all of the mourners to sleep in the *shiv'a* house, they may go elsewhere to sleep at night.

SHIV'A: MINYAN

Reason for Shiv'a House Minyan

The main reason for a *shiv'a* house *minyan* is to allow the male mourners to pray with a *minyan* and say *kaddish*, since they may not leave the house.

SHIV'A: FURNISHINGS

Shiv'a: Furnishings: Seat Height

Mourners during *shiv'a* do not sit on normal chairs. Any seat should be less than 12 inches high.

Shiv'a: Furnishings: Mirrors

Cover all mirrors after the funeral in the house of mourning (*shiv'a* house). This is a non-binding custom, not a *halacha*.

Shiv'a: Furnishing: Candle

Have a candle burn for seven days in the *shiv'a* house.

SHIV'A: MEALS

FIRST SHIV'A MEAL

First Shiv'a Meal: Bread and Egg

The first meal should be bread and a hard-boiled egg. After that meal, any foods may be eaten, including meat and wine.

First Shiv'a Meal: Prepared by Others

The mourners do not eat their own food for the first meal after the burial, so other people bring prepared food to the *shiv'a* house.

BRINGING FOOD TO SHIV'A HOUSE

Bringing Food to Shiv'a House

Bringing food to a *shiv'a* house is a non-binding custom, not a *halacha*. Some people have the custom for all seven days.

SHIV'A: DAILY LIFE

SHIV'A: BATHING

Bathing during Shiv'a

An *avel* should not bathe for pleasure and should only wash hands (to elbows), face (to collarbone), and feet (to the knees). If the *avel* is sweaty, smelly, or dirty, he or she may wash other body parts as needed.

SHIV'A: BUSINESS

Business during Shiv'a

An *avel* may not work and may not own an operating business during *shiv'a*. If a death is imminent, consult a *rabbi* immediately to arrange a sale of the business.

SHIV'A: CLOTHING

Clothing during Shiv'a

Mourners may not wear leather shoes for the seven days of *shiv'a*.

SHIV'A: DRIVING

Driving during Shiv'a

A mourner who absolutely must go somewhere may drive himself or herself (or be driven by someone else), but the proper observance of *shiv'a* is to stay home for the week.

SHIV'A: GIFTS

Gifts during Shiv'a

A mourner may not give gifts for seven days.
It is not appropriate to give gifts to a mourner for one year if the mourner is mourning for a parent.

SHIV'A: GREETING

Greeting during Shiv'a

A mourner may not greet someone in return but may acknowledge a greeting to him/her and may say “thank you” back. (This restriction ceases if a *Jewish festival* occurs during *shiv'a*.)

SHIV'A: LAUNDRY

Laundry during Shiv'a

A mourner may not do laundry nor wear clean clothes for comfort during *shiv'a*, but if all of the clothes are dirty, they may be washed. If so,

- Someone else should briefly wear such clothes before the mourner wears them, or
- The clothes may be thrown on the floor so that they will be considered dirty.

SHIV’A: MAKE UP

No Make Up for Mourner

A mourner should refrain from wearing make up during *shiv'a*.

SHIV'A: MARITAL RELATIONS

Marital Relations during Shiv'a

A mourner may not have marital relations and may not touch his or her spouse affectionately during *shiv'a*.

SHIV'A: SHABBAT AND PUBLIC MOURNING

Shiv'a: Mourning on Shabbat

A mourner does not mourn publicly on *Shabbat*.

Shiv'a: Entering Synagogue Friday Night

A mourner enters the *synagogue* on Friday evening before *Mizmor shir l'yom haShabbat* (after the main part of *Kabbalat Shabbat* has finished).

REASON *Mizmor shir* is the actual starting point of *Shabbat*.

The congregation stands and, as the mourners walk in, greets the mourners with "*HaMakom yenacheim etchem b'toch she'ar aveilei tzion v'yrushalayim*.

Women and Public Consolation after Kabbalat Shabbat

It is not the custom for women to get public consolation (*nichum aveilim)* on Friday night at *synagogue*.

SHIV'A: TEFILIN ON FIRST DAY

Tefilin: First Day of Shiv'a

Mourners do not wear *tefilin* on the first day (the day of burial), but do wear them after the first day.

SHIV'A: TORAH STUDY

Torah Study during Shiv'a

A mourner during *shiv'a* may not study *Torah*, other than:

- Laws of mourning (*aveilut*), and
- Whatever is permitted to study on *Tish'a b'Av*.

NOTE This restriction ceases if a *Jewish festival* occurs during *shiv'a*.

SHIV'A: WASHING, HAIRCUTS, SHAVING

Washing, Haircuts, Shaving during Shiv'a

An *avel* may not wash, shave, or get a haircut during *shiv'a* (for more details on haircuts, see Haircuts during *Shloshim*).

