SHIV'A

SHIV'A: PURPOSE

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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*).

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