

Lesson #10

Kaddish

Kaddish Shalem pgs 138, 181 Complete/Main Kaddish recited after each Amidah.

Chatzi Kaddish pgs 106, 146, 155 Functions as a link between parts of the service.

Kaddish Yatom pgs 82, 184 Mourners' Kaddish.

Kaddish D'Rabannan pg 71 Scholars' Kaddish (concluding prayer to study).

Background and History:

- Kaddish- Aramaic for 'Holy'.
- Kaddish is only said in the presence of a minyan.
- Kaddish is a hymn that praises G-d and yearns for a speedy establishment of G-d's kingdom on earth. No mention of Adonai or Elohim.
- The lack of mention of the destruction of the Temple indicates the antiquity of the prayer.
- Not originally part of the synagogue services but used as an informal prayer in the Beit Midrash (study hall). In the 6th century CE became part of the daily prayers (*Soferim 10:7*)

Ezekiel 38:23: "Yitgadal V'Yitkadash shemei rabah.....Magnified and sanctified be his great name throughout the world that He created....."

Chatzi Kaddish

- The Chatzi Kaddish is the same as the first three verses of the Kaddish Shalem
- The Chatzi Kaddish was expanded in the 8th century CE with the addition of three verses, two in Aramaic and one in Hebrew (for non-Aramaic speakers).
- In the 13th century CE Kaddish began to be recited by mourners at the time of severe persecutions in Germany by the Crusaders. Kaddish became a mourner's prayer because originally there was mention of resurrection of the dead in the messianic passage at the beginning (no longer included today in most versions of the siddur). The Kaddish Shalem (5 sections) differs from the Kaddish Yatom (4 sections) by one verse "*Titkabel.....Let it be accepted*".

Mourners' Kaddish

- The Mourner's Kaddish is recited for 11 months and not the full 12 months of mourning. The longer period implies a disrespect of the parent's piety (*Shulchan Aruch 376:4*).
- The mourners' kaddish is also recited on the Yahrzeit.
- A son in Yiddish is called 'a *Kaddish*' and a man who has no son is said to have died 'without leaving a kaddish'.

B. Why do mourners say Kaddish?

- a. Tzidduk Hadin (justification of the judgement).
"Man is obliged to give praise for the evil [that befalls him] even as he gives praise for the good". (Berachot 9:5-Talmud tractate).
- b. Redeeming the soul of the deceased:
Legend of Rabbi Akivah (1st century CE) "rescued a soul from punishment in hell by persuading the son to recite the verse "Titgadal V'titkadash...."
- c. Bond between parent and child.
- d. Continue to show respect for one's parent.

C. Rituals The last two verses are essentially the same. The first is in Aramaic and the last verse is in Hebrew. As one says the last verse one takes three steps backwards and bows to the left, right and forwards with each of the three phrases: Oseh Shalom Bimromav, *bow left* Hu ya'aseh Shalom *bow right* Aleinu ve'al Kol Yisrael. *bow forwards* Ve'imru Amen.

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Shortly after I was widowed a friend, who had been through a similar experience, called to offer me some advice. She said: "Today you probably feel like you are standing next to a very large crater and the only thing you can see in your life is that crater. Know that, as time passes, your vision and perspective will expand. The crater will always be there, it will always be part of the landscape, but you'll come to see it as part of a larger landscape instead of the only thing in the landscape."

The words of the Mourners' Kaddish, it seems to me, remind us of the existence of that larger landscape. At a time when all we can think about is our loss, the Kaddish gently reminds us that our loss exists within the broader context. If we look at the first three paragraphs in English, we see that:

- a. The first sentence reminds us that we are not alone; we are part of the world.
- b. The second sentence reminds us that we are part of a community; our life is bound up with the life of all Israel.
- c. The second paragraph reminds us that the time of our loss is not the only time. It is part of all time, past, present and future.
- d. The third paragraph reminds us that the mortal life is not the only relevant life.
- e. These reminders bring us to the ultimate reminder contained in the last two paragraphs. That even in the time of our loss, when we can look beyond ourselves, we can see that God is waiting there to bring peace to us.