



Mourner's Prayer during the Coronavirus Crisis

Introduction

Ever since that sad day when the doors of our Shuls were closed, many mourners have been feeling additionally pained over the lack of an opportunity to say Kaddish for their loved one. A number of communities have been learning Mishna text which is a tradition for those in mourning, and saying memorial prayers for the deceased, although there are many who understandably feel that this does not fill the void. Kaddish has a large amount of resonance for those who say it, and they feel the support of the community with them while they recite the kaddish.

An alternative to kaddish

The ideal would be to find something that is said by those in mourning, while maintaining the traditional approach that kaddish, as well as a number of other prayers, requires a physically present community in order to be said. A solution exists from the middle ages. A Rabbi from the 13th century, Judah ben Samuel of Regensburg, the author of the Sefer Chasidim (Book of the Pious) composed a mourner's prayer for those who lived in a place where a minyan could not be found. It is comprised of three verses, which capture the essence of kaddish.

We look forward to returning speedily to a situation when we no longer need to rely on this and mourners will have the opportunity and comfort to say the mourner's kaddish with a minyan.

3 verses + a response

At the point when the mourner's Kaddish would be said, the mourner would say the following three verses:

וְעַתָּה יִגְדַּל נָא כַּח אֲדֹנָי כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ לְאֹמֵר (בַּמְדַּבֵּר י"ד
י"ז).

V'atah yigdal na ko'ach Adonai ka'asher dibartah lay-mor.

וְהִתְגַּדַּלְתִּי וְהִתְקַדְּשִׁיתִי וְנִוְדַעְתִּי לְעֵינֵי גוֹיִם רַבִּים וְיָדְעוּ
כִּי אֲנִי ה' (יחזקאל ל"ח כ"ג).

V'hit-gadilti v'hit-kadishti v'no-dati l'ey-ney goyim rabim v'yad-u ki ani
Adonai.

יְהִי שֵׁם ה' מְבֹרָךְ מְעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם (תהלים קי"ג ב').

Y'hi shem Adonai m'vorach may-atah v'ad olam.

And now, may the strength of my Lord be magnified as You have spoken, saying:

I will be exalted and I will be sanctified, and I will make Myself known before the eyes of many nations; then they will know that I am Hashem:

Blessed be the name of the Lord now and forever more.

This would be followed by all those on the Zoom saying 'Oseh Shalom' together with the mourners.