MOURNER'S KADDISH

KADDISH: FOR WHOM TO SAY

Kaddish for Parents/Exceptions

Mourner's *kaddish* is only supposed to be said for parents, unless no one else is saying *kaddish* for the dead person. If both your parents are still alive, you may not say mourner's *kaddish* for someone else unless you get your parents' permission.

Kaddish for Relatives Other than Parents

If you wish, you may say mourner's *kaddish* for family members other than parents, especially during *shloshim* (the first 30 days after burial), since the first 30 days after death are the most difficult for the dead person's soul.

However, you may say *kaddish* for anyone even after *shloshim* ends, if you wish, until the end of 11 months (for a *shomer-mitzvot* person) or 12 months (for a non-*shomer mitzvot* person. But in a place where only one person says *kaddish*, you may not supplant another person who is halachically required to say *kaddish*.

KADDISH: HOW LONG TO SAY

Kaddish: How Long To Say: Shomer Shabbat or Not

Kaddish is only said for 11 months for a *shomer Shabbat* Jew and 12 months for a non-shomer-*Shabbat* Jew.

Kaddish Timing: Last Day of Kaddish

The last day of *kaddish* is based on the day he or she was buried.
The final *kaddish* for a mourner, at the end of 11/12 months, will always be at *mincha*, regardless of when the dead person died or was buried.

KADDISH: WHO SHOULD SAY

Kaddish: Who Should Say: Sons Six and Above

All sons age 6 and above are required to say *kaddish* for a dead parent. For frequency, see *Kaddish* Frequency: Requirements of Sons.

NOTE Women are not required to say *kaddish*.

Kaddish: Who Should Say: Women

Women are not required to say *kaddish*, and it is not customary for them to do so. But if they want to, it is best if at least one *man* says *kaddish* with the woman.

KADDISH: HOW OFTEN TO SAY

Kaddish Frequency: Needs of Dead Person

Each dead person needs *kaddish* to be said for him or her:

- By at least one person.

  NOTE If more than one person who was close to the dead person (such as a relative) says *kaddish*, it is a merit for the soul of the dead person.

- At least once a day.

  NOTE More frequently is commendable, since *kaddish* relieves a dead person's soul from *gehenna*.

Kaddish Frequency: Requirements of Sons

Each son age 6 and above is required to say *kaddish* for his dead parent at least once a day.

NOTE "Day" here means from dark until the following sunset**.** If you say *kaddish* at *mincha* and the following *ma'ariv*, you have covered two days.

Saying Kaddish Multiple Times

Even though saying *kaddish* many times benefits the dead person's soul, there is no need--nor is it the custom--to attend multiple minyans each day in order to say *kaddish* for a dead person many times.

KADDISH: WITH WHOM TO SAY

Saying Kaddish in Unison

Ideally, only one mourner should say *kaddish*, whether mourner's *kaddish*, *rabbis' kaddish*, etc. Any *kaddish* said by more than one mourner should be said in unison.

THIRTY DAYS OF MOURNING (SHLOSHIM)

WHEN SHIV'A (AND SHLOSHIM) ENDS

Shiv'a and Shloshim: Ended by Jewish Festivals

Shiv'a ends if a *Jewish festival*, *Rosh Hashana*, or *Yom Kippur* intervenes.
Shloshim ends if a *Jewish festival*, *Rosh Hashana*, or *Yom Kippur* intervenes.
If two of those holidays occur within the first seven days after burial, the first one will break *shiv'a* and the second one will break *shloshim*.
Shimini Atseret does not constitute a second day for breaking shiv'a or *shloshim* (it is considered to be part of *Sukkot* for this purpose).

SHLOSHIM: DAILY LIFE

SHLOSHIM: BATHING

Bathing during Shloshim

For the first 30 days, a mourner should not bathe for pleasure in hot water and should only wash hands (to elbows), face (to collarbone), and feet (to the knees). If sweaty, smelly, or dirty, he or she may wash other body parts even during *shiv'a*. Lukewarm water may be used after *shiv'a* ends.

SHLOSHIM: CLOTHING

Clothing during Shloshim

Do not wear newly purchased clothing during the first 30 days of mourning (*shloshim)*. You may wear new clothing from the end of *shiv'a* if someone else wears them somewhat before you do.

NOTE Restrictions on newly purchased clothing end after:

- the year of mourning for those mourning for parents, and
- 30 days for those mourning for other relatives.

SHLOSHIM: HAIRCUTS

Haircuts during Shloshim

Do not get a haircut for the first 30 days of mourning. When mourning for parents, a mourner's hair should grow for three months from the last haircut but not for less than 30 days from the time *shiv'a* began. This applies to men and women, except if the woman needs to cut her hair for immersing in the *mikva*.

SHLOSHIM: KIDDUSH

Kiddush Club during Shloshim

A mourner during *shloshim* (or the rest of the mourner's year) may eat at a *kiddush* on *Shabbat* after *shacharit* if he is expected to be there (for example, if he is a regular member of a "*Kiddush* Club") because you may not display mourning in public on *Shabbat*.

