

## Mourning in the Tanakh, Part 2

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Last week we studied some of the Hebrew Words for Mourning (Aval, Evel, and Avel) as well as the Hebrew word for Sorrow (Aven) and also some figurative uses for mourning in the Hebrew words of qader and qadoraniyt. The conclusion from last week was that there was no specific length of time nor was a command given of how to mourn. This week we will continue to look at the words for Lament (safad and mis'ped).

Safed (Semech-Fey-Dalet) is a verb and reference number 5594, which means to mourn or lament.

The Kal form we will examine first which is the simple form of the verb.

Melekh Aleph/I Kings 14:13

2 Jeroboam said to his wife, "Go and disguise yourself, so that you will not be recognized as Jeroboam's wife, and go to Shiloh. The prophet Ahijah lives there, the one who predicted that I would be king over this people.

12 As for you, go back home; as soon as you set foot in the town, the child will die.

13 And all Israel [they] shall lament (v'saf'du וְסָפְדוּ) over him and bury him; he alone of Jeroboam's family shall be brought to burial, for in him alone of the House of Jeroboam has some devotion been found to Yehovah, Elohey of Israel.

Zechar'yah/Zechariah 12: 10, 12

10 But I will fill the House of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem with a spirit of pity and compassion; and they shall lament (v'saf'du וְסָפְדוּ) to Me about those who

are slain, [like in] wailing (kamis'ped כָּמִסְפֵּד) over them as over a favorite son and showing bitter grief as over a first-born. 11 In that day, the wailing (hamis'ped הַמִּסְפֵּד)

in Jerusalem shall be as great as the wailing (kamis'ped כָּמִסְפֵּד) at

Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddon. 12 The land shall wail (v'saf'dah וְסָפְדָה)

), each family by itself: The family of the House of David by themselves, and their womenfolk by themselves; the family of the House of Nathan by themselves, and their womenfolk by themselves;

We see that the mourning or lamenting being done is equated to that of the loss of a child. Even the land mourns/lament.

Bereshit/Genesis 23:2

23:1 Sarah's lifetime—the span of Sarah's life—came to one hundred and twenty-seven years. 2 Sarah died in Kiriath-arba—now Hebron—in the land of Canaan; and Abraham proceeded to mourn (lis'pod לְסָפֵד) for Sarah **and to bewail her (v'livkotah וְלִבְכָתָהּ)**. 1058

Avraham mourned for his wife before burial and weeped or cried for her. It does not reference how long this was.

Melekh Aleph/I Kings 13:29

29 The prophet lifted up the corpse of the man of Elohim, laid it on the ass, and brought it back; it was brought to the town of the old prophet **for lamentation (lis'pod לְסָפֵד)** and burial. 30 He laid the corpse in his own burial place; **and they lamented over it (vayis'pedu וַיִּסְפְּדוּ)**, “Alas, my brother!”

The Prophet is brought to me mourned over as was the practice of the people.

Kohelet/Ecclesiastes 3:4

4 A time **for weeping (liv'kot לִבְכוֹת)** and a time for laughing, A time for **wailing (sefod סְפוֹד)** and a time for dancing;

There is a time for lamenting/Mourning and crying.

Yemiyahu/Jeremiah 16:4,5,6

4 They shall die gruesome deaths. They shall not **be lamented (yisaf'du וַיִּסְפְּדוּ)** or buried; they shall be like dung on the surface of the ground. They shall be consumed by the sword and by famine, and their corpses shall be food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth.

5 For thus said Yehovah:

Do not enter a house of mourning, Do not go to lament (lis'pod לְסָפֵד) and to condole with them; For I have withdrawn My favor from that people—declares Yehovah—My kindness and compassion. 6 Great and small alike shall die in this land, They shall not be buried; men shall not **lament them (yis'pedu וַיִּסְפְּדוּ)**, Nor gash and tonsure themselves for them. 7 They shall not break bread for a mourner To comfort him for a bereavement, Nor offer one a cup of consolation For the loss of his father or mother.

