

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT TO DO WHEN A PARENT OR OTHER IMMEDIATE RELATIVE PASSES AWAY

Checklist: What to Do at the Time of Passing

After waiting approximately twenty minutes, one should do the following:

1. Some mourners recite the Baruch Dayan Ha'Emet blessing at the time of passing. The most prevalent practice, however, is not to recite it until one rends their garment at the funeral or burial.

The words of the blessing are as follows:

HEBREW: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם דִּין הָאֱמֶת

ENGLISH: Blessed are You, Ado-noy, our God King of the Universe, the true Judge.

2. Make sure the deceased's head is raised (either by changing the setting on the hospital bed, or by gently placing a pillow under their head).
3. Gently close the eyes.
4. Gently close the mouth.
5. Adjust limbs that may be hanging over the bed and straighten fingers or other limbs that may be bent, if possible.

6. Remove any heavy blankets and cover their face and body with a sheet.
7. If a person dies at home (as opposed to a hospital), light a candle near their head, whenever possible to do so.
8. Consult with your rabbi or religious mentor.
9. Call the *chevrah kaddisha* (Jewish Burial Society). If you do not know their number, contact your rabbi, or the National Association of Chevrah Kaddisha, NASCK.org.
10. If in a house (as opposed to a hospital), open the windows in the room where the deceased lies.
11. If relevant, take clothing or anything else that may have blood on it and put it in a bag for burial. Give the bag to a member of the chevrah kaddisha or send it to the funeral home.
12. If tubes or intravenous lines are still connected, wait for the member of the chevrah kaddisha to remove them, if possible.
13. Do not authorize an autopsy.
14. Do not kiss the deceased.
15. The deceased should not be left alone unattended (see below).
16. If the passing occurs on Shabbat or a major Jewish festival, lighting the candle is not permitted, nor is using the phone to call anyone. Some Rabbinic authorities allow gently closing the eyes and mouth of the deceased and straightening their limbs.

Checklist: The Seven Immediate Relatives for whom One is Required to Mourn

- Father
- Mother
- Son
- Daughter
- Brother (including half-brother)
- Sister (including half-sister)
- Spouse

Checklist: When the Mourner is a Kohain

1. Generally, a kohain must allow himself to become ritually impure (tamay) for the close relatives listed above.
2. A kohain may not become tamay for a sister who has been married, maternal siblings, or a wife who he was not permitted to marry (e.g. a divorcee).
3. A kohain still sits shiva and observes other mourning practices for the siblings he can't become tamay for, (but not for the wife he wasn't allowed to marry).
4. Even when the kohain is required to become tamay, he should leave the funeral before the casket is removed.

Checklist: The Five Stages of Mourning

1. From the moment of passing until burial. This period is called *aninut*, and the mourner is called an *onain*.
2. The first week after burial (*Shiva*).
3. The first thirty days after burial (*Shloshim*).
4. The first twelve months after passing.
5. The Jewish calendar anniversary of the passing (*yartzeit*). (If the burial was delayed, the first *yartzeit* may be the anniversary of the day of burial.)

Checklist: Arrangements to Consider

1. Contact your rabbi or religious mentor.
2. Contact the *chevrah kadisha* or funeral home you will be using.
3. Obtain the death certificate expeditiously.
4. Procure the deceased's release from the hospital.
5. In conjunction with the *chevrah kadisha* or funeral director, make sure the deceased is properly cared for, that the body is not left alone (*shmirah*), and that they will perform a *taharah* (the ritual cleansing of the body).
6. Make sure the deceased has a burial plot, and you know where it is.
7. Set the time and location of the funeral.

8. Arrange for transport to Israel, if applicable. (Usually done by the funeral director or the *chevrah kadisha*.)
9. Notify family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and other community members of the time and location of the funeral.
10. Arrange for a rabbi to officiate.

***Checklist: Personal Restrictions Applicable
from the Time of Death until Burial***

An *onain* may not:

- Bathe or shower (except for health reasons or if a person is particularly fastidious).
- Shave.
- Get a haircut.
- Cut their nails.
- Apply lotions.
- Wear fresh clothing (see chapter 6).
- Engage in marital relations.
- Exchange greetings.
- Attend social events.
- Work or conduct business. (Business owners should consult a qualified rabbi.)
- Drink wine.

- Eat meat.
- Pray.
- Wear tefillin.
- Make (most) blessings.
- Perform (most) mitzvot.
- Study Torah.
- Remember that these exemptions apply only to mitzvot an *onain* would otherwise be required to perform, anything that is normally prohibited remains forbidden to do.

Checklist: Personal Allowances from the Time of Death until Burial

An *onain* may:

- Wash their hands and face with cold water.
- Wear leather shoes.
- Wear tzitzit (without making the blessing).
- Leave their house.
- Sit in a chair that is of regular height.