

Nihum Aveilim

A Guide for the Comforter

By Rabbi Stuart Kelman and Dan Fendel
with Rabbi Jason Weiner

Tu Bishvat 5775
February 2015
EKS Publishing Co., Oakland, California

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June 2016

ISBN 978-0-939144-72-3

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PREFACE

WHY THIS BOOKLET?

A friend, a colleague, a relative has died. Or a friend, colleague, or relative of someone close to you has died.

You have decided to attend the funeral—a funeral you know will include Jewish traditions and rituals—to honor the deceased and to offer support and comfort to family and close friends. You may also want to provide support and comfort in the days, weeks, and months to come.

What do you do? What should you expect? What do you say? How do you behave in a way that is appropriate and loving, while honoring and respecting Jewish tradition?

This booklet is intended to provide guidance and insight for you around these issues, whether you are Jewish or not. It acknowledges the variety of practices that may occur within Jewish tradition and the spirit that underlies all of those practices.

This spirit can be summed in two fundamental principles that underlie every aspect of how someone who has died is honored and how we as survivors can comfort the mourners. The Hebrew terms for these principles are:

* *Kavod HaMeit*: Honoring the deceased

* *Nihum Aveilim*: Comforting the mourners

This same spirit is expressed in the Hebrew word for funeral—*levayah*—which means to accompany. We are here to accompany the deceased to their place of rest and to accompany the mourners through their grief.

Jewish tradition also includes the notion that the communal work of caring for the deceased and comforting the mourners occurs in both sacred and mundane realms. Traditionally, this work was done by the local *Chevrah Kadisha* (“holy society”), an honored group within each Jewish community. Today, it is often done by the community at large, of which everyone—Jew and non-Jew—is a part. It is not necessary to have knowledge, answers, insights, wisdom, or experience to comfort mourners.

Your presence at the events and gatherings described in this booklet will, by itself, provide comfort to the mourners and show your support for them. Even the simple act of sending a note of condolence will be appreciated. Beyond that, you may participate in the various rituals to the extent that you are comfortable. There are few “musts” when it comes to your role.

The funeral or memorial service is a good to place to start your involvement in honoring the deceased and supporting the mourners—by bringing your memories, questions, tears, and silence. Our hope is that this booklet can prepare you for undertaking this important—even sacred—role in your community.

If you want to go beyond what this brief guide can offer, we have provided a bibliography and list of websites at the end of this booklet.

VARIATIONS IN PRACTICE

Any guide of this sort must navigate through the wide variety of practice that exists in today's Jewish community. We have attempted to make the reader aware of what is "traditional" while acknowledging that there is considerable variation from community to community and from one stream of Judaism to another. Much of the subject matter of this guide is in the nature of Jewish *custom* (Hebrew: *minhag*) rather than Jewish *law*, which makes for even greater variation. Even within one synagogue or community, choices may vary. When in doubt, feel free to ask someone who seems to be in charge—a close friend of the family or religious leader. (And even then, you may get more than one answer!)

JEWS AND NON-JEWS

Much of what is in this guide applies equally to Jews and non-Jews. If you are in the role of comforter, what matters most to the person you are comforting is your presence, compassion, and caring—not your personal belief system or even your religion.

Individual cemeteries and branches of Judaism vary in their practice concerning whether non-Jews can be buried in the same space as Jews. Some institutions that hold funerals, such as a synagogue, may restrict certain roles, such as that of a pallbearer, to Jews. Other forms of participation, such as helping to fill in the grave, are generally open to all.

IN-GROUND BURIAL

This guide is written from the perspective that the body of the deceased is being buried in the ground, although alternatives, such as placement of a casket in an above-ground mausoleum or of cremation remains in a niche, do occur every day within the Jewish world. If the funeral you are attending involves one of these alternatives, some elements of this guide will not be applicable. Most elements are universal.

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Transliteration of Hebrew into English letters is not an exact science. In particular, we have chosen to represent the Hebrew letter **ח** using the symbol *ḥ* and the Hebrew letters **כ** and **ך** with the combination *kh*. Both are pronounced similarly to the German "ch."

NOTE ON GENDER USAGE

We have attempted to reflect gender neutrality where feasible, but this can be awkward. Edward Feld, our translator for Psalm 1, has written "I am frustrated that I cannot translate this psalm in gender neutral language without sacrificing too many other important considerations." A similar problem applies in reference to God; we have sometimes used "God" (or the Hebrew *Adonai*) where the Hebrew simply says "he."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The idea of this book arose from many conversations on the subject of education about Jewish rituals around death and dying. We came to realize that the best moment to reach individuals concerning this subject is when they attend a Jewish funeral. Our conversations also persuaded us that, in addition to providing people with the information they need during the funeral (including the prayer texts), we should provide them with something substantial, yet manageable, to take home so they can follow up on their experience. And while most books about death and dying are written for the mourners, this one is aimed at the “visitor”—whether Jewish or not—who wants to know the basics and background of Jewish practice and, equally important, how he or she can best be of support to the primary mourners.

Many individuals provided insights and suggestions. Our thanks go to all of the following for their detailed editorial counsel: David Zinner, Executive Director of Kavod v’Nichum, and Rabbi Joe Blair and Susan Barnes of the Kavod v’Nichum Editorial Committee; Sharon Brusman, Jennifer Kaufman, Fred Silverman, and Sandy Stadtler, all of Sinai Memorial Chapel Chevra Kadisha, San Francisco, CA; and the participants at our presentation at the 2014 Kavod v’Nichum Conference.

Rabbi Jason Weiner provided an authoritative voice for us regarding the Orthodox perspective on the issues we sought to address. Samuel J. Salkin, Executive Director of Sinai Memorial Chapel Chevra Kadisha, was a true partner, suggesting important ways to think about certain subjects and securing a grant to launch this publication. Our appreciation goes especially to the Milton and Sophie Meyer Fund for their generosity in supporting this work.

We want to dedicate this book to our friend, Claudia Valas, owner of EKS Publishing, and publisher of *K’vod Hamet* and *Chesed Shel Emet*. Over the many years of our work together, she has encouraged us, prodded us, and made it possible for us to publish these works on very specialized subjects. Her commitment can be seen as enabling the American Jewish community to deepen its understanding of our traditions and these particular transitions in our lives.

Rabbi Stuart Kelman
Dan Fendel
Tu Bishvat, 5775

THE FUNERAL AND BURIAL

Just Before the Funeral Service

Before family and friends arrive at a funeral, many things have happened. The period before death may have been marked by a long illness and hospitalization, which will have put stress and strain on the family, even with strong support from their community.

The period between death and the funeral is called *aninut*, and it is a very emotional time for the family. Amidst their grief, the immediate mourners must deal with many practical matters, often making major decisions to arrange for the funeral and notifying relatives and friends. Once again, the community may have been of help.

All of this may leave the mourners in a fragile emotional state and, perhaps, still in a state of disbelief. The funeral is intended to concretize the reality of their loss as well as remind them that they have a community of support from relatives and friends. Although some attendees may have visited or spoken with the mourners prior to the funeral, for most this will be the first time they will have contact with them.

WHEN AND WHERE THE FUNERAL WILL BE

- You can usually find out the location and time of the funeral in the local newspaper, by calling or visiting the website of the funeral chapel handling arrangements, or from family members and close friends.
- The funeral will take place as soon as practical after the death, with allowance made for the Jewish Sabbath and major Jewish holidays, and so that out-of-town mourners may participate.
- The funeral service may take place in a funeral chapel, in a synagogue, or at a cemetery.
- If the funeral service is at the graveside, some details will be different.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Traditionally, you will see a closed casket (Hebrew: *aron*) in the front of the room. Public viewing of the deceased is contrary to traditional Jewish practice.
- You may see children in attendance. Traditional practice suggests that children be part of life cycle events, including funerals, to make them aware of the realities of life and to familiarize them with Jewish tradition and ritual practice. Individual parents will make their own judgment about the appropriateness of attendance for children.
- You may see individuals standing just outside the funeral location who do not enter the place of the service. If so, this is likely because they trace their lineage to the ancient Jewish priesthood (Hebrew: *kohen*; plural: *kohanim*). People of this lineage are, by tradition, subject to a variety of special rules, including a prohibition against physical contact with the dead or entering a cemetery or facility holding a dead body. You need simply be aware that this is not a sign of disrespect but a matter of traditional practice.
- You will probably not see flowers or plants, because flowers are a symbol of life, and a funeral is a time of death. Rather than donating flowers, family and friends of the mourners are encouraged

to give a charitable donation (*tzedakah*) to an organization that supports the values held by the deceased. You may see information about where to donate included in an obituary or death notice.

- You may not see the immediate family of the deceased initially. They may be in a separate area until the service begins, and they will likely sit in the front row during the service. Do not expect to speak with them until after the funeral.
- Traditionally, the primary mourners (a parent, sibling, spouse/partner, or child of the deceased) would tear a piece of clothing immediately upon hearing of the death of the family member. This action, called *kri'ah* (“tearing”), symbolizes the idea that the individual’s life has been “torn.” Today, this custom is carried out by tearing a garment or pinning on, and then tearing, a black ribbon, often at the time of the funeral. In-laws or other close relatives, including grandchildren, may choose to do *kri'ah* as well.
- Jewish tradition excuses primary mourners from the usual demands of politeness. Prior to or during the service, they are not expected to greet those who have come to be with them. For more information about greeting and engaging with the mourners, see pp. 10-13.
- By Jewish custom, the casket should be made entirely of wood or other natural and biodegradable materials, with no metal or adornment. This is in keeping with the principles that all are equal in death and that the casket should completely disintegrate over time.

WHAT TO DO

- You may find a registry book to sign, which will let the mourners know that you have come to support them.
- It is Jewish custom for men (and, in some streams of Judaism, women as well) to wear a head covering, particularly during a religious event such as a funeral. This may be a special covering called a *kippah* (plural: *kippot*; also known as a *yarmulke*—Yiddish). Non-Jews are encouraged to wear one as well. (There is probably a supply of them available for attendees near where you entered the room.)
- Take a seat quietly and be sure your cell phone and camera are turned off.
- Focus on the deceased, the mourners, and the context of the funeral. You might want to read the information in this booklet or any of the Psalms or other readings at the end.