This is not so much telling them what to do but what not to do in mourning for them. Why, because Yehovah has withdrawn his favor of them.

Zechar'yah/Zechariah 7:5

**7:1** In the fourth year of King Darius, on the fourth day of the ninth month, Kislev, the word of Yehovah came to Zechariah—**2** when Bethel-sharezer and Regem-melech and his men sent to entreat the favor of Yehovah, **3** [and] to address this inquiry to the priests of the House of Yehovah and to the prophets: “Shall I weep (ha'ev'keh) and practice abstinence in the fifth month, as I have been doing all these years?”

**4** Thereupon the word of Yehovah Tzava'ot came to me: **5** Say to all the people of the land and to the priests: When you fasted and **lamented** (v'safod וְסָפַד) in the fifth and seventh months all these seventy years, did you fast for my benefit? **6** And when you eat and drink, who but you does the eating, and who but you does the drinking?

Here the mourning was not for the dead but for the temple and its destruction.

Shemu'el Bet/2 Samuel 3:31

**31** David then ordered Joab and all the troops with him to rend their clothes, gird on sackcloth, **and make lament** ( v'sif'du וְסִפְדוּ) before Abner; and King David himself walked behind the bier.

They mourned for Avner.

Yemiyahu/Jeremiah 4:8

**8** For this, put on sackcloth, **Mourn** (sif'du וְסִפְדוּ) and wail; For the blazing anger of Yehovah Has not turned away from us.

Mourning here was for sins not loss of life.

Bereshit/Genesis 50:10

**10** When they came to Goren ha-Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, they held there a very great and solemn **lamentation**; and he observed a mourning period of seven days for his father.

We read this in the last paper. The only place a seven day period is even referenced.

Shemu'el Aleph/1 Samuel 25:1

**25:1** Samuel died, and all Israel gathered and made **lament** for him; and they buried him in Ramah, his home. David went down to the wilderness of Paran.

No time period is given for Shemu'el for the people to mourn.

Shemu'el Aleph/1 Samuel 28:3

3 Now Samuel had died and all Israel made **lament** for him; and he was buried in his own town of Ramah. And Saul had forbidden [recourse to] ghosts and familiar spirits in the land.

Again like the previous verse.

Shemu'el Bet/2 Samuel 1:12

11 David took hold of his clothes and rent them, and so did all the men with him.

12 They **lamented** and wept, and they fasted until evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the soldiers of Yehovah and the House of Israel who had fallen by the sword.

The death of Saul and Jonathan is one in which David give a example of Mourning in his day. Was this both mourning for their loss and the defeat also?

Melekh Aleph/I Kings 14:18

17 Jeroboam's wife got up and left, and she went to Tirzah. As soon as she stepped over the threshold of her house, the child died. 18 They buried him and all Israel **lamented** over him, in accordance with the word that Yehovah had spoken through His servant the prophet Ahijah.

The boy is mourned and buried but no time again is given.

Yemiyahu/Jeremiah 22:18

18 Assuredly, thus said Yehovah concerning Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah: They shall not **mourn** for him, "Ah, brother! Ah, sister!" They shall not **mourn** for him, "Ah, lord! Ah, his majesty!"

The unrighteous leader are not to be mourned for.

Yemiyahu/Jeremiah 34:5

4 But hear the word of Yehovah, O King Zedekiah of Judah! Thus said Yehovah concerning you: You will not die by the sword. 5 You will die a peaceful death; and as incense was burned for your ancestors, the earlier kings who preceded you, so they will burn incense for you, and they will **lament** for you 'Ah, lord!' For I Myself have made the promise—declares Yehovah."

Yehovah assures the King he will be mourned over.

