

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FUNERAL

Checklist: The Funeral Service

1. The recitation of chapters of Tehilim (Psalms).
2. Eulogies are delivered.
3. *El Malay Rachamim* (O God, Full of Compassion) is recited.
4. The mourners tear their garments (*kriah*) and recite the blessing “Blessed are You, Ado-nay, our God, King of the world, the true Judge. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם דִּין. הָאֱמֶת,” if it was not recited earlier.

Checklist: The Mourners Tear Their Clothes

- Before beginning to tear the garment, the mourner recites the “*Baruch dayan ha’emet*” prayer.
- The mourner should be standing.
- The tear starts at the edge of the garment, typically a shirt, near the collar. For a parent, the tear is made on the left side of the garment; for other relatives, the tear is made on the right side.
- When mourning a parent, one is required to tear each outer layer of clothing worn on the upper body (i.e. jacket and shirt). When mourning other relatives, only

the outermost garment is torn. One may remove a jacket, so that one's shirt is now considered the outermost garment. Coats, rain jackets, undergarments, sweaters and sweatshirts worn for warmth, tallit katan, and pajamas are all exempt from *kriah*.

- The tear should be along the length of the garment vertically.
- The tear should be at least three and a half inches long for a spouse or close relative. When mourning the loss of a parent, the tear should extend all the way to the heart.
- As most people lack the strength or dexterity to tear a garment, someone else should take a knife or scissors and make a small cut to start the procedure.
- The obligation to tear one's garment applies to both men and women. However, accommodations are made for women for the sake of modesty. The tear on the outer garment must still be made, but the torn garment should either be covered with another garment or worn on top of another garment that does not require tearing, so that the woman isn't even partially exposed.

Checklist: The Conclusion of the Funeral

- The pallbearers carry the casket to the hearse.
- The pallbearers should preferably be Jewish relatives

(cousins, nephews, etc.), but not immediate relatives, who are required to sit shiva.

- The family walks behind the casket, followed by the funeral attendees.
- All funeral attendees should follow the casket at least briefly. Even if you are unable to attend the burial, you should accompany the casket for at least six feet. This is symbolically important, as it shows honor to the deceased.
- Funeral attendees unable to continue on to the cemetery should wait until the funeral procession departs, and then ritually wash their hands before leaving the area. The custom is not to hand the washing cup directly to another person, but to place it on the ground, mouth down, and let the other person pick it up. Hands are usually air-dried.