The Funeral Service

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Someone, usually a rabbi, will lead the service, which may begin with a Psalm or other reading. The sequence described here is common, but may vary.
- The rabbi, selected family members, friends, or professional colleagues may offer a eulogy (Hebrew: *hesped*)—relatively brief and balanced words of praise and grief, perhaps including a short history of the life of the deceased. (In some communities, eulogies are not offered on certain days in the year.)
- Frequently, the rabbi or funeral leader will offer some teachings as well.
- Psalm 23, which begins “Adonai [God] is my Shepherd,” is often said either by the leader or the entire congregation. This Psalm is famous for the verse “though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death (or: darkest of valleys), I fear no evil.” This phrase probably led to its inclusion at funerals, as it offers comfort to the mourners and also speaks of God as Protector of all souls.
- A memorial prayer, *Eil Malei Raḥamim* (“God full of compassion”), is recited or chanted. Everyone will be asked to rise during the recital of this prayer. [Recitation of *Eil Malei Raḥamim* is an Eastern European (Ashkenazi) tradition, so it is not always said.] In this prayer, we ask God to grant proper rest for the soul of the departed. The deceased is referred to by the (Hebrew) first name and the names of his or her parents (i.e., “X, son/daughter of Y and Z”).

WHAT TO DO

- Follow the instructions of the service leader, including standing (if you are able) as requested at certain points, and participating in unison or responsive readings to the extent that you are comfortable.
- At the end of the service, those who are serving as pallbearers generally are called up to the front of the room. Everyone rises as the casket is carried or wheeled out of the hall. Immediate mourners walk behind the casket, and everyone else follows.
- Follow the instructions of the rabbi or funeral director about getting to the place of burial. In addition, printed directions may be handed out. You will also be given information about the family’s wishes regarding the location and times of *shiva*, a week-long period of mourning when you may visit the family. Details on that tradition are explained beginning on p. 8.

OTHER INFORMATION

- Jewish tradition considers accompanying the deceased to the burial (called *levayah*) to be a major *mitzvah* (“commandment”), one that takes precedence over most other activities. It is considered an act of true lovingkindness—*chesed shel emet*—because the performer of the deed cannot expect any reward or repayment from the one for whom the deed is being done.
- If a Jew is engaged in another activity when a funeral procession passes by, he or she is expected, at a minimum, to stop that activity and symbolically “walk several steps” along the way of the procession, as acknowledgment.

The Burial

WHERE IT TAKES PLACE

- Jewish cemeteries are often in a separate location from other cemeteries, but in many cities, there is a Jewish section within a larger cemetery. In that case, the Jewish section likely has distinct boundaries.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Pallbearers will usually carry the casket to the graveside. By tradition, they stop seven times along the way, symbolizing our reluctance to part with the deceased. Seven is the number of days of creation, so we are reminded of the need to ponder the fragility of life and to value each day of our life.
- During the procession to the grave, Psalm 91 (see p. 22) may be recited. It speaks of confidence that God will watch over all God's people.
- A prayer, *Tzidduk haDin* ("the justice of the judgment") is generally recited, suggesting that only God knows our destiny. We pray that God be merciful to the survivors and we thank God for the years that were given to the deceased.
- Often Psalms 1, 15, 23, 90 and/or 121 may be said, along with *Eil Malei Raḥamim* (see p. 35).
- If the funeral consists only of a graveside service, eulogies may be offered at this stage.
- The casket will either be lowered by hand or placed on a mechanism that will lower it into the grave. (This is usually done by cemetery staff.) The cemetery may require that the grave itself have a concrete liner into which the casket is placed.
- Individuals will shovel earth from a mound of earth onto the casket to fill up the grave or at least cover the casket. Everyone present can perform this act of *chesed shel emet*.
- About the shoveling of earth:
 - The sound of earth hitting the casket is one of the most terrible sounds in the world, but it makes the event real.
 - Customarily, the rabbi lovingly places earth on the casket first, then the immediate mourners follow, after which others participate. (In some communities, the immediate mourners place earth first.)
 - Traditionally, the grave is completely filled in by those present. Sometimes, only the top of the casket is covered.
 - Many use the back of the shovel, symbolizing a reluctance to speedily complete the task and that this is not "ordinary" shoveling.
 - The shovel is usually not handed from one person to the next but placed back in the mound of earth, or on the ground, to symbolize that it is an individual obligation to perform this mitzvah and that death is the one thing that we all do alone. (Naturally, assistance is permitted for those who require help.)
 - There are varied customs as to how many shovelfuls of earth an individual places on the casket, with one and three most common.
- The final part of the service is the recitation of the *Kaddish* (see the discussion on pp. 6-7 and the text of the prayer beginning on p. 32), which is a doxology—a prayer affirming belief in the existence and power of God. It takes the form of a call-and-response. There is a special variation,

the Burial *Kaddish*, which is recited only at graveside, but in the non-Orthodox world, the more familiar Mourner's *Kaddish* may be recited instead.

- Since there are various traditions that determine the order followed, be prepared for the sequence to be different. And on certain days during the year, substitute prayers may be recited in place of the ones described above.

WHAT TO DO

- Proceed to graveside following the immediate mourners who are walking behind the casket.
- Participate in filling the grave, as described above.
- Respond as appropriate, and as you are comfortable, during the recitation of the *Kaddish* (see p. 32).
- At the end of the burial, participate in forming two lines for mourners to walk through as they transition to leave the cemetery. This is a symbol of the community joining together to support the mourner simply by being present at this most difficult of times.
- While the mourners are walking through the lines, recite the greeting “May God comfort you among those who have mourned for Zion and Jerusalem” (Hebrew: *HaMakom y’naheim etkhem b’tokh sh’ar aveilei Tziyon vi’Y’rushalayim*—see p. 36), or simply “May God comfort you” (Hebrew: *HaMakom y’naheim etkhem*).
- Wait for the mourners (immediate family and very close friends) to depart the cemetery.
- When leaving the cemetery, it is customary to wash one’s hands, a symbol that one is leaving a place of death and reentering the world of the living. There is no blessing said, nor are hands dried.

About the Mourner's *Kaddish*

Though the origin of the custom of mourners reciting *Kaddish* is obscure, it has become an essential element of Jewish prayer. The Mourner's *Kaddish* is not a private prayer; rather, it is recited in community with a *minyan* (quorum of 10) present. In that setting, the mourner affirms that tragedy has not separated him or her from God nor from the Jewish people; in turn, the communal response then constitutes a way of acknowledging the mourner. It is essentially, in its recitation, a prayer of hope.

[ADAPTED FROM MAHZOR LEV SHALEM, P. 46]

WHAT IS IT?

- There are various forms of the *Kaddish* in Jewish liturgy, with distinct purposes, but in every case, the prayer is a doxology—a summary of praise, hope, and faith that God's blessings will pervade this world. More particularly, the *Kaddish*:
 - proclaims that God is beyond all words of praise
 - concludes with the ultimate blessing of peace
 - reminds us that, through our actions, we sanctify God's name and demonstrate our faith
- *Kaddish* is in the form of call-and-response. It thus requires a group to respond, which explains why it can be said only in a *minyan*, a group of 10 adult Jews.
- In the specific usage and form known as the Mourner's *Kaddish*, the prayer also serves to:
 - underscore the importance of the mourner's place within the community, because a *minyan* is needed
 - help link mourners to the community
 - grant immortality to the deceased by perpetuating that person's memory
 - affirm life for the mourner even when faced with death
- Despite its name, the Mourner's *Kaddish* makes no mention of death. Indeed, the positive, affirming, and hopeful nature of the text is in contradiction to the often negative, even depressed, outlook of a mourner, which is part of why recitation is so important.

HOW IT WORKS

- Traditionally, *Kaddish* is said daily for a parent for the first 11 months following the death. For all other relatives, it is said daily during *shloshim* (the 30 days beginning with burial). It is then recited on *yahrzeit* (the anniversary of death) and, in some traditions, whenever the memorial prayer *Yizkor* is said.
- Recitation of *Kaddish* provides comfort and consolation to the mourner. Often, it is very difficult to know what to say to a mourner, and yet when the *minyan* responds with the appropriate words (at the same time that the mourner is standing), it is as if those words and the voices of those present offer comfort, since the mourner senses the presence of everyone around him or her.
- When we say *Kaddish*, according to some, we are offering consolation to God for God's own loss. With the death of a human being, God's name has been diminished. We therefore ask that God's name be magnified and increased, and continue to reign eternally. The overall message is that God cares for each and every individual.

- Recitation of *Kaddish* is said to symbolize our fulfillment of other *mitzvot*.
- The core of the prayer is the group response: *Y'hei sh'mei raba m'varach l'alam ul'almei almaya* (“May God’s great Name be blessed forever and ever.”) The rabbis of the Talmud (Shabbat 119b) went so far as to say that “any decrees against them [i.e., against those who recite this response] will be torn up... and the Garden of Eden opened.” The hyperbole of this statement underscores the rabbinic importance of the *Kaddish*.

ITS ORIGINS

- Until perhaps the 8th century, *Kaddish* had nothing to do with mourning. It was originally a call for the coming of God’s ultimate reign on earth, and was probably said following a study session or sermon, which ended on the theme of hope. This origin explains why the prayer is in Aramaic—the Jewish vernacular of the time—because the study and sermon were in the vernacular also.
- The most frequently recorded explanation (in numerous variations) of the beginnings of *Kaddish* being used for mourning is the vision of Rabbi Akiba, who taught an orphan to recite the response *Y'hei sh'mei raba...*, and thereby rescued the orphan’s father from further punishments in the afterlife. It thus represented the child having redemptive power through bestowing merit on the parent. Indeed, we say it to honor the deceased.
- While it is known today as the *Mourner’s Kaddish*, this usage of the prayer was originally known as the *Orphan’s Kaddish*, and was said by children. It now encompasses others in mourning or observing a *yahrzeit*.

AFTER THE BURIAL

The Period of *Shiva*

Burial of the deceased inaugurates a seven-day period of mourning known as *shiva* (from the Hebrew word meaning “seven”). A condolence visit during this period is known as a *shiva* “call,” and the mourner is said to be “sitting” *shiva*. (The latter term comes from the fact that mourners traditionally sit on low stools.)

WHERE *SHIVA* TAKES PLACE

- The traditional location for *shiva* activities is the home of the deceased (even if there is no one remaining living at that home). This location is considered to be the place where the soul (Hebrew: *neshamah*) of the deceased is most likely to linger.
- If there are no primary mourners living in the area of the funeral, *shiva* activities may take place at the home of a close friend or relative, or perhaps in a community building such as a synagogue.

THE MEAL OF CONSOLATION

Shiva begins immediately following the burial with a traditional “meal of consolation” (Hebrew: *se’udat havra’ah*). This is a meal for the primary mourners, prepared by their community as part of its obligation to provide support and care. (In fact, even if the mourners already have food in the house, that food is not used for the meal of consolation.) Many synagogues have a committee whose role includes making arrangements for this meal. In other cases, close friends of the deceased or of the mourners will coordinate the meal.