Yehez'qel/Ezekiel 24:16, 23

15 The word of Yehovah came to me: 16 O mortal, I am about to take away the delight of your eyes from you through pestilence; but you shall not **lament** or weep or let your tears flow. 17 Moan softly; observe no mourning for the dead: Put on your turban and put your sandals on your feet; do not cover over your upper lip, and do not eat the bread of comforters.”

22 Accordingly, you shall do as I have done: you shall not cover over your upper lips or eat the bread of comforters; 23 and your turbans shall remain on your heads, and your sandals upon your feet. You shall not **lament** or weep, but you shall be heartsick because of your iniquities and shall moan to one another.” 25 You, O mortal, take note: On the day that I take their stronghold from them, their pride and joy, the delight of their eyes and the longing of their hearts—their sons and daughters—

Here Yehovah directs Yehez'qel to tell the people not to mourn for the Temple. Instead they are to mourn for their iniquities.

Michah 1:8

8 Because of this I will **lament** and wail; I will go stripped and naked! I will **lament** as sadly as the jackals, As mournfully as the ostriches.

Does this mean all who lament should go naked? Or more figuratively to go stripped of everything.

Kohelet/Ecclesiastes 12:5

5 When one is afraid of heights And there is terror on the road.— For the almond tree may blossom, The grasshopper be burdened, And the caper bush may bud again; But man sets out for his eternal abode, With **mourners** all around in the street.

The grave (sheol) is his eternal abode.

Yeshayahu/ Isaiah 32:12

11 Tremble, you carefree ones! Quake, O confident ones! Strip yourselves naked, Put the cloth about your loins! 12 **Lament** upon the breasts, For the pleasant fields, For the spreading grapevines,

Niphal

Yemiyahu/Jeremiah 25:33

**33** In that day, the earth shall be strewn with the slain of Yehovah from one end to the other. They shall not be **mourned**, or gathered and buried; they shall become dung upon the face of the earth.

The next word we are going to look at is from the verb form which is Mis'ped (Mem-Samech-Pey-Dalet) which is a masculine noun. It is reference 4553.

Bereshit/Genesis 50:10

**10** When they came to Goren ha-Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, they held there a very great and solemn lamentation; and he observed a mourning period of seven days for his father.

Ester/Esther 4:3

**3** Also, in every province that the king's command and decree reached, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing, and everybody lay in sackcloth and ashes.

Tehllim/Psalms 30:11

**11** Hear, Yehovah, and have mercy on me; Yehovah, be my help!" **12** You turned my lament into dancing, you undid my sackcloth and girded me with joy,

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 22:12

**12** My Lord GOD of Hosts summoned on that day To weeping and lamenting, To tonsuring and girding with sackcloth.

Yemiyahu/Jeremiah 6:26

**26** My poor people, Put on sackcloth And strew dust on yourselves! Mourn, as for an only child; Wail bitterly, For suddenly the destroyer Is coming upon us.

Yehez'qel/Ezekiel 27:31

**31** On your account, they shall make Bald patches on their heads, And shall gird themselves with sackcloth. They shall weep over you, brokenhearted, With bitter lamenting;

Here we see how the other nations would mourn for their dead. Here are the prohibitions against doing it in Torah. 1 for the priests and the other for the people.

Vayiqra/Leviticus 21:1-

**21:1** Yehovah said to Moses: Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them:

None shall defile himself for any [dead] person among his kin, **2** except for the relatives that are closest to him: his mother, his father, his son, his daughter, and his brother; **3** also for a virgin sister, close to him because she has not married, for her he may defile himself. **4** But he shall not defile himself as a kinsman by marriage, and so profane himself.

**5** They shall not shave smooth any part of their heads, or cut the side-growth of their beards, or make gashes in their flesh. **6** They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God; for they offer Yehovah's offerings by fire, the food of their God, and so must be holy.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 14:1

**14:1** You are children of Yehovah your God. You shall not gash yourselves or shave the front of your heads because of the dead. **2** For you are a people consecrated to Yehovah your God: Yehovah your God chose you from among all other peoples on earth to be His treasured people.

