

• "I'm sure that the wonderful memories you have of... will be a source of strength for you during this difficult time."

• "There's so little that I can say at this time. Just know that I'm with you."

• "Your relationship with ... was so special. I know you'll never forget him/her." And as a final comment...

• "... was a wonderful human being. I will miss him/her tremendously."

Anticipating that mourners will have difficulty preparing meals for the seven day Shiva period, many visitors send or bring foods of various types. Prior to preparing or sending any foods, specific needs and dietary restrictions should be determined. Under all circumstances, scrupulous attention to the laws of Kashruth should be observed---that is, confirming that all foods are strictly Kosher.

Coin boxes for charitable donations" Pushka" boxes-are often provided at the place of mourning. It is traditional and appropriate to make a nominal donation in memory of the deceased.

Frequently Asked Questions

• If the mourner chooses not to speak about the deceased, how should I respond? *After an initial attempt to focus the conversation on the deceased, the visitor should not force the issue. The visit should be brief, and words of consolation should be expressed when leaving.*

• If the visitor represents an organization or has no personal relationship with the mourner or the deceased, what should be said?

Identify the organization adding "Though I did not know your..... personally, I want to express our feelings of sorrow on your

loss"-or- "I did not know ... personally, but want to express my sympathy."

• Should infants or young children who are not related to the mourners attend a Shiva? *If crying or other disruptive behavior might be anticipated, children of any age should not be part of the Shiva call.*

• Is it appropriate to serve food and drinks 10 those visiting the mourners? *The Shiva call is not a social visit. Elaborate displays of food and drink encourage lengthy visits and conversations that take away from the focus of the visit.*

• Is it appropriate to send or bring gift baskets or floral arrangements? *Gift baskets and floral arrangements create an air of celebration and festivity that contradict the solemnity of the mourning period, and should be avoided.*

TO THE VISITOR

In the merit of having performed this act of kindness, the Mitzvah of Nichum Aveylim [comforting the mourners], may GOD bless you, your family and loved ones with physical health, spiritual tranquility, fulfillment and peace.

DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF
AARON M. SCHREIBER

ר' אהרן משה בן ר' יוסף זאב ע"ה
AND
BLANCHE SCHREIBER
בלימה בת ר' אברהם הלוי ע"ה

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THE SHIVA CALL

A GUIDE TO COMFORT THE VISITOR AND THE MOURNER

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"Shiva" - Its Meaning and Purpose

"Shiva" is a Hebrew word that means the number seven. Used in the context of "Aveylut" or mourning, it refers to the seven day period of mourning that traditional Jews observe when a family member has passed away and begins immediately after the burial has taken place.

During the Shiva period, family, friends and members of the community visit the mourners in the hope of bringing them some measure of comfort and consolation, and this visit has become known as the Shiva Call.

The Shiva Call

The Shiva Call, which is a uniquely Jewish experience, presents an extraordinary opportunity for both the visitor and mourner to join one another in a truly meaningful spiritual and healing moment.

The visitor is able to demonstrate a heartfelt sense of caring, love and empathy, while the mourner is able to use this opportunity as a cathartic release of feelings that need to be expressed rather than repressed.

Together they share a kaleidoscope of emotions-from sadness, loss and grief to comfort, solace and inner peace.

Unfortunately, because the etiquette for "paying a Shiva call" has never been effectively communicated throughout the Jewish community, there has been a deterioration in the proper performance of this essential Mitzvah.

This guideline is only a partial remedy. It is hoped that with proper knowledge, information and instruction, what is often perceived as a difficult chore can be transformed into a meaningful, worthwhile and elevating spiritual experience.

A Shiva call is:

- Often a highly emotional time for the mourners and the visitors
- Intended to allow the mourners an opportunity...
to mourn...
to grieve...
to remember...
to laugh...
to share...
to feel a sense of caring from friends, family and community
- Often a time for tears... a time for touching, and a time for silence
- Always a time to listen.

A Shiva call is not:

- Always comfortable, pleasant, enjoyable or easy to do
- An occasion for socializing with friends and family
- A time for loud conversation, idle talk, gossip or frivolity
- An opportunity to discuss business, weather, fashion, sports or the stock market
- A time for reminiscing about the visitor's own personal losses
- An excessively lengthy visit

"Do's and Don'ts" - The Etiquette of a Shiva call.

- Prior to paying the Shiva call, inquire as to the meal and prayer service schedules at the place of mourning. This will allow both the mourners and the visitors the opportunity to get the most out of the time they spend together.
- Enter the residence without knocking on the door or ringing the door bell.

- Upon entering the room where the mourners are seated, try to make eye contact so that your presence is recognized and felt, without the need for greeting or introduction.

- Because the visitor is unaware of the moods or emotional levels of the mourners, it is insensitive for the visitor to initiate any conversation. Wait for the mourners to speak first and let the mourners set the tone.

- Focus the conversation on their feelings, emotions, experiences and remembrances about the deceased.

- To encourage such conversation, it is appropriate to make statements like:

- "It must be so painful to lose a"

- "I really didn't know your.... Could you tell me what he/she was like?"

- "What will you miss most about?"

- "Was's passing expected?"

- "I hope your....didn't suffer during his/her illness."

- "Were you with when he/she passed away?"

- "Did you have a chance to say good-bye?"

- "When I lost my....it was so painful. Tell me what you are feeling."

- Upon taking leave of the mourners, face them and recite the following phrase:

"המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבילי ציון וירושלים"

*HA-MA-KOWM Yeh-nah-chem Es-chem
B'Towch Sha-ar Ah-vey-ley Tzion
V'Yerushalayim*

"May God comfort you among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem."

Additional comments might include:

- "I know this must be a most difficult time for you. My thoughts and prayers are with you."

- "May GOD bless you with only joy, happiness and good tidings from now on."