- The mourner is *not* the host at the meal of consolation (or at any other time during *shiva*).
- In some cases, all those attending the funeral will be invited to come to the meal of consolation. In other cases, only the family and closest friends will participate.
- Traditionally, the meal of consolation includes “round foods,” such as hard-cooked eggs or lentils, to represent the cycle of life.

THE REST OF THE WEEK OF *SHIVA*

The *shiva* week is the time of the mourner’s greatest need for support—emotional, spiritual, and practical. This period will likely include prayer services in which the mourner will be participating. These services require a quorum of 10 adult Jews, called a *minyan* (plural: *minyanim*), so the service is referred to as a *shiva minyan*. (In some communities, only men are counted toward the quorum, and men and women may be separated during the service.) *Shiva minyanim* may occur both in the morning and in the afternoon/evening, and may include study of classical texts. There may also be eulogies and opportunities for visitors to speak about the deceased and to share memories.

The schedule of when and where the *shiva minyanim* will take place, as well as other times when mourners will be receiving visitors, will likely be announced at the close of the funeral or burial service.

WHAT TO DO

- Attend the *shiva* services or occasions of visiting during *shiva* as your schedule permits. If you are not familiar with the service, follow the cues and directions of the person leading the service and of the other participants. See the next section for information and suggestions about behavior upon entering, and within, the place of *shiva*.
- You may bring food to the home when you visit, whether immediately after the funeral or later in the week. Be sure to determine the religious requirements (“*kashrut*” observance) or other dietary preferences.
- Write a note of condolence.

Making a *Shiva* Call

PREPARING TO VISIT

- Find out when the mourners will be “sitting *shiva*,” i.e., available for visiting (which may include immediately following the funeral).
- Dress appropriately (based on local community standards).
- If you are bringing food, be sure your contribution is within the mourners’ dietary guidelines, which includes both *kashrut* observance as well as personal food restrictions of the mourners. (If in doubt, you might contact a close friend of the mourner.)
- If you want your food containers returned, be sure to put your name and contact information on them.

AT THE FRONT DOOR OR ENTRY

- If you are coming directly from the cemetery, you may find a bowl of water and a small cup on the front porch or at the entryway to the home. If you did not wash your hands as you left the cemetery, then do so now, before entering the home, using the cup and bowl, by pouring water alternately over each hand. (As with the shovel used for filling the grave, the cup is simply replaced, rather than passed from person to person.)
- Simply walk into the house, without knocking or ringing the doorbell. The front door will typically be open or unlocked. Do not expect anyone to greet you.

WITHIN THE HOME

What to Expect

- Traditionally, mourners will be seated on low stools and have removed any leather shoes. These signs of mourning represent humility and a sense of lowering oneself closer to the earth.
- Mirrors may be covered. This represents, among other things, the notion that mourners should not be concerned about their physical appearance at this time.
- A candle will be burning, which will have been lit by the mourners upon return from the cemetery. This special mourning candle will continue to burn throughout *shiva*.
- There will likely be a close friend or a relative in charge of what is happening. You can give this person any food you may have brought.
- Do not expect a mourner to either rise or to greet you.
- Topics of conversation among the visitors are expected to focus on the deceased and the mourners, in keeping with the purpose of the visit.
- You may hear laughter or other sounds that are not solemn. Although the occasion requires a certain level of decorum, people may be recounting stories about the deceased that generate a light-hearted feeling as well.

What to Do

- If a seat is available by the mourner, walk over and sit, silently, perhaps offering a comforting hand or a gentle hug. This may be your first opportunity to engage directly with the mourner. For suggestions about how to engage with and offer comfort to the mourner, see pp. 10-13.

- If the mourner is occupied with others when you arrive, you can just sit and wait for an opportunity to engage.
- If the mourner is not eating, you can offer to bring food or a beverage to him or her.
- While visiting, you might ask how you might be of assistance to the mourner. This may include tasks such as helping with childcare, shopping, cleaning up the house, providing transportation for out-of-town visitors, and so on. Often, a close friend of the mourner will have been designated as the coordinator of such assistance. You can ask the rabbi or funeral director for information on who this may be.
- After your initial engagement with the mourner, feel free to get food and drink, if available, and to engage in appropriate conversation with others.
- If you are visiting at a time when there is a *shiva minyan*, participate in the service to the extent that you are comfortable, taking your cues, as needed, from other visitors and the leader.
- Be careful not to overstay your visit. See the next section, under “Things you might say to the mourner,” for suggestions on what to say upon departing.

Comforting the Mourner

Don't let discomfort prevent you from reaching out to someone grieving. Now, more than ever, your support is needed. You might not know exactly what to say or what to do, but that's okay. You don't need to have answers or give advice. The most important thing you can do for a grieving person is to simply be there; your support and caring presence will help him or her cope with the pain and begin to heal.

[ADAPTED FROM WWW.HELPGUIDE.ORG/MENTAL/HELPING_GRIEVING.HTM]

GENERAL GUIDELINES

In Jewish tradition, comforting the mourners (Hebrew: *nihum aveilim*) is the obligation of the community. The following general guidelines review and build on the information in the previous section:

- Traditionally, one does not extend the usual greetings to a mourner, such as, "Hello, how are you?" A handshake or a hug is often acceptable. Just sitting down near the mourner is probably the best action.
- If you are not certain what to say, simply be present and be silent.
- Let the mourner initiate conversation. The purpose of consoling is to reflect on the deceased, not to take the mourner's mind off the death.
- Allow mourners the opportunity to express their grief in their own way. If a mourner chooses to talk about matters not directly related to the deceased, that is his or her option, and you should respect that choice.
- Listen attentively, showing your caring through non-verbal means.
- Share your feelings about the deceased and the mourner, without making yourself or your personal experiences the focus of the mourner's concern.
- Demonstrate your affection with a hug or tender touch.
- Be patient.
- Don't try to fix the pain.

[ADAPTED FROM RON WOLFSON, "HOW TO MAKE A SHIVA CALL," IN "A TIME TO MOURN, A TIME TO COMFORT," P. 197]

THINGS YOU MIGHT SAY TO THE MOURNER

Let the mourner initiate conversation. If you don't know what to say in response, simply be present and be silent, but here are some options:

- "Is there something I can help you with?" (e.g., childcare, answering phones, shopping, cleaning)
- "Tell me about [name of deceased]."
- If you knew the deceased: "I remember fondly when he/she...".
- "I wish I had the right words. Just know I care."
- "I'm so sorry about your loss."
- "I don't know what to say. This must be very difficult for you."
- "As you've said, 'it's not fair'."

- “It’s so hard, isn’t it, each new memory that comes up.”
- “I don’t know how you feel, but I am here to help in any way I can.”
- “It’s good to see you laugh. [name of deceased] loved it when you laughed.”
- “I’m here for you.”
- “Can I call you after *shiva* to get together?”
- When leaving, it is traditional to say, “May God comfort you among those who have mourned for Zion and Jerusalem.” (Hebrew: *HaMakom y’naḥeim etkhem b’tokh sh’ar aveilei Tziyon vi’Y’rushalayim*)
- Other options when leaving:
 - “Please accept my sincerest condolences. I’ll call you later to see if I can be of any help.”
 - “I know [name of deceased]’s memory will always be with you. I have fond memories of [name of deceased].”
 - “May the next time we meet be for a happy occasion.”

THINGS *NOT* TO SAY TO THE MOURNER

As already noted, take your cues from the mourner and allow the mourner to guide whatever conversation takes place. When you do speak, don’t make assumptions about the mourner’s religious framework or the nature of the mourner’s relationship with the deceased, and don’t begin by asking how the deceased died. Here are some other things not to say:

- “At least she’s not suffering; she went fast.”
- “Don’t cry. You’ll feel better soon.”
- “You’ll get over it. Get on with your life.”
- “There is a reason for everything.”
- “He is in a better place.”
- “At least you had her for ___ years.”
- “You’re young, there will be another (or other children).”
- “This will make you a stronger person.”
- “At least he’s out of his misery.”
- “Keep busy – you’ll feel better.”
- “I know just how you feel.”
- “God promises never to give us more than we can handle.”
- “What are you going to do now?”

Ongoing Support for the Mourner

It's important to remember that a mourner needs the support and comfort of friends and extended family well beyond the time of the funeral and its immediate aftermath. Grief is an ongoing and complex process. In addition to needing emotional support, the mourner may need assistance with everyday logistics and management of his or her life. Such assistance can be particularly important with the loss of a spouse, especially if there are still children in the home.

During the entire week of *shiva*, the mourner's home may be a gathering place for friends and family. You can help make this time less stressful by assisting in the kitchen, providing transportation, bringing food, answering the telephone, and so on, as well as by your simple presence and by participating in *shiva* services.

Here are some ways you can be supportive after *shiva*:

- Invite the mourner for a quiet meal at your home. Friends, especially local ones, are essential for the mourner's re-integration into the community.
- When speaking with the mourner, allow him or her to guide the conversation. A mourner will sometimes want to talk directly about his or her loss, and at other times will feel a need to connect with the outside world.
- Offer to take children for an afternoon.
- Offer to assist with basic logistics, such as meals and housekeeping.
- The mourner is likely to want to visit the cemetery, perhaps regularly, in the weeks and months following the burial. Offer to accompany him or her on such visits.
- Offer to simply be present for the mourner, suggesting a walk together or sitting quietly.

THE STAGES OF MOURNING

Jewish tradition sets out a detailed calendar for the process of mourning (Hebrew: *aveilut*) which, over the centuries, has demonstrated a particular insight into the process of human grief. As you do what you can to provide support to the mourner, it may be helpful to understand, from the Jewish perspective, the stages through which the mourner is moving.

- **From death until burial:** This most intense period is called *aninut* (from the Hebrew word *an*, meaning "sorrow").
- **The first seven days from burial:** This period is called *shiva*, from the Hebrew word for seven. (The day of burial is considered Day 1.) During this period, the mourner refrains from daily and work-life obligations.
- **The first 30 days from burial:** This period is called *shloshim*, from the Hebrew word for 30. (Again, the day of burial is considered Day 1.) For mourning other than for a parent, the formal period of ritual mourning ends with *shloshim*.

- **The first 12 months from death:** This constitutes the formal period of ritual mourning for a parent. (This period begins with the death, rather than with the burial.)
- **After the first year:** Jewish practice includes several regular annual occasions for remembrance, including certain Jewish holidays as well as the anniversary of the death (*yahrzeit*, in Yiddish, meaning “yearly time” or anniversary).