Times for other leaders of mourning.

Bamidbar/Numbers 20:26

**23** At Mount Hor, on the boundary of the land of Edom, Yehovah said to Moses and Aaron, **24** "Let Aaron be gathered to his kin: he is not to enter the land that I have assigned to the Israelite people, because you disobeyed my command about the waters of Meribah. **25** Take Aaron and his son Eleazar and bring them up on Mount Hor.

**26** Strip Aaron of his vestments and put them on his son Eleazar. There Aaron shall be gathered unto the dead."

**27** Moses did as Yehovah had commanded. They ascended Mount Hor in the sight of the whole community. **28** Moses stripped Aaron of his vestments and put them on his son Eleazar, and Aaron died there on the summit of the mountain. When Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain, **29** the whole community knew that Aaron had breathed his last. All the house of Israel bewailed Aaron thirty days.

Aharon was also 30 days like Moshe.

Bamidbar/Numbers 20:1

**1** The Israelites arrived in a body at the wilderness of Zin on the first new moon, and the people stayed at Kadesh. Miriam died there and was buried there.

It does not talk of 30 days for Miriam like Moshe and Aharon.

Vayiqra/Leviticus 10:

**10:1** Now Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu each took his fire pan, put fire in it, and laid incense on it; and they offered before Yehovah alien fire, which He had not enjoined upon them. **2** And fire came forth from Yehovah and consumed them; thus they died at the instance of Yehovah. **3** Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what Yehovah meant when He said: Through those near to Me I show Myself holy, And gain glory before all the people." And Aaron was silent.

**4** Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, "Come forward and carry your kinsmen away from the front of the sanctuary to a place outside the camp." **5** They came forward and carried them out of the camp by their tunics, as Moses had ordered. **6** And Moses said to Aaron and to his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, "Do not bare your heads and do not rend your clothes, lest you die and anger strike the whole community. But your kinsmen, all the house of Israel, shall bewail the burning that Yehovah has wrought. **7** And so do not go outside the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, lest you die, for Yehovah's anointing oil is upon you." And they did as Moses had bidden.

Being a high priest they could not mourn for the loss of their son or brothers. Instead they were to let Yisrael mourn for them.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 34:7-8

**7** Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eyes were undimmed and his vigor unabated. **8** And the Israelites bewailed Moses in the steppes of Moab for thirty days. The period of wailing and mourning for Moses came to an end.

Thirty days for Moshe.

Yehoshua/Joshua 24:29-33

**29** After these events, Joshua son of Nun, the servant of Yehovah, died at the age of one hundred and ten years. **30** They buried him on his own property, at Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. **31** Israel served Yehovah during the lifetime of Joshua and the lifetime of the elders who lived on after Joshua, and who had experienced all the deeds that Yehovah had wrought for Israel.

**32** The bones of Joseph, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem, in the piece of ground which Jacob had bought for a hundred *kesitahs* from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, and which had become a heritage of the Josephites.

**33** Eleazar son of Aaron also died, and they buried him on the hill of his son Phinehas, which had been assigned to him in the hill country of Ephraim.

No days listed for Yehoshua and Eleazar.

Mourning traditions of the Rabbanites as seen from published accounts on the Internet.

## **Sitting Shiv'ah**

“The term "Sitting Shivah" refers to a seven day period of mourning after a close relative of a Jewish person has passed away. A person sits Shivah after the death of one of his parents, brothers/sisters, children, husband or wife. There are many rules concerning the Shivah, which create a great interruption to one's normal routine. However, sitting Shivah has two important purposes: honoring the dead, and helping the mourner deal with his or her loss.

Once they have returned from the funeral, the mourners are considered "Avelim", and are not allowed to do any of the following for seven days:

They mustn't do any form of work, apart from cooking and cleaning the house.

They mustn't wear leather shoes.

They mustn't have intercourse during the Shivah.