SHLOSHIM: NAIL CUTTING

Nail Cutting during Shloshim

Do not cut your nails for the first 30 days of mourning.

EXCEPTION Women mourners may cut their nails before going to the *mikva*.

SHLOSHIM: SHAVING

Shaving during Shloshim

If you shave regularly (can be every day or a few times each week), you may shave after 30 days but not within 30 even if for non-parent and certainly not for a parent. If you normally grow a beard, you may not shave until 3 months have passed since the last time you trimmed your beard (and as long as it is more than 30 days from the day *shiva* began for the parent).
In case of a large financial loss, consult a *rabbi*.

NOTE A large loss is subjective to the individual's actual wealth and also to that person's perception of what is a large loss

SHLOSHIM: GETTING MARRIED

Wedding during Shloshim

Do not get married during the first 30 days of mourning, but you may get engaged.

YEAR OF MOURNING

YEAR-OF-MOURNING: TIME PERIOD

Mourner Period When Shiv'a or Shloshim Are Shortened

Someone who is mourning for parents is still a mourner for the entire year even if *shiv'a* and *shloshim* are truncated.

YEAR-OF-MOURNING: PRACTICES

YEAR OF MOURNING: MARRYING

Remarrying after a Wife Dies

If a wife dies, the husband must wait for three *Jewish festival* holidays to pass before remarrying (*Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur* do not count for this purpose).

Remarrying after a Husband Dies

If a husband dies, the wife may remarry after 92 days have passed.

YEAR OF MOURNING: NEW CLOTHING

New Clothing during Year of Mourning for Parent

For wearing new clothes during the year of mourning for a parent, see Clothing during *Shloshim* .

YEAR OF MOURNING: MOURNERS LEADING A MINYAN

Mourners Leading a Minyan

The dead person benefits if his/her son or sons lead public prayer services, whether during *shloshim* or the entire year (11 or 12 months). However, if the mourner is uncomfortable leading the *minyan* or is not a good reader or will be embarrassed, he should not feel obligated to do so.

A mourner does not lead a *minyan* on:

- *Shabbat*;
- *Jewish Festivals* (including chol ha'moed);
- *Purim*;
- *Rosh Chodesh*.

Opinions differ concerning *Chanuka*, so follow your local custom.

YEAR OF MOURNING: PUBLIC FESTIVITIES

Public Festivities for Mourner for Parent

A mourner may not generally enter a hall of joyous celebration and may not eat at any public meal. During the year of mourning for parents, you may not join any public festivities (even if it is not a *simcha*) that have a meal, including any meals celebrating a *mitzva* (se'udat *mitzva*) such as for a *brit mila*, wedding, or redemption of a son (*pidyon* ha'ben). After 30 days, you may attend a *bar mitzva* or a *siyum* meal, since a *bar mitzva* is similar to a *siyum* since the child's parent's commandment to educate his/her child in Jewish education has been completed.

EXCEPTION A mourner whose child is getting married, does attend the wedding and does eat at the meal with everyone else, even if mourning for a parent. He or she does not need to leave the room when music is

being played. To attend the wedding of anyone other than one's child, regardless of who died, a mourner must eat alone and outside the main dining area.

NOTE An intervening *Jewish festival* partially truncates the 30 days of mourning and so you may attend a *bar mitzva* or *siyum* even before the end of 30 days.

NOTE If you work at weddings (caterer, musician, etc.), you may attend weddings even before 30 days are up, but you may not join the meal.

Public Festivities for Mourner for Non-Parent

A mourner for the five categories of people other than parents (spouse; son; daughter; brother; sister) may join any celebrations, including the meals, after 30 days (and if any *Jewish festivals* intervene, that 30-day period is truncated).

YEAR OF MOURNING: SHEHECHEYANU

SheHecheyanu

A mourner (*avel*) is permitted to say *she'hecheyanu* for himself but should not say *she'hecheyanu* if required for the congregation. An *avel* should say *she'hecheyanu* on:

- Eating a “new” fruit.
- Wearing a new garment.
- Lighting *Chanuka* candles at home for the first time that year.

An *avel* should not do the following, since he should not say *she'hecheyanu* unless it is necessary:

- Light *Chanuka* candles in *synagogue*.
- Read the *megila*.
- Blow *shofar* on *Rosh Hashana*.

YEAR OF MOURNING: SYNAGOGUE SEAT

Synagogue Seat When Mourning for Parent

Change your normal seat in *synagogue* during the year of mourning for a parent. (The *rabbi* is not required to change seats). You should move to a seat further away from the *aron hakodesh* then your previous seat (since seats further from the *aron* are considered to be less prestigious than those close to the *aron*).

REASON This is to show humility and that we feel subdued due to the death.

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