Traditionally, a mourner observes certain restrictions through *shloshim* or through the first year of mourning. Some mourners may consider certain activities, such as going to parties or concerts, to be inappropriate, perhaps too celebratory for their situation. Some may wish to avoid large gatherings of any kind, feeling uncomfortable that those around them will not know or understand their circumstances. Each mourner will find his or her own path through the journey of grief. You can help best by listening and validating their experience.

Your sensitivity can be particularly important in the case of a widow or widower, as the mourner confronts the conflicting needs of wanting companionship and requiring time to grieve. If there are young children in the home, the demands of parenting create even further complexities. Jewish tradition shows great flexibility on these issues, especially if children are involved, requiring only that a widower wait at least 30 days before remarrying. (For a widow, the period is 90 days, to avoid any possibility of ambiguity about paternity of future children.)

At some point, usually during or at the end of the first year, an identifying memorial marker (Hebrew: *matzevah*) will be placed at the grave, including the deceased’s name and other information. A brief ceremony, called an “unveiling,” is often held to acknowledge the placement of this marker. This may be a very private ceremony, involving only immediate family, or the mourner may wish to include a wider circle (especially if there is little or no immediate family in the area). When visiting a cemetery at a time other than the funeral, it is customary to place a stone on the grave or on the marker indicating that someone who cares has visited.

RESOURCES

Prayer Texts

We have divided the prayer texts commonly used in connection with funerals into three categories:

I. PSALMS: The Psalms included here, selected from the Biblical book containing the best of ancient Jewish religious poetry, are responses to eternal questions about life and death.

II. MISCELLANEOUS SELECTIONS: Often, readings from other parts of the Bible and/or modern literature complement the selections from Psalms in theme and function.

III. PRAYERS OF REMEMBRANCE: There are two settings in which these prayers are used: within a *minyan** and in individual prayer.

Many of these prayers build on traditional beliefs about the soul (Hebrew: *neshamah*) and its existence beyond death. Jewish ideas on the subject of afterlife and the soul are complex and varied.

Words separated by a slash (“/”) represent the male/female version of the Hebrew text.

I. PSALMS

We have included Psalms 1, 15, 23, 90, 91, and 121 as representative of the psalms most commonly used in funeral services.

a. Psalm 1 (“Blessed is the person...”): This first psalm extols the virtues of the righteous individual: good will be rewarded and evil punished.

*Ashrei ha'ish asher lo
halakh ba'atzat r'sha'im,
uw'derekh hata'im lo amad,
uw'moshav leitzim lo yashav.
Ki im b'torat Adonai
heftzo, uw'torato yeh'geh
yomam valailah. V'hayah
k'eitz shatul al-palgei
mayim asher piryo yitein
b'ito, v'aleihu lo yibol,
v'khol asher ya'aseh yatzli'ah.
Lo khein har'sha'im, ki im
kamotz asher tid'fenu ru'ah.
Al kein lo-yakumu r'sha'im
bamishpat, v'hata'im
ba'adat tzadikim. Ki yodei'a
Adonai derekh tzadikim,
v'derekh r'sha'im toveid.*

אֲשֶׁרִי הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא
הָלַךְ בְּעֲצַת רְשָׁעִים,
וּבְדֶרֶךְ חַטָּאִים לֹא עָמַד,
וּבְמוֹשָׁב לִצְדִיקִים לֹא יָשָׁב.
כִּי אִם בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה
חָפְצוֹ, וּבְתוֹרָתוֹ יִהְיֶה
יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה. וְהָיָה
כְּעֵץ שָׁתוּל עַל-פְּלִיגֵי
מַיִם אֲשֶׁר פִּרְיוֹ יִתֵּן
בְּעֵתוֹ, וְעֵלְהוּ לֹא יִבּוֹל,
וְכָל אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה יִצְלִיחַ.
לֹא-כֵן הָרְשָׁעִים, כִּי אִם
כַּמִּץ אֲשֶׁר תִּדְפְּנוּ רוּחַ.
עַל-כֵּן לֹא-יִקְמוּ רְשָׁעִים
בַּמִּשְׁפָּט, וְחַטָּאִים
בַּעֲדַת צְדִיקִים. כִּי-יֹדֵעַ
יְהוָה דֶּרֶךְ צְדִיקִים,
וְדֶרֶךְ רְשָׁעִים תֹּאבֵד.

Blessed is the person who has not pursued the counsel of the wicked, nor stood with sinners on their way, nor sat with the indolent.

Rather, his desire is for the teaching of Adonai, intoning his teaching day and night. For he will be as a tree planted astride streams bearing fruit in season, its leaves never shriveling—everything thriving.

Not so the wicked, who are only like chaff, tossed by the wind.

So, the wicked will not stand up in court nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous, for Adonai knows the way of the just, but the way of the wicked will be lost.

[TRANSLATION FROM “JOY, DESPAIR, AND HOPE” BY EDWARD FELD]

b. Psalm 15 (“Who may sojourn...”): This psalm asks, and then answers, the question of who can enter holy space, by articulating the ideal Israelite person.

Mizmor l'David: Adonai, mi-yagur b'ohalekha, mi-yishkon b'har kadshekha. Holeikh tamim ufo'eil tzedek, v'doveir emet bilwavo. Lo ragal al-l'shono, lo asah l'rei'eihu ra'ah, v'herpah lo-nasa alk'rovo. Nivzeh b'evinav nim'as v'et-yir'ei Adonai y'khabeid, nishba l'hara v'lo yamir. Kaspo lo natan b'neshekh v'shohad al naki lo-lakah; oseih eileh lo yimot l'olam.

מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד : יְהוָה, מִי־
יִגוֹר בְּאֹהֶלְךָ, מִי־יִשְׁכֹּן
בְּהַר קָדְשְׁךָ. הוֹלֵךְ
תָּמִים וּפְעֵל צְדָק, וְדֹבֵר
אֱמֶת בְּלִבּוֹ. לֹא רָגַל עַל־
לְשׁוֹנוֹ, לֹא עָשָׂה לְרֵעֵהוּ
רָעָה, וְחָרְפָה לֹא־נִשְׂאָה
עַל־קַרְבּוֹ. נִבְזָה בְּעֵינָיו
נִמְאָס וְאֶת־יְרֵאֵי יְהוָה
יִכְבֵּד, נִשְׁבַּע לְהַרְעוֹ וְלֹא
יָמַר. כֶּסֶף לֹא נָתַן
בְּנִשְׁכָּה וְשִׁחַד עַל־נַקִּי
לֹא־לָקַח; עָשָׂה אֱלֹה לֹא
יִמוּט לְעוֹלָם.

A Psalm of David: Adonai, who may sojourn in Your tent, who may dwell on Your holy mountain?

One who walks blamelessly and does what is right, and speaks truth in one's heart;

who has not slandered with one's tongue, who has not done evil to the other, and who has cast no slur on one's neighbor.

In one's eyes, a debased person is abhorrent, but those who fear Adonai are honored; if one vows to one's detriment and will not recant.

One does not lend money at interest, and has not taken bribes against the innocent. One who does these things will never stumble.

[TRANSLATION ADAPTED FROM "A NEW PSALM" BY BENJAMIN SEGAL]

c. Psalm 23 (“Adonai is my shepherd...”): The metaphors of God as shepherd and host—expressions of God’s care for us—have provided comfort to many over the generations.

Mizmor l’David: Adonai ro’i
 lo ehsar. Bin’ot deshe
 yarbitzeini, al-mei m’nuhot
 y’nahaleini. Nafshi y’shoveiv,
 yanheini v’ma’g’lei-tzedek
 l’ma’an sh’mo. Gam ki eileikh
 b’gei tzalmavet lo-ira
 ra ki Atah imadi;
 shivt’kha umish’antekha
 heimah y’nahamuni.
 Ta’arokh l’fanei shulhan
 neged tzor’rai, dishanta
 vashemen roshi, kosi r’vayah.
 Akh tov vahesed yird’funi
 kol-y’mei hayai, v’shavi
 b’veit Adonai l’orekh yamim.

מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד : יְהוָה רֹעִי
 לֹא אֶחְסָר. בְּנֵאוֹת דְּשֵׁה
 יַרְבִּיצֵנִי, עַל־מֵי מְנוּחוֹת
 יְנַהֲלֵנִי. נַפְשִׁי יִשְׁוֵיֵב,
 יַנְחֵנִי בְּמַעְגְּלֵי־צֶדֶק
 לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ. גַּם כִּי אֵלֶיךָ
 בְּגֵיא צַלְמוֹת לֹא־אִירָא
 רָע כִּי אַתָּה עִמָּדִי;
 שִׁיבְתֵךְ וּמִשְׁעַנְתֵךְ
 הִקְמָה יְנַחֲמֵנִי.
 תַּעֲרֹךְ לְפָנַי שִׁלְחָן
 נֶגֶד צְרוּרִי, דִּשְׁאֲנָתְךָ
 בְּשֶׁמֶן רֹאשִׁי, כּוֹסֵי רִנָּה.
 אַךְ טוֹב וְחֶסֶד יִרְדְּפוּנִי
 כָּל־יְמֵי חַיִּי, וְשָׁבְתִי
 בְּבֵית־יְהוָה לְאָרְךָ יָמִים.

A Psalm of David: Adonai is my shepherd, I shall not want.

God gives me repose in green meadows, and guides me over calm waters.

God will revive my spirit and direct me on the right path—for that is God’s way.

Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no harm, for You are at my side. Your staff and Your rod comfort me.

You prepare a banquet for me in the presence of my foes; You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and kindness shall be my portion all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of Adonai in the fullness of time.

[ADAPTED FROM MAHZOR LEV SHALEM, p. 293]

d. Psalm 90 (“You have been our refuge...”): This is the only Psalm attributed to Moses, and perhaps reflects the despair Moses experienced at the end of his life, when he felt that all was for naught. The poet calls upon God to “return” to earth; that is, for God, who is infinite, to understand the human situation, which is finite.