They are not allowed to learn Torah, apart from learning mourning rules, reciting psalms or reading the books of Job and Lamentations.

They mustn't greet anyone "hello" or "goodbye", but after the first three days they may answer if someone else has asked them for their well being.

They may not wash their clothes, iron them, or wear clean clothes.

They may only sit on cushions and mattresses, or on stools that are less than 30 cm high.

They mustn't leave the house, apart from going to the synagogue on Sabbath and going to their homes late at night (if they have trouble sleeping where the Shivah is held).

They aren't allowed to shave, have their hair cut, or cut their nails for 30 days (including the 7 days of the Shivah).

They are not allowed to attend joyful events for 30 days, and if they are mourning one of their parents, they are not allowed to do so for 12 months. However, they are allowed to attend a wedding or a Brit Milah of their own child even during the Shivah itself.

After the funeral, it is customary for friends or neighbors to arrange a "Seudat Havra'ah" for the Avelim. This is the first meal they eat during the Shivah, usually consisting of bread, hard boiled eggs, etc. In some communities it is customary to cover the mirrors in the house at the time of the Shivah. Throughout the next seven days, it is a Mitzvah to visit the mourners- known as the Shivah Call. On the seventh day of the Shivah, after a short time of mourning someone tells the Avelim "Get up", and that is a sign for them that the Shivah is over. The mourners can now wash, change clothes, etc, and must start returning to their normal life.

It is a tradition to visit the grave on the 7th day of the Shivah, as well as on the 30th day after the death. On the 30th day eulogies are usually said, and a tombstone is positioned on the grave. If the 7th day of the Shivah is Sabbath, it is customary to visit the grave the next day.”

[http://www.judaica-guide.com/sitting\\_shivah/](http://www.judaica-guide.com/sitting_shivah/)

In the Jewish encyclopedia, we see the follow for mourning.

### **“Mourning Period.**

Manifestation of sorrow and grief over the loss, by death or otherwise, of a relative, a friend, an honored leader or prophet, or over a national calamity.

### —Biblical Data:

It is recorded that Abraham mourned for Sarah (his wife) and wept for her (Gen. xxiii. 2). Jacob mourned "many days" for the supposed death of Joseph. David lamented for Absalom, in spite of the latter's ill conduct. The **mourning** for an only son was profound (Amos viii. 10). The days of **mourning** for parents were generally observed (Gen. xxvii. 41). Joseph mourned seven days for his father (ib. 1. 10), while the **mourning** of the captive Gentile woman lasted thirty days (Deut. xxi. 13), showing that the Gentile period of **mourning** for a parent exceeded that of the Hebrews.

The death of a person who had been esteemed and honored in life was publicly lamented by the people as a tribute of respect. Jacob was thus honored in Egypt when he died; the Egyptians organized an elaborate public funeral, and their **mourning** for him lasted seventy days (Gen. 1. 3). Among the Hebrews a public **mourning** never exceeded thirty days, even in the case of their greatest prophet, Moses (Deut. xxxiv. 8).

The **mourning** for a national defeat or other public calamity was confined to the day the news of the misfortune was received. For an exceptionally great and epoch-marking calamity, as the destruction of the Temple on the 9th of Ab, every anniversary of the event was observed as a day of **mourning**.

The manner of **mourning** differed according to the degree of the loss and distress connected with it. The Gentile captive mourned for her parents by remaining within the house, weeping, cutting off her hair, and paring her nails, abundant hair and long nails being considered marks of feminine beauty; whereas among men, during **mourning**, the hair and nails were allowed to grow. **Mourning** was also marked by throwing dust on the head (Josh. vii. 6), by wearing sackcloth, sitting in ashes, lacerating the flesh, and tearing out the hair of the head and face (Jer. xvi. 6). Such self-mutilation, however, was forbidden by Moses (Lev. xxi. 5; Deut. xiv. 1). Other forms of **mourning** are indicated in Ezek. xxiv. 17, as (1) crying, (2) removing the head-dress, (3) removing the shoes, (4) covering the lips as a guard of silence, (5) eating "the bread of mourners" (Hos. ix. 4). To express his sorrow for the death of Saul and Jonathan and the defeat of Israel, David rent his clothes, wept, and fasted all day (II Sam. i. 11, 12). David's lament on that occasion is one of the gems of Hebrew poetry. Seven days' **mourning** for the dead appears to have been usual among the Jews (comp. Ecclus. [Sirach] xxii. 12).

