

Disclaimer

This booklet is to define the common מנהג of the Edgware Adath Yisroel and those affiliated to this קהילה. It does not replace the need for direction in individual circumstances by your Rav who knows your personal situation. It is not a comprehensive guide to the הלכות of אבילות; for that see, The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning by Rabbi Maurice Lamm or the Laws of Availos from Artscroll.

Introduction

In earlier generations, every local קהילה had a חברה קדישא with their own unique מנהגים and תקנות, which were rigorously adhered to. In our time, given the terrible destruction of the communities of old, many of these established מנהגים have been lost and confused. In a community such as ours, where we come from numerous backgrounds and without a shared tradition, much confusion exists of what is appropriate and correct. Especially at a time when a person suffers bereavement and wants to be comforted by what seems familiar, it is painful to lack certainty or understanding of what needs to be done or how it is done. In reflection of past tragedies and losses where the pain was inadvertently compounded by this lack of clarity, this brief guide has been compiled to give understanding and direction of what needs to be done and how.

It is my hope and prayer that it not be needed, but rather we merit with all of ישראל the time of

בלע המנות לנצח ומחה אדני ידוד דמעה מעל כל פנים וחרפת עמו יסיר מעל כל הארץ פי ידוד דבר
ואמר ביזום ההוא הנה אלדינו זה קוינו לו ויושיענו זה ידוד קוינו לו נגילה ונשמחה בישועתו
ספר ישעיה פרק כה

Help and contact numbers

Rav- Rabbi Zvi H Lieberman

Mobile: 07956 957 287
Home: 020 8931 6206
Office: 020 8958 0493

EAYC Shul Office

Office: 020 8238 2491
Email: bereavement@eayc.org
[This email will alert the Rabbi, Hon. Secretary, the Shul Administrator and all the relevant members of the Council of Management]

Burial Societies

Adath Yisroel Office	020 8802 6262
United Synagogue	020 8950 7767 Out of hours: 07957 119 119
Federation of Synagogues	020 8202 2263 Out of hours: 020 3870 4728
Spanish and Portuguese	020 7481 7827 Out of hours: 020 8958 2112
For other congregations you should contact their synagogue office.	

Registry Office

Barnet	Barnet Town Hall, The Burroughs, London NW4 4BG 020 8359 6400
Harrow	The Civic Centre. Station Road, Harrow HA1 2XY 020 8863 5611
Camden	Judd Street, London, WC1H 9JE 020 7974 4444

פטירה – Passing

After the פטירה, when possible, the נפטר is placed on the floor, limbs are straightened and the face of the נפטר is covered.

Light a candle if possible near the head of the נפטר (if it is not possible, e.g. the person died in hospital, light a candle at home as soon as possible).

The נפטר is constantly attended by two Jews until burial. This Mitzvah of 'vaching' (watching) is a duty which devolves upon the family and close friends. An Onen who is a Cohen is allowed to perform this Mitzvah. Where the body is in a hospital mortuary it is sometimes difficult to 'vach' with the body, for this reason that we recommend that the נפטר be brought home as soon as practicable after the פטירה. You should contact the Chevra Kadisha for assistance with this. This however is generally not possible until a death certificate has been issued. The co-operation of the hospital administration will be needed. The view of many Poskim is that 'vaching' is not required when the נפטר is secured in a hospital mortuary.

Anninus

From the time of פטירה until the burial, a mourner is called an Onan.

Only immediate relatives are considered onanim or availim. Immediate relatives are; spouse, children, parents and siblings. Children under Bar/Bas Mitzvah age are not obliged to observe these Halachos, except for Kriah.

An Onan should be fully focused on their loss and making any arrangements needed for the נפטר. Other than going out when necessary for making such arrangements and wearing shoes, which an Onan may do, all other forms of availus restrictions such as not shaving, having a haircut or going to the hairdressers, bathing, wearing freshly laundered outerwear, marital relations, etc., apply.

An Onan is allowed to leave the house to help or deal with any aspects of the burial arrangements. He may go to his place of work in order to set in motion arrangements for his absence for the period of the שבעה but should not conduct any business. A business owned by an avel must close during the שבעה. Alternatively, the business may be sold or partners should withdraw from the partnership for the duration of the שבעה. (For further details of this complex area, please speak to the Rav if necessary.)

An Onan does not do any positive Mitzvos including Davenning, study of Torah and does not recite any beracha. He does not put on Tefillin but must wash hands before eating. On Shabbos the halachos of Anninus do not apply, however, private aspects of availus e.g. not learning Torah, not having marital relations, avoiding anything joyous, continue to apply.

An Onan may not eat meat or drink wine except on Shabbos. However, during שבעה there are no restrictions on what one may eat or drink. An Onan obviously remains obligated to keep all the negative commandments.

From the time of פטירה until the end of the שבעה a special Yahrzeit candle should be kept alight at all times - even through Shabbos. The candle, of course, must never be lit on Shabbos. Many maintain a candle for the Shloshim and some for the year.