T'filah l'Moshe ish-
 ha'Elohim: Adonai ma'on
 Atah hayita lanu b'dor
 vador. B'terem harim yuladu,
 vat'holeil eretz v'teiveil,
 umei'olam ad olam Atah
 Eil. Tasheiv enosh ad daka,
 vatomer shuvu b'nei-adam.
 Ki elef shanim b'einekha
 k'yom etmol ki ya'avor,
 v'ashmurah valailah.
 Z'ramtam sheinah yih'yu;
 baboker kehatzir yahalof.
 Baboker yatztiz v'halaf;
 la'erev y'moleil v'yaveish.
 Ki khalinu v'apekha,
 uvahamat'kha nivhalnu.
 Shatah avonoteinu l'negdekha;
 alumeinu lim'or panekha.
 Ki khol-yameinu panu
 v'evratekha; kilinu shaneinu
 kh'mo hegeh. Y'mei sh'noteinu
 bahem shiv'im shanah, v'im
 bigvurot sh'monim shanah,
 v'ra'bam amal va'aven;
 ki gaz hish vana'ufah.
 Mi yodei'a oz apekha,
 ukh'yiratkha evratekha.
 Limnot yameinu kein hoda,

תפלה למשה איש-
 האלהים: אדני מעון
 אתה היית לנו בדר
 ודר. בטרם הרים ילדו,
 ותחולל ארץ ותבל,
 ומעולם עד עולם אתה
 אל. תשוב אנוש עד דכא,
 ותאמר שובו בני-אדם.
 כי אלה שנים בעיניך
 כיום אתמול כי יעבר,
 ואשמורה בלילה.
 זרמתם שנה יהיו;
 בבקר כחציר יחלה.
 בבקר יציץ וחקף; לערב
 ימולל ויבש.
 כי כלינו באפקה,
 ובחמתך נבהלנו.
 שטה עונותינו לנגדך;
 עלמנו למאור פניך.
 כי כל-ימינו פנו
 בעברתך; כלינו שנינו כמו
 הנה. ימי שנותינו בהם
 שבועים שנה, ואם בגבורת
 שמונים שנה,
 ורהבם עמל ואון;
 כי גז חיש ונעפה.
 מי יודע עז אפקה,
 וכיראתך עברתך.
 למנות ימינו כן הודע,

v'navi l'vav hokhmah.
 Shuvah Adonai ad matai,
 v'hinaheim al-avadekha.
 Sab'einu vaboker hasdekha,
 un'ran'nah v'nism'ha
 b'khol-yameinu. Samheinu
 kimot initanu, sh'not
 ra'inu ra'ah. Yeira'eh
 el-avadekha fa'alekha,
 vahadarkha alb'neihem.
 Viy'hi no'am Adonai Eloheinu
 aleinu, uma'aseih yadeinu
 kon'nah aleinu, uma'aseih
 yadeinu kon'neihu.

וְנָבֵא לְבַב חֲכָמָה.
 שׁוּבָה יְהוָה עַד־מָתַי,
 וְהִנָּחֵם עַל־עֲבֹדֶיךָ.
 שְׁבַעֲנוּ בְבֹקֶר חֲסִדֶיךָ,
 וְנִרְנְנָה וְנִשְׁמָחָה
 בְּכָל־יָמֵינוּ. שָׂמְחָנוּ
 כִּימוֹת עֲנִיתָנוּ, שָׁנוֹת
 רָאִינוּ רָעָה. יִרְאֶה
 אֶל־עֲבֹדֶיךָ כְּעֶלְךָ,
 וְהִדְרֶךָ עַל־בְּנֵיהֶם.
 וַיְהִי נֹעַם אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 עָלֵינוּ, וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ
 כּוֹנֵנָה עָלֵינוּ, וּמַעֲשֵׂה
 יְדֵינוּ כּוֹנֵנָהוּ.

A prayer of Moses, man of God.

Adonai, You have been our refuge through all generations.

Before the mountains emerged, before the earth was formed, from age to age, You are God.

*But humans You crumble into dust, and You say: "Return, O mortals."
 For a thousand years in Your sight are as a passing day, as an hour of night.*

You engulf all human beings in sleep; they flourish for a day, like grass.
 In the morning it sprouts afresh; by nightfall it fades and withers.

*By Your anger we are consumed; by Your wrath we are overcome.
 You set out our transgressions before You, our secret sins before Your presence.*

Your wrath darkens our days; our lives are over like a sigh.

*Threescore and ten our years may number, Fourscore years if granted the vigor.
 Laden with trouble and travail, life quickly passes and flies away.*

Who can know the power of Your wrath? Who can measure the reverence due You?
 Teach us to use all our days, that we may attain a heart of wisdom.

*Relent, Adonai! How long must we suffer? Have compassion upon Your servants.
 Grant us Your love in the morning, that we may sing in gladness all our days.*

Match days of sorrow with days of joy equal to the years we have suffered.
 Then Your servants will see Your power; their children will know Your glory.

*May Adonai our God show us compassion, and establish the work of our hands.
 May the work of our hands be firmly established.*

[ADAPTED FROM MAḤZOR LEV SHALEM, P. 53]

e. Psalm 91 (“Dwelling in the shelter of the Most High...”): The worshipper affirms faithfulness and a responding voice offers reassurance of God’s protection. At the end of the psalm, ultimate reassurance is affirmed as God’s own voice is heard, promising fullness of days.

Yosheiv b’seiter Elyon, b’tzeil Shadai
 yitlonan. Omar l’Adonai mahsi
 um’tzudati, Elohai evtah-bo.
 Ki Hu yatziikha mipah yakush,
 midever havot. B’evrato yasekh lakh
 v’tahat k’nafav teḥse, tzinah
 v’soheirah amito. Lo-tira
 mipahad lailah,
 meiḥeitz ya’uf yomam. Midever
 ba’ofel yahalokh, miketev yashud
 tzohorayim. Yipol mitzidkha elef
 ur’vavah miminekha,
 eilekha lo yigash. Rak b’einekha
 tabit, v’shilumat r’sha’im tir’eh.
 Ki atah Adonai mahsi, Elyon
 samta m’onekha. Lo-t’unekh
 eilekha ra’ah,
 v’nega lo-yikrav b’oholekha.
 Ki mal’akhav y’tzaveh-lakh,
 lishmarkha b’khol d’rakhekha.
 Al kapayim yisa’unkha, pen
 tigof ba’even raglekha.
 Al shahal vafeten tidrokh, tirmos
 k’fir v’tanin. Ki vi hashak
 va’afalteihu, asagveihu
 ki-yada sh’mi. Yikra’eini v’e’eneihu,
 imo anokhi v’tzarah, aḥaltzeihu
 va’akhabdeihu. Orekh yamim asbi’eihu,
 v’ar’eihu bishu’ati.

יֵשֵׁב בְּסִתְרֵי עֲלִיּוֹן, בְּצֵל שָׁדַי
 יִתְלוֹנֵן. אָמַר לַיהוָה מַחְסֵי
 וּמְצוּדָתִי, אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹטְח־בּוֹ.
 כִּי הוּא יִצִּילֵךְ מִפַּח יָקוּשׁ,
 מִדְּבַר הַיּוֹת. בְּאֲבָרְתוֹ יִסֹּךְ לָךְ
 וְתַחַת כַּנְּפֵיו תִּחְסֶה, צְנָה
 וְסִחְרָה אֲמִתּוֹ. לֹא־תִירָא
 מִפַּחַד לַיְלָה,
 מִחֵץ יַעוֹף יוֹמָם. מִדְּבַר
 בְּאִפְלֵי יְהִלֵּךְ, מִקְטֹב יִשׁוּד
 צָהָרִים. יִפֹּל מִצִּדְּךָ אֵלֶיךָ
 וּרְבָבָה מִיַּמִּינֶךָ,
 אֵלֶיךָ לֹא יִגָּשׁ. רַק בְּעֵינֶיךָ
 תִּבְטֵיט, וְשִׁלְמַת רְשָׁעִים תִּרְאֶה.
 כִּי־אַתָּה יְהוָה מַחְסֵי, עֲלִיּוֹן
 שָׁמַתָּ מְעוֹנֶךָ. לֹא־תֶאֱנָה
 אֵלֶיךָ רָעָה,
 וְנִגַּע לֹא־יִקְרַב בְּאֲהָלֶךָ.
 כִּי מִלְּאֲכָוִי יִצְוֶה־לָּךְ,
 לְשֹׁמְרֶךָ בְּכֹל דְרָכֶיךָ.
 עַל־כַּפְּיִם יִשְׁאוּנֶךָ, פֶּן
 תִּגַּף בְּאֲבָן רִגְלֶךָ.
 עַל־שֹׁחַל וּפְתָן תִּדְרֹךְ, תִּרְמַס
 כְּפִיר וְתַנִּין. כִּי בִי חָשַׁק
 וְאִפְלִטָהוּ, אֲשַׁגְּבֶהוּ
 כִּי־יָדַע שְׁמִי. יִקְרָאנִי וְאֶעֱנֶהוּ,
 עִמּוֹ אֲנַכִּי בְצָרָה, אֲחַלְצֶהוּ
 וְאֶכְבְּדֶהוּ. אֲרַךְ יָמִים אֲשַׁבִּיעֶהוּ,
 וְאַרְאֶהוּ בִישׁוּעָתִי.

Dwelling in the shelter of the Most High, abiding in the shadow of the Almighty,
I call Adonai my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust.

*God will save you from the hidden snare, from deadly pestilence;
God's wings will cover you and in God's shelter you will find refuge.*

Fear not terror by night nor the arrow that flies by day,
the pestilence that stalks in darkness nor the plague that rages at noon.

*A thousand may fall by your side, ten thousand close at hand,
but it will never touch you; God's faithfulness will shield you.*

You need only look with your eyes to see the recompense of the wicked.

*You have made Adonai your refuge, the Most High your haven.
No evil shall befall you; no plague shall approach your dwelling.*

God will instruct angels to guard you in all your paths,
to carry you in their hands lest you stumble on a stone.

You will step on cubs and cobras, tread safely on lions and serpents.

“Since you are devoted to Me I will deliver you;
I will protect you because you care for Me.

*“When you call Me I will answer; I will be with you in time of trouble.
I will rescue you and honor you.*

“I will satisfy you with fullness of days, and show you My salvation.”

“I will satisfy you with fullness of days, and show you My salvation.”

[ADAPTED FROM MAHZOR LEV SHALEM, P. 54]

f. Psalm 121 (“I lift my eyes...”): Lifting one’s eyes to the mountains is a powerful image of unbridled assurance with faith coexisting with a degree of doubt.