### —In Rabbinical Literature:

According to the Talmud, the seven days of **mourning** were observed even before the Flood. The seven days of grace granted to the wicked generation of the Flood (Gen. vii. 4) were to allow the period of **mourning** for Methuselah to expire (Sanh. 108b; Gen. R. xxxii. 10). An inference is drawn from the verse in Amos (viii. 10), "I will turn your feasts into **mourning**"—the principal feasts, like those of Passover and Sukkot, continue seven days; so also do the **mourning** days (M. □. 20a). Another reason for the number seven is that it is a tenth of man's allotted span of three-score and ten ("Sefat Emet," xix.; quoted in Levensohn, "Me□ore Minhagim," § 97).

The **mourning** proper, according to the Talmud, is divided into four periods. The first three days are given to weeping and lamentation; the deceased is eulogized up to the seventh day, the mourner keeping within the house; the somber garb of **mourning** is worn up to the thirtieth day, and personal adornment is neglected; in the case of

**mourning** for a parent, the pursuit of amusement and entertainment is abandoned up to the end of the year.

Mourning is represented as a sword raised over the mourner's shoulders during the first three days; it approaches him from the corner of the room up to the end of seven days; it passes him on the street up to the end of thirty days; it is likely to strike any one of the family during the whole year (M. □. 27b; Yer. M. □. iii. 7; comp. Shul□an 'Aruk, Yoreh De'ah, 394, 4).

### **Limitations to Grief.**

Excessive **mourning** is discouraged, as it would imply that "the mourner is possessed of more pity than the Almighty." "One who persists in **mourning** overmuch for his dead will mourn for another death" (M. □. 27b). The prolongation of **mourning** to twelve months probably originated with the instruction given by Judah ha-Nasi I., that his disciples should close the yeshibah and observe full **mourning** for thirty days; that to the end of twelve months the yeshibah should be closed during one-half of the day and that the other half should be devoted to eulogies of the dead nasi (Ket. 103b). There is also an allusion in the Zohar to the belief that while the soul of a righteous person clings to his body for the first thirty days before entering heaven, the soul of an ordinary person clings to the body for twelve months (Zohar, Waya□hel, pp. 398, 419, ed. Wilna, 1882). The full year of **mourning** is now observed only for parents.

Mourning Habit and "Keri'ah."

The **mourning** garments worn by a widow (Gen. xxxviii. 14) were probably black (comp. II Sam. xiv. 2). R. Yannai contrasted the black garment of a mourner with the white garment of a bridegroom (Shab. 114a). Na□manides quotes R. Isaac ibn Ghayyat on the custom of wearing black ("Torat ha-Adam," p. 27d, ed. Venice, 1595). Asheri says "one may mourn for his father-in-law by wearing black for twelve months; one may mourn so for a mere friend, as did David for Abner" ("Rabbenu Asher," Rule 27, No. 9). In Russia, Poland, and Galicia the Jews discarded black for **mourning** in order to avoid seeming to ape the Christian custom. The only outward sign of **mourning** observed there is the "keri'ah" (rent) in the garment (there are numerous references in the Bible to rending the garments as a sign of grief). The rent must be at least a handbreadth (4 inches) long, and it is usually made in the lapel of the coat. In case of a parent's death the mourner must rend all the clothes worn by him during the **mourning** period. In ancient times it was customary to mourn for a parent, a principal teacher, or a nasi by exposing both shoulders through the upper garments; for a hakam (chief rabbi) the right shoulder was exposed, for the ab bet din the left shoulder. This custom had already become obsolete in the Middle Ages.