Arrangements

Before the Levaya and Kevurah can be arranged, it is necessary to formally register the death with the local Registrars. To expedite matters you should immediately contact the burial society of the community of which the נפטר was a member to inform them of the פטירה. (See contact details above)

Death Certificate

Your first task is to obtain the death certificate from the doctor or hospital. Halachoh demands that the נפטר be given every possible respect. Therefore, requests by doctors to carry out a post mortem examination should be refused by relatives unless the Coroner insists upon one being undertaken. You should contact the Rav or the appropriate Chevra Kadisha if you have any problems with uncooperative doctors. There are now alternatives to an invasive post mortem investigation.

Green Form and Registration

The death certificate will have to be taken to the registrar for Births and Deaths for the district in which the death occurred. You should be able to find out the address of the registrar from the doctor or hospital who issued the death certificate. The registrar's office is only open for a few hours each weekday and you should therefore endeavour to go to the registrar as soon as possible so as to avoid any delays in arranging the Levaya and Kevura. In most registration districts it is possible to see the registrar out of hours (by appointment) on Sunday mornings. It will help the registrar and save time later if the following information can be supplied:

- The full legal name of the נפטר. (also the maiden name in the case of a woman).
- The date and place of death and the נפטר's usual address.
- The date and place of birth - town and county. (If born abroad - Country of birth.)
- Occupation (and husband's occupation, in the case of a woman).
- Whether the נפטר was in receipt of a pension or allowance from public funds. (take along the pension book etc.)
- If the נפטר was married - the date of birth of the surviving spouse.
- The National Health medical card number - take along card.

It is often useful to obtain a few copies of the registration certificates for insurance purposes, etc. You should therefore have sufficient money (about £40) with you for payment.

Once the green burial certificate has been issued by the registrar, it is necessary to take it to the Burial Society of the community to which the נפטר belonged, who will arrange the Levaya and Kevura.

Once the Levaya and Kevura have been arranged, you should inform the Shul administrator and Honorary Secretary or email bereavement@eayc.org and give them the appropriate details.

Kriah

Kriah is the tearing of one's outer garment as a sign of grief.

Our minhag is generally to do this immediately before the levaya.

A sweater or waistcoat is acceptable, but not a tie, underwear or scarf. On the loss of parents, the Kriah is done on the left-hand side (near the heart) and on the loss of other relatives, on the right-hand side. The Kriah garment is worn for the duration of the שבעה but not on Shabbos.

Levaya

If the נפטר is at home the preparation of the body for the Levaya and Kevura will be carried out by members of the Chevra Kadisha who will discuss the detailed arrangements with you at the appropriate time.

At the arranged time the Kriah will take place and the נפטר and Aveilim will leave the home and hespedim (if appropriate and permitted) and Tehillim recited. The Avilem and the Menachamim will then accompany the Aron for a short distance before they will leave for the Kevura.

If the נפטר is not in the house, the Aron may be brought to the home after the Tahara - when Kriah will take place - followed by the Levaya with Hespadiim and Tehillim.

It is not appropriate for men and women to mix at a Levaya.

Arrangements should be made for someone to be with any Availim who are not going to the Kevura and to accompany them at the שבעה house.

Kevura

If there is no Levaya at the home, the Kriah is carried out at the cemetery immediately before the Kevura.

The custom of the Adath Yisroel Burial Society is that women may attend the Levaya but do not go to the Kevura, especially when a Levaya has taken place.

Those men and women who do wish to go to the Kevura should make sure to do so immediately after the Levaya.

For Availim who go to the Kevura, a close friend or relative should take with slippers or non-leather shoes to change into after the Kevura. Wash your hands after changing shoes.

Avilus

שבעה Beginning

A close friend should prepare the meal for the Availim on return from the Levaya this should consist of at least a hard boiled egg and a roll or bread.

The Shul Secretary will need to know where you will be sitting שבעה and how many chairs you will require. They will also need to discuss with you the times of Davenning at the שבעה house. You will have to arrange for the chairs, siddurim (and Sefer Torah) to be collected from the Shul.

It is recommended that you arrange for a close friend or relative to be on hand and help with such matters as answering the door and phone, purchasing and preparing food and contacting relatives and friends whom you wish to inform.

A stock of Yahrzeit and Shabbos candles should be purchased for the week.

In the שבעה house all mirrors and reflective glass should be covered.

Excess furniture should be cleared away to make room for the שבעה chairs and to prepare an area for Tefillos. A table should be placed facing east, on which should be placed the two candles which are to be lit during the Tefillos.

Tefillos and Kaddish

It is a great zechus for the נפטר that children should say קדיש. For this reason, our minhag is that אבילים lead the Tefillos and are therefore able to say all the קדישים.

After Shacharis and Maariv at a שבעה house we add תהלים מ"ט followed by קדיש יתום. On days when תחנון is not said, we substitute with תהלים ט"ז. After תהלים, many will continue with a Hespel, learning of a Mishna, קדיש דרבנן then followed by an אזכרה followed by קדיש יתום.

