

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE TWELVE-MONTH PERIOD OF MOURNING

Checklist: The Twelve-Month Mourning Period

- After the thirty-day mourning period has been completed, bathing and showering may be done without restrictions.
- Haircuts are not automatically permitted at the end of the thirty days, but only after someone mentions to the mourner that his hair is very long (i.e. a social reproach). This may be done by a friend who is aware of the requirement. If no one reproaches the mourner, he may not explicitly instruct someone to reproach him. He may, however, point to his long hair, hoping to elicit the required reproach. If no one takes the hint, the outer limit is three months, which can be shortened to two months if the mourner's appearance has crossed the line from looking "unkempt" to looking "offensive." If the mourner works in the secular world, there is room for further leniency. Subsequent haircuts should preferably be taken at twice the usual interval. If this is difficult, the mourner may take subsequent haircuts every thirty days.
- Shaving is permitted, but the mourner should diminish their frequency, preferably doubling the time between shaves. If the mourner works in a secular environment

and is concerned about his unkempt appearance, there is room to be lenient during the work week.

- Wearing freshly laundered clothing is permitted.
- Wearing new clothing is prohibited during the entire twelve-month period. If the mourner really needs new clothing, it is permitted to have someone else wear the item for at least half a day, so that it is no longer considered new when the mourner puts it on.
- Listening to music remains prohibited for the full twelve months.
- Giving and receiving gifts are prohibited for the full twelve months. However, this does not apply to receiving wedding gifts or charity.
- The accepted practice is for the mourner to sit in a place other than his usual seat in synagogue. Some have the custom to switch back to their usual seat on Shabbat and holidays. The new seat must be at least six feet away from the old seat.
- Major purchases or moves, such as moving to a newly purchased or rented house, are not permitted for the entire twelve months, unless failing to do so will result in financial hardship, or unless it is difficult for the family to remain in the current house. The same conditions apply to purchasing or leasing a new car or other significant items.
- It is prohibited to attend parties and social gatherings the entire twelve months. Business lunches are permitted.

***Checklist: Outer Garments That May Not Be
Worn During the Twelve-Month Mourning
Period if They Are New***

- Dress
- Blouse
- Skirt
- Wig
- Pants
- Shirt
- Jacket
- Suit
- Sweater
- Tie
- Coat
- Hat

TABLE 2: MAY SOMEONE WHO IS MOURNING A PARENT ATTEND A SIMCHA?

Simcha/Event	Shiva	Shloshim	Twelve Months
Brit Milah Ceremony	No ^a	Yes	Yes
Brit Milah Meal	No	No	No
Shalom Zachor	No	No	No ^b
Pidyon Haben Ceremony	No ^c	Yes	Yes
Pidyon Haben Meal	No ^c	No	No
Bar Mitzvah Service	No ^d	Yes	Yes
Bar Mitzvah Meal	No	No	No
Wedding Ceremony	No ^e	No	Yes
Wedding Meal	No ^e	No	No ^f
Sheva Berachot on a Weekday	No ^g	No ^h	No
Sheva Berachot on Shabbat	No ^g	Yes ⁱ	Yes
Kiddush (Shabbat)	No	No	No ^j

Notes

Note: This chart can also be utilized by those mourning for other close relatives, although the last column applies only for mourners of parents. The only other difference is that most authorities allow mourners of close relatives to attend the non-musical portion of a bar mitzvah celebration.

- a. During shiva, mourners may not attend a brit milah, unless they are the baby's parents.
- b. Opinions vary on attending a *shalom zachor*. On the one hand, music is not played, as it is Shabbat, nor is a formal meal served. On the other hand, it is

more of a social gathering than an actual mitzvah.

Parents, however, may attend.

- c. Parents may attend their son's *pidyon haben*, including the festive meal that follows. During the week of shiva, however, they can partake of the meal only if it is held in their home.
- d. Parents may attend their son's bar mitzvah. If a bar mitzvah is celebrated at the synagogue that they ordinarily attend, they are allowed to attend the ceremony and the service. Parents may not attend their son's bar mitzvah meal during shiva, unless it is on Shabbat.
- e. Parents may attend their own child's wedding, including the meal, even during shiva. However, the mourner should not sit at the head table and must step out of the room when music is played.
- f. The general rule is that attending a wedding meal is prohibited. However, see the discussion earlier in this chapter for exceptions to this rule.
- g. Parents during shiva may not attend the *sheva berachot* of their children.
- h. Parents during *shloshim* may not attend the *sheva berachot* of their children.
- i. The generally accepted ruling is that a mourner may attend Shabbat *sheva berachot* during *shloshim* for a relative or close friend.

- j. During kiddush, a mourner may wish the host a mazal tov, and then quickly depart. According to some views, he may even partake of light refreshments.