



Chigwell & Hainault
SYNAGOGUE



Bereavement Guide

Chigwell and Hainault Synagogue Bereavement Guide

Losing a loved one is a traumatic time and often one of great stress. Set out below is a practical step by step guide which should prove helpful at the most difficult of times.

Contact the Rabbi via the Shul Office (0208 500 2451) who will offer guidance and support.

Immediately after your loved one passes on obtaining a medical cause of death certificate from the doctor or hospital, stating the cause of death. This should currently be issued electronically and sent directly to the registrar, please ask that this also be emailed to the burial office at bbo@usburial.org.uk.

In the case the coroner needs to get involved this can cause significant delays to the burial. Your Rabbi can contact the relevant people to try and fast track this process where possible.

Contact the Registrar for Births and Deaths in the vicinity where the death occurred. They will make a telephone appointment with you to electronically issue the death certificate. Again, please request that this is also sent to the burial office at bbo@usburial.org.uk

Advise the burial office 020 8950 7767 once you have been issued with the relevant documentation and they will liaise with your rabbi to arrange a time for the funeral. The out of ours burial office number is 07957 119 119

Laws of mourning between the death and burial

After a loved one has passed away there may be a delay for a day or more before the burial takes place. During this time the mourner is classified as an 'Onain' meaning one who is in deep distress. An Onain is exempt from all positive mitzvot so he/she can focus on arranging the burial and showing respect for their deceased relative.

For example, an onain refrains from the following: wearing tefillin/counting towards the minyan/saying kaddish, prayers/blessings and learning Torah.

During this time one refrains from:

- Engaging in business
- Haircuts or shaving
- Eating meat and drinking wine
- Showering/bathing for pleasure
- Marital relations
- Joyous activities

An Onain however does not start to sit on a shiva chair or change into non-leather shoes until after the burial. In addition, mourners during the shiva week may eat and drink wine.

The Funeral

At the grounds the Rabbi will perform Kriah which symbolizes the permanent rent that has taken place in the mourners lives. These torn clothes are then worn throughout the shiva period, except for Shabbat. It is sensible not to wear good or new clothes for this purpose. Garments that are torn include: a suit jacket, cardigan or sweater and shirts or blouses.

The funeral prayers are said followed by eulogies. Those assembled escort the bier to be buried. Immediate family members will be asked to help fill in the grave and should replace the shovel or trowel (used by women) to the ground to avoid passing to the next person. Then other people are called forward to help fill in the grave. It is a mitzvah to make sure the bier is completely covered by earth by those in attendance.

Back at the hall the remaining prayers are said followed by kaddish, the memorial prayer and kaddish again. There is a special kaddish to be recited by those mourning a parent and transliterations for this special kaddish and the regular mourners kaddish in the back of the prayer books at the grounds.

The mourners then will either choose to sit on low chairs as people file past and offer brief condolences or will walk between two rows formed by those gathered. Those comforting the mourners recite the traditional greeting:

מִגְּלוֹשׁוּרֵינוּ וְנוֹצֵץ נִלְכָּא רָאשׁוֹן דְּרֵיתָב מִכְּתָא מִתְּנִי מוֹקְמָה

May G-d comfort you among the rest of the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem/
Hamakom yenakhem etekhem betokh shaar avelay tziyon viyrushalayim

If you would like the levaya and or the Shiva to be zoomed this can be arranged.

The Meal of Condolence

After returning home from the funeral, it is the practice for neighbours or friends to prepare the first meal that the mourners eat. This is called Seudat Havra'ah - the Meal of Condolence. It usually consists of bagels (or soft round rolls) and hard boiled eggs, accompanied by a drink. It is not the custom for food or drink to be provided for friends and family on returning to the shiva house. However, those who have travelled a long way may be offered some light refreshment.

Preparing the Shiva house prior to the funeral

A candle should burn throughout the shiva period.

Two candles in candlesticks should burn during every prayer service. These may be extinguished and used more than once.

It is the custom to cover the mirrors in the home of the mourner, in the rooms that he/she will use (there is no need to cover television screens). The coverings can be removed for Shabbat.

Those classified as mourners are the parents, brothers/sisters, spouse or children of your loved one. These are the only people for whom the laws of mourning apply.

All mourners should sit on low chairs, which can be obtained from your local synagogue.

A shiva house should not be treated as a social occasion and traditionally visitors wait for the mourner to initiate conversation.

There is no issue for the mourners to respond 'thank you' to those offering condolences.

Post Shiva period

On the 7th day from the funeral, (the day of the funeral counts as day one) the mourners 'get up' from sitting shiva. The mourners may now go back to work, change out of their torn clothes, wear leather shoes, resume learning Torah and marital relations.

If mourning for parents the additional mourning restrictions (see below) remain in place for a whole year. For all other immediate relatives the restrictions remain until the morning of the 30th day from the funeral:

Haircuts and shaving

Listening to music/attending concerts/parties

Buying a new home/furniture/clothes

Kaddish and Yahrzeit

Kaddish for parents is recited for 11 hebrew months minus one day from the date of the burial and the first yahrzeit is observed 12 hebrew months from the date of death.

If the burial was delayed 3 days or more from the date of death, then the first yahrzeit is observed on the date of burial and all subsequent yahrzeits on the hebrew anniversary of the death.

Below are some of the customs which are followed during the Yahrzeit period:

The family will light a Yahrzeit candle at the beginning of the Yahrzeit (this begins at night) It should stay alight for 24 hours.

Family and friends visit the grave of their loved one where psalms (tehillim) and the mourners kaddish prayer are recited. (In order to recite the Kaddish, a minyan of 10 men is required.)

A call up to the Torah (aliyah) is arranged for a male mourner if the Yahrzeit falls on either a Monday, Thursday or Shabbat. The Rabbi will also say a short prayer for the departed.

On the day of the Yahrzeit, a male relative of the deceased will usually lead one of the prayer services (if he is able to do so).

At shul on the day of the Yahrzeit, the family can provide some refreshments to make a L'Chaim and the Rabbi or family member will sometimes give a short D'var Torah in memory of their loved one.

On Shabbat, a family may wish to sponsor the Kiddush or Seuda Shelishit in memory of their loved one.

The Yahrzeit is one in which we reflect on the lives of our loved ones and the legacy they left, and through good deeds and learning Torah we can help to uplift the spirit of the departed.

Yizkor

Yizkor is a short prayer recited four times a year during the Jewish festivals of Yom Kippur, Shemini Atzeret, 8th Day Pesach and 2nd Day Shavuot. Yizkor means to 'remember' and is a way for a relative of the deceased to make a personal request of God, that in return for an act of charity, God will uplift the soul of the relative in the spiritual world.

This helps to strengthen the connection between the deceased and their relatives who carry out these positive acts. This benefits their dearly departed and also improves their actions in this world.

The custom is not to say Yizkor during the first year of mourning a relative.



Chigwell & Hainault
SYNAGOGUE