### **Ceremonies.**

Full **mourning** is limited to the following occasions: the death of a (1) father, (2) mother, (3) son, (4) daughter, (5) brother, (6) sister, (7) wife or husband (comp. Lev. xxi. 2, 3). The Rabbis included a half-brother and half-sister. **Mourning** need not be observed for a child that has lived less than thirty days. The ceremonies observed in **mourning** for a

kinsman are as follows: The time between death and the burial is called "aninut" (= "deep grief"), during which the mourner must not eat in the same house with the dead, and, except on Sabbath or on a holy day, must not eat in company, nor eat meat, nor drink wine. On returning from the burial "Shib'ah" commences—the seven days during which the mourner is confined to the house, in which he sits on the floor or on a low bench, devoting his time to reading the Book of Job. He is excused from rising when an elder, or even a nasi, passes. The lamentation while sitting may have been derived from Neh. i. 4. The first meal after the funeral is prepared by a neighbor; it is called "se'udat habra'ah" (= "meal of consolation"). It usually consists of bread with eggs or lentils (B. B. 16a), the latter being a symbol of death. The mourner occupies the front seat in the room when the consolers come to visit him, as indicated in Job xxix. 25, the Talmudic interpretation of which is "as one comforted by mourners" (Ket. 69b). "Silence is the price of consolation in a house of **mourning**" (Ber. 6b). Aaron "held his peace" when apprised of the death of his sons Nadab and Abihu (Lev. x. 3). Hence the conversation is limited to praises of the deceased. The mourner, however, speaks first, and it is provided that he pronounce the benediction, "Praised be the Almighty, the righteous Judge." The visitors must not make observations reflecting on Providence, as, for instance, "What can you do?" On leaving, the visitors say, "May the Almighty comfort you among all mourners for Zion and Jerusalem."

### **Mourners' Ordinance.**

The things prohibited to mourners during Shib'ah are: (1) manual labor or business transactions; (2) bathing or anointing the body; (3) wearing shoes or sandals; (4) reading the Torah or studying (the reading of the Book of Job or the Lamentations excepted); (5) cohabitation; (6) lying on the bed when it is in its usual horizontal position (hence it was necessary to take down the canopy and fold up the lower supports so that one end of the bed might touch the ground); (7) washing and preparing garments; (8) cutting the hair. The last two prohibitions are in force up to the end of thirty days, while music and all forms of recreation are usually excluded for the whole year, especially when the **mourning** is for a parent. Marrying is prohibited during the first thirty days; in the case of **mourning** for husband or wife this prohibition extends to a year. The prohibition against working during Shib'ah is modified where the mourner is dependent on his daily earnings; in such a case he may resume his work in private after three days.

(see image) Friends Giving Mourners Bread of Affliction.(From Kirchner, "Jüdisches Ceremoniel," 1726.)

Many exceptions to these regulations are enumerated in Yoreh De'ah, 380-383. The Sabbath excludes public **mourning**, but is counted in the Shib'ah. A holy day suspends the Shib'ah when the latter has begun at least one hour before the holy day; otherwise the Shib'ah is postponed until after the holy day. The holy days also deduct seven days from the thirty days of **mourning** ("Sheloshim"), and where the Shib'ah expires immediately before the holy days begin, the thirty days of **mourning** are entirely suspended. The Feast of Tabernacles causes fourteen days to be deducted from the thirty days, if the Shib'ah begins at least one hour before the holy days.

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=972&letter=M&search=mourning>

Thus, we see that much of Sitting Shiv'ah is traditional and much of its practices is from Talmud not Tanakh. Yet, we also see that while there are practices/traditions of mourning in the Tanakh there is no commandment of how to mourn just how not to mourn.