*Shir lama'alot: Esa einai
el-heharim; mei'ayin yavo
ezri. Ezri mei'im Adonai,
oseih shamayim va'aretz.
Al-yitein lamot raglekha;
al-yanum shomrekha. Hineih
lo yanum v'lo yishan
shomeir Yisra'eil. Adonai
shomrekha; Adonai tzilkha
al-yad y'minekha. Yomam
hashemesh lo-yakekah,
v'yarei'ah balailah. Adonai
yishmarkha mikol-ra,
yishmor et-nafshekha.
Adonai yishmar-tzeit'kha
uvo'ekha, mei'atah
v'ad-olam.*

שִׁיר לַמַּעְלוֹת: אֲשָׂא עֵינַי
אֶל־הַהָרִים; מֵאֵין יָבֵא
עֲזָרִי. עֲזָרִי מֵעַם יְהוָה,
עֹשֶׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ.
אֲל־יִתֵּן לַמּוֹט רַגְלְךָ;
אֲל־יָנוּם שֹׁמְרְךָ. הִנֵּה
לֹא יָנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן
שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל. יְהוָה
שׁוֹמְרְךָ; יְהוָה צִלְךָ
עַל־יַד יְמִינְךָ. יוֹמָם
הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לֹא־יִכְפֹּה,
וַיַּרְח בַּלַּיְלָה. יְהוָה
יִשְׁמְרְךָ מִכָּל־רָע,
יִשְׁמֹר אֶת־נַפְשְׁךָ.
יְהוָה יִשְׁמֹר־צֵאתְךָ
וּבֹאֶךָ, מֵעַתָּה
וְעַד־עוֹלָם.

A Song for Ascents:

I lift my eyes to the mountains; from where will my help come?

My help is from Adonai, creator of heaven and earth.

God shall not let your foot slip; your Guardian shall not slumber.

Behold, God neither slumbers or sleeps, the guardian of Israel.

Adonai is your guardian; Adonai is your shade, at your right hand.

By day the sun will not strike you, nor the moon by night.

Adonai will guard you from any harm; God will guard your life.

Adonai will guard your going and your coming, from now through eternity.

[TRANSLATION ADAPTED FROM "A NEW PSALM" BY BENJAMIN SEGAL]

II. MISCELLANEOUS SELECTIONS

a. Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8 (“A season is set for everything...”): These words acknowledge the appropriateness of everything in its season. The cycle of patterned living governs our predictable existence.

Lakol zman, v'eit l'khol-heifetz
tahat hashamayim. Eit laledet v'eit
lamut; eit lata'at v'eit la'akor
natu'a. Eit laharog v'eit lirpo;
eit lifrotz v'eit livnot.
Eit livkot v'eit lishok;
eit s'fod v'eit r'kod.
Eit l'hashlikh avanim v'eit k'nos
avanim; eit lahavok v'eit lirhok
meihabeik. Eit l'vakeish v'eit l'abeid;
eit lishmor v'eit l'hashlikh.
Eit likro'a v'eit litpor;
eit lahashot v'eit l'dabeir.
Eit le'ehov v'eit lisno;
eit milhamah v'eit shalom.

לְכֹל זְמַן, וְעֵת לְכָל־חַפֵּץ
תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם. עֵת לְלֵדֶת וְעֵת
לְמוֹת; עֵת לְטַעַת וְעֵת לְעַקֹּר
נְטוּעַ. עֵת לְהַרוֹג וְעֵת לְרַפֹּא;
עֵת לְפָרוֹץ וְעֵת לְבָנוֹת.
עֵת לְבָכוֹת וְעֵת לְשִׂחוֹק;
עֵת סִפּוֹד וְעֵת רִקּוֹד.
עֵת לְהַשְׁלִיךְ אֲבָנִים וְעֵת כְּנוֹס
אֲבָנִים; עֵת לְחַבּוֹק וְעֵת לְרַחֵק
מִחֶבֶק. עֵת לְבַקֵּשׁ וְעֵת לְאַבֹּד;
עֵת לְשָׁמֹר וְעֵת לְהַשְׁלִיךְ.
עֵת לְקַרֹּעַ וְעֵת לְתַפּוֹר;
עֵת לְחַשׂוֹת וְעֵת לְדַבֵּר.
עֵת לְאַהֲבֹב וְעֵת לְשִׂנְאָ;
עֵת מִלְחָמָה וְעֵת שְׁלוֹם.

A season is set for everything,
a time for every experience under heaven:
A time for birthing and a time for dying;
A time for planting and a time for reaping;
A time for slaying and a time for healing;
A time for tearing down and a time for building up;
A time for weeping and a time for laughing;
A time for wailing and a time for dancing;
A time for throwing stones and a time for gathering stones;
A time for embracing and a time for shunning embraces;
A time for seeking and a time for losing.
A time for keeping and a time for discarding;
A time for ripping and a time for sewing;
A time for silence and a time for speaking;
A time for loving and a time for hating;
A time for war and a time for peace.

[TRANSLATION FROM TANAKH FROM THE JEWISH PUBLICATION SOCIETY]

b. Proverbs 31:10-31 (“Would that one find a heroic woman...”): This, from the final chapter in Proverbs, is written as an acrostic, and describes the attributes of the good wife whose characteristics are limited only by the letters of the alphabet.

Eishet ḥayil mi yimtza, v'rahok mip'ninim
 mikhrāh. Bataḥ bah leiv ba'lah, v'shalal
 lo yeḥsar. G'malat'hu tov v'lo-ra,
 kol y'mei ḥayeiha. Darshah tzemer ufishitim,
 vata'as b'heifetz kapēha. Hay'tah ka'oniyot
 soḥeir, mimerḥak tavi laḥmah. Vatakam
 b'od lailah vatitein teref l'veitah,
 v'hok l'na'arotēha. Zam'mah sadeh
 vatikaḥeihu, mipri khapeha nat'ah karem.
 Hograh v'oz matneha, vat'ameitz z'ro'oteha.
 Ta'amah ki-tov saḥrah, lo yikhbeh
 valailah neirah. Yadeha shilḥah vakishor,
 v'khapeha tamkhu falekh. Kapah parsah
 le'ani, v'yadeha shilḥah la'evyon. Lotira
 l'veitah mishaleg, ki khol-beitah lavush
 shanim. Marvadim astah-lah,
 sheish v'argaman l'vushah. Noda bash'arim
 ba'lah, b'shivto im ziknei-aretz.
 Sadin astah vatimkor, vaḥagor natnah
 lak'na'ani. Oz v'hadar l'vushah,
 vatishak l'yom aḥaron. Piha pat'ḥah
 v'hokmah, v'torat-ḥesed al-l'shonah.
 Tzofiyah halikhoh beitah, v'leḥem atzlut
 lo tokheil. Kamu vaneha vay'ashruha,
 ba'lah vay'hal'lah. Rabot banot asu ḥayil,
 v'at alit alkulanah. Sheker haḥein v'hevel
 hayofi, ishah yir'at-Adonai hi tit'halal.
 T'nu-lah mipri yadeha, viy'hal'luha
 vash'arim ma'aseha.

אִשֶׁת חַיִל מִי יִמְצָא וְרָחֵק מִפְּנִינִים
 מִכְרָהּ. בַּטַּח בָּהּ לֵב בְּעֵלָהּ וְשָׁלַל
 לֹא יִחְסָר. גְּמַלְתָּהּ טוֹב וְלֹא רָדַע
 כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיהָ. דָּרְשָׁה צְמֶר וּפִשְׁתִּים
 וַתַּעַשׂ בְּחֶפֶץ כַּפֵּיהָ. הָיְתָה כְּאֹנִיּוֹת
 סוֹחֵר מִמְרָחֵק תְּבִיא לְחֶמֶה. וַתִּקָּם
 בְּעוֹד לַיְלָה וַתִּתֵּן טָרֶף לְבֵיתָהּ,
 וְחָק לְנִעְוֹתֶיהָ. זָמְמָה שָׂדֵה
 וַתִּקְחֶהּ, מִפְּרֵי כַפֵּיהָ נִטְעָה כָרֶם.
 חֲגָרָה בְּעוֹז מִתְנִיָּה, וַתֹּאמֶץ זְרוּעֹתֶיהָ.
 טָעַמָּה כִּי טוֹב סִחְרָה, לֹא יִכְבֶּה
 בְּלֵילָה נִרְהָ. יָדֶיהָ שָׁלְחָה בְּפִישׁוֹר,
 וְכַפֵּיהָ תָמְכוּ פֶלֶךְ. כַּפָּה פְרִשָׁה
 לְעַנִּי, וַיִּדְיָה שְׁלָחָה לְאֲבִיוֹן. לֹא־תִירָא
 לְבֵיתָהּ מִשָּׁלֵג, כִּי כָל־בֵּיתָהּ לְבוֹשׁ
 שָׁנִים. מְרַבְּדִים עֲשֵׂתָהּ־לָהּ,
 שֵׁשׁ וְאַרְגָּמָן לְבוֹשָׁהּ. נוֹדַע בְּשַׁעְרִים
 בְּעֵלָהּ, בְּשִׁבְתּוֹ עַם־זִקְנֵי־אֶרֶץ.
 סָדִין עֲשֵׂתָהּ וַתִּמְכֹּר, וַחֲגוֹר נִתְּנָה
 לְכֹנָעַנִי. עוֹזֵד־וְהָדָר לְבוֹשָׁהּ,
 וַתִּשְׁחַק לְיוֹם אַחְרוֹן. פִּיהָ פִּתְחָה
 בְּחֶכְמָה, וַתּוֹרֶת־חֶסֶד עַל־לְשׁוֹנָהּ.
 צוֹפְיָה הִלִּיכּוֹת בֵּיתָהּ, וְלֶחֶם עֲצָלוֹת
 לֹא תֹאכַל. קָמוּ בְנֵיהָ וַיֵּאֱשְׁרוּהָ,
 בְּעֵלָהּ וַיְהִלְלֶהָ. רַבּוֹת בָּנוֹת עָשׂוּ חָיִל,
 וְאַתָּה עָלִית עַל־כָּל־נָה. שָׁקֵר הַחַן וְהַבֶּל
 הִיפִי, אִשָּׁה יִרְאֵת־הוָה הִיא תִתְהַלָּל.
 תְּנוּ־לָהּ מִפְּרֵי יָדֶיהָ, וַיְהִלְלוּהָ
 בְּשַׁעְרִים מְעֻשִׂיהָ.

Would that one finds a heroic woman!

Far beyond rubies is her worth.

Her husband depends on her, never lacking necessities and luxuries. She does him good, not harm, all the days of her life.

She seeks out wool and flax and works them as she wills.

She is like a merchant's fleet bringing food from afar.

She rises while it is still night, providing food for her children, daily fare for her maidservants.

She surveys a field and acquires it; plants a vineyard, fruit of her handiwork. She girds her loins with might, braces her shoulders for the tasks ahead. She sees to her business going well, not putting out her lamp at night.

