

Chapter 11:

Ending the Abelut of Seven Days

1. During the seven days of mourning, at the conclusion of Tefilat Shacharit and between Mincha and Arbit the Chazan or the Rabbi comes near to the Abelim and recites in front of them the Tsiduk haDin (*Tsadik Ata haShem...*). This prayer expresses our recognition and admission of the Infinite Divine Justice and the acceptance of His designs, whether our human and limited mind comprehends this or not. Together with this prayer, the Hashcaba is recited, which is the prayer said for the memory of the deceased, where we pray for his or her resting in peace. The custom in our community is that after the Tsiduk haDin, the officiant says *rabbi Chananya ben aqashia omer* and the mourner says Kaddish al Israel by himself.

2. When finishing this prayer, those present there come near the Abelim, conveying the traditional words of comfort: HAMAKOM INACHEM ETKHEM BETOKH SHEAR ABELEI TSION VIRUSHALAIM o TENUKHAMU MIN HASHAMAIM, which means: “From Heaven may comfort be given to you, with the other mourners of Zion and Yerushalaim” .

3. In our community it is customary that on the eve of the second or third day of mourning, the ceremony of remembrance called Didan be performed. After the Afternoon prayers, and before or after Arbit depending on the time of the year, the Rabbis and/or any other member of the Community or the family of the deceased, pronounce some words of Tora in the memory of the deceased. In this eulogy the speakers underline the virtues of the dearly departed, trying to comfort those in mourning and exhorting them to honor the memory of their dearly departed by imitating his or her good actions and Jewish values.

4. In some communities, it is customary to have this memorial during the eve of the seventh day (haft). There is not set rule for these memorials and especially when the prayers take place in the house of mourning, it is not uncommon to say Dibre Torah everyday between Mincha and Arbit.

5. The seven days are counted from the day of the burial until the morning of the seventh day. Thus, if the burial took place Monday (before sunset), Monday is counted as day one, even though the mourning was kept during that day only for a few hours (or even less). Then, the seventh day will be Sunday. In the morning, after Tefilat Shacharit, the seven days of mourning will be over.

6. In the morning of the seventh day, after the Tefila of Shacharit, the Tsiduk haDin is read to the Avelim for the last time, adding the verses of comfort: *LoYabo Od shimshekh..* At the end of this prayer the Avelim “rise up” from the seven-day mourning period, thus canceling from that moment on all the prohibitions relative to the seven days. Now the Avel can bathe, change clothes, dress leather shoes etc. Except the prohibitions to cut the hair and shaving are still in place, as it shall be explained below.

7. The Sephardic custom and the custom in our community is that after the Tefila of the seventh day, and before the Avelim change their torn clothes, they visit the cemetery, if possible with Minyan. There, next to the gravesite, they recite the Hashkaba and the Kaddish. Only when they come back home, they would wash themselves, change their clothing, wear leather shoes, go to work, etc. The Ashkenazi custom, is to visit the cemetery only 30 days after the burial, when the ceremony called “Shloishim” takes place .

8. As we have already explained, except for the time of the burial, when the Kohanim visit the cemetery they cannot access the areas close to the graves. They must remain in areas reserved for them for the recitation of Hashkaba, Kaddish and any other prayer in memory of the deceased.

9. If the seventh day falls on a Shabbat, the recitation of the verses that mark the end of the Avelut is done in the Synagogue, and visiting the cemetery is postponed for Sunday.