After Davenning the אבילים take their place to receive nichumim.

Halachos of שבעה

During the שבעה period אבילים should sit on the floor. They may not sit on chairs more than 24cm high

They may not wear leather footwear.

They should wear their Kriah garment. Appropriate clothing should be worn but there is no need to wear black.

אבילים may not leave the שבעה house except to go to Shul if there is no Minyan at home.

Men do not shave or take haircuts, women do not wear make-up.

Bathing is prohibited during Shiva, however one may wash limb by limb with warm water.

Marital relations are prohibited from the time of death until after the שבעה.

Visitors should be discouraged from kissing or embracing the Availim. It's sensible to place a coffee table in front of the אבילים.

During the *שבעה*, *Availim* should only study serious Torah literature such as *Iyov* or *Eicha*. The Halachos of *Availus* may also be learned.

אבילים may rise from *שבעה* in time to prepare for *Shabbos* on Friday afternoon. Before going to *Shul* on Friday evening the *אבילים* should change their clothing and change from the *Kriah* garment. The *אבילים* enter after *Lecha Dodi*, just before *Mizmor Shir l'yom Hashabbos* to be greeted by the *Kehilla* with *Nichumim*.

אבילים may not be called to the Torah during *שבעה*. If the *Avel* is the only *Cohen* in the *Shul*, he should leave before *Krias HaTorah*.

The *שבעה* ends on the morning of the seventh day after the *Kevura*, with the day of the *Kevura* counting as the first day. If the seventh day is the *Shabbos*, all public mourning ends with *Shabbos* but private mourning continues until after the conclusion of davenning on *Shabbos* morning.

Kohanim who are in *Aveilus* do not *Duchan* in our *Ashkenazi minyanim* on *Yom Tov*.

It is not appropriate to deliberately listen to music during the time of *Availus*.

Guidelines for Social Conduct during the 12 months

In a tight-knit social community such as the EAYC, we need a common standard of social conduct during the 12 months of Availus for parents. I've used the appendix of the Jewish Way in Death and Mourning by Rabbi Maurice Lamm as a template to define the appropriate behaviour in the EAYC when attending as a relative or friend.

	שבעה	Shloshim	12 months
<i>Shabbos/Yom Tov Kiddush in Shul</i>	Do not attend	To wish Mazal Tov and say a brief l'Chayim but not hang around	Permitted if absence will be noted as being due to availus
<i>Inviting for Shabbos/Yom Tov meals/Kiddush to your home</i>	Not permitted	Permitted with up to 2 families	Permitted with up to 4 families
<i>Eating out on Shabbos/Yom Tov</i>	Do not attend	With family only	Permitted with up to 4 families
<i>Inviting for weekday meals to your home (inc Melava Malka)</i>	Not permitted	Family only	Permitted with limited number
<i>Dining out with others in weekdays (inc Melava Malka)</i>	Not permitted	With family only	With family only
<i>Chupa without instrumental music</i>	Do not attend	Only for immediate family need	May attend
<i>Wedding Dinner</i>	Do not attend For immediate family Simcha speak to the Rav	Do not attend. May enter to wish Mazal Tov not during the music. For immediate family Simcha speak to the Rav	Do not attend. May enter to wish Mazal Tov not during the music. For immediate family Simcha speak to the Rav
<i>Weekday Sheva Brachos</i>	Do not attend	Do not attend	Do not attend
<i>Shabbos/Yom Tov Sheva Brachos</i>	Do not attend	Only as the 10 th to make a minyan and as a Ponim Chadashos, where it will directly impinge on the joy of Chosson and Kalla and when the absence will be noticeably due to the availus	Only as the 10 th to make a minyan and as a Ponim Chadashos or when the absence will be noticeably due to availus
<i>Bar/Bas Mitzvah Davenning</i>	Permitted in your own Shul	Permitted	Permitted

<i>Weekday Bar/Bas Mitzvah Meal without music and with Torah</i>	Do not attend	Do not attend outside your home	Avoid
<i>Charity Events</i>	Do not attend	Do not attend	Do not attend other than to make a donation
<i>Shalom Zachor</i>	Do not attend	Permitted briefly	Permitted
<i>Bris/Pidyon HaBen</i>	Do not attend	Permitted	Permitted
<i>Seudas Bris/Pidyon HaBen/Engagement</i>	Do not attend	Do not attend outside your home	Do not attend other than for a quick l'Chayim outside your home
<i>Birthdays/ Anniversaries/House parties</i>	Not permitted	Not permitted	Not permitted
<i>Theatre/Movies/ Sports events</i>	Not permitted	Avoid public events and entertainment	Avoid public events and entertainment
<i>Cruises/Tours</i>	Not Permitted	Not permitted	Not permitted
<i>Business Entertainment</i>	Not permitted	Permitted to prevent financial loss or lost opportunity	Permitted to prevent financial loss or lost opportunity

May we all see B'nechomas Tzion V'Yerushalayim.