Her hand trains the distaff; a fist supports the spindle.

Her palm is open to the poor, her hand extended to the needy.
When it snows, she does not worry for her children for all are dressed in red woven wool.

She sews colorful fabrics for herself, dresses of linen and crimson cloth. Her husband is recognized in the gates and sits with the leaders of the land. She fashions sheets of cloth for sale, stocking sashes with brokers.

Dressed in strength and splendor, she smiles as she looks to the future. She opens her mouth and speaks wisely, her tongue teaches kindness and love.

She anticipates the bustle of her household, and never eats the bread of idleness.

Her children mature and make her happy, her husband praises her: "Many women have acted with strength, but you exceed them all."

Charm is deceptive, beauty is passing, but a woman who stands in awe of God is surely to be praised.

Extol her for her handiwork, and praise her in the gates for all she has done.

[TRANSLATION FROM SIDDUR LEV SHALEM, PP. 73-74]

c. “We remember them...” by Rabbi Sylvan Kamens and Rabbi Jack Reimer

At the rising of the sun and at its going down
 We remember them.
At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter
 We remember them.
At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring
 We remember them.
At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer
 We remember them.
At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn
 We remember them.
At the beginning of the year and when it ends
 We remember them.
As long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us as
 We remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength
 We remember them.
When we are lost and sick at heart
 We remember them.
When we have joy we crave to share
 We remember them.
When we have decisions that are difficult to make
 We remember them.
When we have achievements that are based on theirs
 We remember them.
As long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us as
 We remember them.

d. “Birth is a beginning...” by Rabbi Alvin Fine

Birth is a beginning
and death a destination.
And life is a journey:
From childhood to maturity
And youth to age;
From innocence to awareness
and ignorance to knowing;
From foolishness to discretion
And then, perhaps, to wisdom;
From weakness to strength
Or strength to weakness –
And, often, back again;

From health to sickness
 And back, we pray, to health again;
 From offense to forgiveness,
 From loneliness to love,
 From joy to gratitude,
 From pain to compassion
 And grief to understanding –
 From fear to faith;
 From defeat to defeat to defeat –
 Until, looking backward or ahead,
 We see that victory lies
 Not at some high place along the way,
 But in having made the journey, stage by stage,
 A sacred pilgrimage.
 Birth is a beginning
 And death a destination
 And life is a journey,
 A sacred pilgrimage –
 To life everlasting.

e. “Yeish kokhavim...” (“There are stars...”) by Hannah Senesh

*Yeish kokhavim she'oram
 magi'a artzah rak ka'asher
 heim atzmam avdu v'ainam.
 Yeish anashim sheziv zikhram
 mei'ir ka'asher heim atzmam
 einam od b'tokheinu. Orot
 eileh hamavhikim b'heshkat
 halayil heim shemar'im
 la'adam et haderekh.*

יֵשׁ כּוֹכָבִים שְׂאוֹרָם
 מִגִּיעַ אֶרְצָה רַק כַּאֲשֶׁר
 הֵם עֲצָמָם אָבְדוּ וְאֵינָם.
 יֵשׁ אַנָּשִׁים שְׂזִיּוֹ זִכְרָם
 מֵאִיר כַּאֲשֶׁר הֵם עֲצָמָם
 אֵינָם עוֹד בְּתוֹכֵנוּ. אוֹרוֹת
 אֵלֶּה הַמַּבְהִיקִים בְּחֶשֶׁכַת
 הַלַּיִל הֵם שְׁמֵרָאִים
 לְאָדָם אֶת הַדֶּרֶךְ.

There are stars whose light reaches the earth only after they themselves have disintegrated and are no more.

And there are people whose scintillating memory lights the world after they have passed from it. These lights – which shine in the darkest night – are those which illuminate for us the path.

[TRANSLATOR UNKNOWN: SEE WWW.RITUALWELL.ORG/RITUAL/YESH-KOCHAVIM-THERE-ARE-STARS]

f. "L'khol ish yeish sheim..." ("Every person has a name...") by Zelda

L'khol ish yeish sheim
shenatan lo Elohim
v'natnu lo aviv v'imo.

לְכֹל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם
שֶׁנָּתַן לוֹ אֱלֹהִים
וְנָתַנוּ לוֹ אָבִיב וְאִמוֹ.

L'khol ish yeish sheim
shenatnu lo komato
v'ofen hiyukho
v'natan lo he'arig.

לְכֹל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם
שֶׁנָּתַנוּ לוֹ קוֹמָתוֹ
וְאָפֵן חִיּוּכּוֹ
וְנָתַן לוֹ הָאָרֶג.

L'khol ish yeish sheim
shenatnu lo heharim
v'natnu lo k'talav.

לְכֹל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם
שֶׁנָּתַנוּ לוֹ הַהָרִים
וְנָתַנוּ לוֹ כְּתָלָיו.

L'khol ish yeish sheim
shenatnu lo hamazalot
v'natnu lo sh'kheinav.

לְכֹל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם
שֶׁנָּתַנוּ לוֹ הַמַּזְלוֹת
וְנָתַנוּ לוֹ שְׁכֵנָיו.

L'khol ish yeish sheim
shenatnu lo hata'av
v'natna lo k'mihato.

לְכֹל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם
שֶׁנָּתַנוּ לוֹ חֲטָאִיו
וְנָתַנָּה לוֹ כְּמִיהָתוֹ.

L'khol ish yeish sheim
shenatnu lo son'av
v'natna lo ahavato.

לְכֹל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם
שֶׁנָּתַנוּ לוֹ שׁוֹנְאָיו
וְנָתַנָּה לוֹ אֲהַבָתוֹ.

L'khol ish yeish sheim
shenatnu lo hagav
v'natna lo m'lakhto.

לְכֹל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם
שֶׁנָּתַנוּ לוֹ חֲגָיו
וְנָתַנָּה לוֹ מְלַאכְתּוֹ.

L'khol ish yeish sheim
shenatnu lo t'kufot
hashanah v'natan lo ivrono.

לְכֹל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם
שֶׁנָּתַנוּ לוֹ תְּקוּפוֹת
הַשָּׁנָה וְנָתַן לוֹ עִירוֹנוֹ.

L'khol ish yeish sheim
shenatan lo hayam
v'natan lo moto.

לְכֹל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם
שֶׁנָּתַן לוֹ הַיָּם
וְנָתַן לוֹ מוֹתוֹ.

Every person has a name
that God gave him
and which his father and mother gave him

Every person has a name
which his height
and the style of his smile gave him
and which his tapestry gave him

Every person has a name
which the mountains gave him
and which his walls gave him

Every person has a name
which the star signs gave him
and which his neighbours gave him

Every person has a name
which his sins gave him,
and which his longing gave him

Every person has a name
which his enemies gave him
and his love gave him

Every person has a name
which his festivals gave him,
and which his work gave him

Every person has a name
which the seasons gave him,
and which his blindness gave him

Every person has a name
which the sea gave him,
and which his death gave him

[TRANSLATION BY GEORGE JAKUBOVITZ: SEE WWW.HEBREWSONGS.COM/SONG-LECHOLISHYESHEM.HTM]

III. PRAYERS OF REMEMBRANCE

a. Mourner's *Kaddish* (*Kaddish Yatom*): (See pp. 6-7.)

Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'meih
raba [Cong.: Amein].

B'alma di v'ra khir'uteih,
v'yamlikh malkhuteih,
b'hayekhon uv'yomeikhon
uv'hayei d'khol beit Yisra'eil,
ba'agala uvizman kariv.
V'imru: [Cong.:] Amein.

[Cong. and Mourner:]
Y'hei shmeih raba m'varakh
l'alam ul'almei almaya.

Yitbarakh v'yishtabah
v'yitpa'ar v'yitromam
v'yitnasei v'yit'hadar
v'yit'aleh v'yit'halal sh'meih
d'Kud'sha, [Cong.:] B'rikh Hu.
Leila min kol birkhata
v'shirata, tushb'hata
v'nehemata, da'amiran
b'alma. V'imru: [Cong.:] Amein.

Y'hei shlama raba min sh'maya,
v'hayim aleinu v'al kol Yisra'eil.
V'imru: [Cong.:] Amein.

Oseih shalom bimromav,
Hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu,
v'al kol Yisra'eil
[**v'al kol yoshvei teiveil].
V'imru: [Cong.:] Amein.

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ
רַבָּא.

בְּעֻלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ,
וְיִמְלִיךָ מַלְכוּתָהּ,
בְּחַיִּיכוּן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוּן
וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,
בְּעֻגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב.
וְאִמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ
לְעָלָם וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא.

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח
וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם
וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר
וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלֵּל שְׁמֵהּ
דְּקֻדְשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ הוּא.
לְעֻלָּא מִן כּוֹל בְּרִכְתָּא
וּשְׁיִרְתָּא, תּוּשְׁבְּחָתָא
וְנַחֲמָתָא, דְּאִמְרֵן
בְּעֻלְמָא. וְאִמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא,
וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כּוֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל.
וְאִמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרְוֵמֵינוּ,
הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ
וְעַל כּוֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל
[**וְעַל כּוֹל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל].
וְאִמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

b. Burial *Kaddish* (*Kaddish d'Ithadata*): This form of the *Kaddish* is said only at burial. It differs from the Mourner's *Kaddish* by having the following paragraph substituted for the first paragraph of the Mourner's *Kaddish*. This paragraph contains the only mention in any form of *Kaddish* of the message of the future rebuilding of the Temple and resurrection of the dead.

Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'meih raba

[Cong.: Amein].

B'alma dihu atid l'ithadata,

ul'ahaya meitaya, ul'asaka l'hayei alma,

ul'mivnei karta dirushleim, ul'shakhl'la

heikhalei b'gavah, ul'me'ekar pulhanah

nukhra'ah mei'ar'a, ul'atava

pulhanah dishmaya l'atreih,

v'yamlikh kud'sha b'rikk hu

b'malkhuteih viy'karei b'hayeikhon

uv'yomeikhon uv'hayei d'khol beit Yisra'eil,

ba'agala uwizman kariv. V'imru: Amein.

(Continue with "Y'hei shmeih..." from the Mourner's *Kaddish*)

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵיהּ רַבָּא.

בְּעֵלְמָא דְהוּא עֲתִיד לְאַתְחַדְתָּא,
וְלְאַחַיָּא מִתְיָא, וְלְאַסְקָא לְחַיֵּי עֵלְמָא,
וְלְמַבְנֵי קַרְתָּא דִירוּשָׁלַם, וְלְשַׁכְלָלָא
הֵיכְלָהּ בְּגוֹהַ, וְלְמַעְקַר פּוּלְחָנָהּ
נּוּכְרָאָה מְאַרְעָא, וְלְאַתְבָּא
פּוּלְחָנָהּ דְשַׁמְיָא לְאַתְרָהּ,
וְיַמְלִיךְ קוּדְשָׁא בְרִיךְ הוּא
בְּמַלְכוּתֵיהּ וְיַקְרֶהּ בְּחַיֵּיכוּן
וּבְיוֹמֵיכוּן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,
בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב. וְאַמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

May God's great name be exalted and hallowed in the world that will be renewed, in which God will revive the dead, restore them to eternal life, rebuild the city of Jerusalem, complete the Temple within it, uproot alien worship from the earth, and return the worship of heaven to its place, and where the Holy One, blessed be God, will reign in sovereignty and splendor, in your lifetime and in your days, and in the life of the whole House of Israel, speedily and soon. And respond with: *Amein*.

(Continue with "May God's great name..." from the Mourner's *Kaddish*)

c. *Eil Malei Raḥamim* (“Exalted, compassionate God”): This prayer may be recited at the funeral service, on visiting a gravesite, and during *Yizkor*, and doesn’t require a *minyan*. It asks God for compassion and safekeeping of the soul of the departed. (On certain days, in some traditions, this prayer is omitted and additional psalms are recited instead.)

Eil malei raḥamim, shokhein
 bam’romim, ham’tzei
 m’nuḥah n’khonah taḥat
 kanfei hash’khinah,
 b’ma’alot k’doshim
 ut’horim k’zohar haraki’ah
 mazhirim, l’nishmat
 _____ ben/bat _____
 shehalakh/shehalkhah
 l’olamo/l’olamah, b’gan
 eiden t’hei
 m’nuḥato/m’nuḥatah.
 Ana, ba’al haraḥamim
 hastireihu/hastirehah
 b’seiter k’nafekha l’olamim,
 utz’ror bitzror haḥayim
 et nishmato/nishmatah,
 Adonai hu naḥalato/naḥalata,
 v’yanu’ah/v’tanu’ah b’shalom
 al mishkavo/mishkavah.
 V’nomar: amein.

אֵל מְלֵא רַחֲמִים, שׁוֹכֵן
 בְּמִרְוֵמִים, הַמְצִיא
 מְנוּחָה נְכוֹנָה תַּחַת
 כַּנְּפֵי הַשְּׁכִינָה,
 בְּמַעְלֹת קְדוּשִׁים
 וּטְהוֹרִים כְּזֹהַר הַרְקִיעַ
 מְזַהְרִים, לְנִשְׁמַת
 _____ בֶּן/בַּת _____
 שֶׁהָלַךְ/שֶׁהָלְכָה
 לְעוֹלָמוֹ/לְעוֹלָמָהּ, בְּגַן
 עֵדֶן תְּהִי
 מְנוּחָתוֹ/מְנוּחָתָהּ.
 אָנָּה, בַּעַל הַרְחָמִים
 הַסְתִּירֵהוּ/הַסְתִּירֶהָ
 בְּסֵיתֵר כְּנַפְיָךְ לְעוֹלָמִים,
 וּצְרוֹר בְּצְרוֹר הַחַיִּים
 אֶת נִשְׁמָתוֹ/נִשְׁמָתָהּ,
 יְיָ הוּא נַחֲלָתוֹ/נַחֲלָתָהּ,
 וְיָנוּחַ/וְתָנוּחַ בְּשָׁלוֹם
 עַל מִשְׁכָּבוֹ/מִשְׁכָּבָהּ.
 וְנֹאמַר: אָמֵן.

Exalted, compassionate God, grant perfect peace in Your sheltering presence, among the holy and the pure, whose radiance is like the heavens, to the soul of _____ son/daughter of _____ and _____ who has gone to his/her eternal home. May he/she rest in paradise. Master of mercy, may he/she find eternal shelter beneath Your sheltering wings, and may his/her soul be bound up in the bond of life. Adonai is his/her portion. May he/she rest in peace. And respond with: *Amein*.

[ADAPTED FROM MAḤZOR LEV SHALEM, p. 293]

Ritual Responses

These words are said in response to specific situations. For items noted with an asterisk (*), see glossary for explanation. Words separated by a slash (“/”) represent the male/female version of the Hebrew text.

a. Recited immediately upon learning of a death, these words acknowledge that life is finite.

Barukh dayan ha'emet. בָּרוּךְ הַיָּיִן הַאֱמֶת.

Praised* is the True Judge.

b. These words from Job 1:21 are said when tearing *kri'ah**; they reflect, in terse phrases, the stark reality of the moment.

Adonai natan v'Adonai lakah; ; יְהוָה נָתַן וַיִּהְיֶה לָקַח;
y'hi sheim Adonai m'vorakh. יְהִי שֵׁם יְהוָה מְבֹרָךְ:

Adonai* has given, Adonai has taken;
Praised* be the name of Adonai.

c. As earth is placed on the casket, these words of final parting are recited.

Al m'komo/m'komah עַל מְקוֹמוֹ/מְקוֹמָהּ
yavo/tavo v'shalom. יָבֹא/תָבֹא בְּשָׁלוֹם.

May he/she go to his/her place in peace.

d. These words are said to the mourner, asking that God comfort the mourner.

i. In Ashkenazic tradition:

HaMakom y'naheim etkhem הַמָּקוֹם יְנַחֵם אֶתְכֶם
b'tokh sh'ar aveilei Tziyon בְּתוֹךְ שְׂאֵר אַבְיֵילֵי צִיּוֹן
vi'Y'rushalayim. וִירוּשָׁלַיִם.

May God comfort you among those who have mourned for Zion and Jerusalem.

The following shortened form is sometimes used in place of the above:

HaMakom y'naheim etkhem. הַמָּקוֹם יְנַחֵם אֶתְכֶם.

May God comfort you.

ii. In Sephardic tradition:

T'nuhamu min hashamayim. תְּנַחֲמוּ מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם.

May Heaven comfort you.

Hebrew Abbreviations

These occur commonly in relation to burial and death. Words separated by a slash ("/") represent the male/female version of the Hebrew text.

a. ז"ל (the Hebrew letters zayin/lamed): This two-word Hebrew phrase is commonly used in speech or in writing to express respect for the deceased. (This is sometimes used in English as z"l.)

זְכוֹרֵנוּ/זְכוֹרֵנָה לְבְרָכָה.

Zikhrono/zikhronah livrakhah.

May his/her memory be for a blessing.

b. תנצב"ה (the Hebrew letters taf/nun/tzadi/bet/hey): This abbreviation is commonly used on gravestones.

תְּהִי נִשְׁמָתוֹ/נִשְׁמָתָהּ

צְרוּרָה בְּצִרוֹר הַחַיִּים.

T'hei nishmato/nishmatah

tz'rurah bitzror haḥayim.

May his/her soul be bound up in the bond of life.

c. פ"נ (the Hebrew letters pey/nun): This is another common inscription on a gravestone.

Po nikbar/nikb'rah...

פֹּה נִקְבָּר/נִקְבְּרָה...

Here lies...

Glossary

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Adonai</i> | traditional term representing God's name (often translated as "Lord") |
| <i>Aninut</i> | the period of time between death and burial |
| <i>Aron</i> | casket |
| <i>Ashkenazi</i> | usually refers to Northern and Eastern European Jewish traditions or people |
| <i>Aveil</i> (pl. <i>aveilim</i>) | mourner; specifically, a person in any of the following seven relationships to the deceased: father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, spouse |
| <i>Aveilut</i> | the period of mourning |
| <i>Barukh</i> | "blessed" or "praised"; used to begin Hebrew blessings. This word is laden with meanings, with the underlying intent being to express a sense of acknowledgement of God. |
| <i>Chesed Shel Emet</i> | "kindness of truth"; true lovingkindness |
| <i>Chevrah Kadisha</i> | "Holy Society"; the group responsible for all matters related to preparation of a body for burial; often also for other end-of-life matters |
| <i>Eil Malei Raḥamim</i> | a prayer asking God to remember and have compassion on the deceased |
| <i>Kaddish</i> | (from the Hebrew root for "holy") a genre of Jewish prayer; often, a version of that prayer recited by a mourner in the presence of a <i>minyan</i> in praise of God and offering a message of hope |
| <i>Kashrut</i> | religious regulations regarding permitted foods |
| <i>Kavod Hameit</i> | respect for the dead |
| <i>Kippah</i> (pl. <i>kippot</i>) | head covering, also known as a " <i>yarmulke</i> " (Yiddish) |
| <i>Kohen</i> (pl. <i>kohanim</i>) | priest |
| <i>Kri'ah</i> | the tearing of a garment or a ribbon |
| <i>Levayah</i> | "accompanying"; burial procession |
| <i>Matzevah</i> | monument/gravestone |
| <i>Meit/meitah</i> | (male/female) deceased person |
| <i>Minyan</i> (pl. <i>minyanim</i>) | the minimum number (10) of adult Jews necessary for certain prayers to be said |
| <i>Mitzvah</i> | commandment; often used more broadly in the sense of "good deed" |
| Mourner | see <i>Aveil</i> |
| <i>Neshamah</i> | soul |
| <i>Niḥum Aveilim</i> | comforting the mourners |
| <i>Niftar</i> | deceased |

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| <i>Onen</i> | one who is in the period of intense mourning between death and burial |
| Praised | see <i>Barukh</i> |
| <i>Se'udat Havra'ah</i> | “meal of consolation”; the first meal for mourners after burial, provided by the community |
| <i>Sephardi</i> | usually refers to Spanish/Italian Jewish traditions or people (sometimes used as well for Middle Eastern Jewry, though this is more properly called <i>Mizrahi</i>) |
| <i>Shiva</i> | the first 7 days of mourning (counting the day of burial as Day 1) |
| <i>Shloshim</i> | the first 30 days of mourning (counting the day of burial as Day 1) |
| <i>Taharah</i> | the preparation of the body for burial |
| <i>Tzedakah</i> | “righteousness”; used to refer to the obligation to care for others; in the context of a funeral, refers specifically to the giving of funds in memory of the deceased |
| Unveiling | the (relatively modern) custom of consecrating a monument or gravestone |
| <i>Yahrzeit</i> | the anniversary of a person's death |
| <i>Yizkor</i> | “May [God] remember”; a set of memorial prayers recited on the holidays of <i>Yom Kippur</i> , <i>Sukkot</i> , <i>Pesah</i> , and <i>Shavuot</i> |

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