

# A TIME FOR TEARING AND A TIME FOR MENDING

(Ecclesiastes 3:7)

A mourner is obliged to tear on account of his dead...

For the whole seven days of mourning, the tear is in front. If he desires to change his garments, he may do so. He is not required to tear the second garment; for any tear not made at the time of heated emotion is not a tear. Of what do these rules speak? They speak of a death other than a father or mother. In the case of one's father or mother, one rips a rip long enough to expose one's heart. He must rip apart the border of the garment; he may not tear it with a utensil and he must tear it outside, in the presence of community.

A child's garment is torn in order to create an atmosphere of sorrow...

When a person does not have an outer garment to tear but acquires one during the seven days of mourning, he tears it. If he acquires it after the seven days, he does not tear it. But for his father and his mother, even after the seven days but within thirty days, he tears his garment....

When one tells a friend: Lend me your cloak so that I can visit my father who is critically ill—if, when he visits, he finds that his father has died, he should tear the garment, mend it and return it, reimbursing the owner for the tear. If he does not inform the owner of the cloak that he is going to visit a critically ill person, he should not tear the garment.

A case: one has a critically ill person in his home and the ill person faints. The host thinks that he has died and he tears his garment, only to find that the sick person regains consciousness and then dies immediately. He need not tear his garment again. If the person survives even a short time, he must tear his garment again.

Any tear that a person makes over a relative other than parents can be basted after seven days and repaired after thirty days. For one's father and mother, one can baste after thirty days but never repair...

Just as one must tear for one's father and mother, so one is obliged to tear for one's teacher who taught him Torah, for the patriarch of the community and for the chief of the court; for a large part of the community that has been slain and for the cursing of god's name; for the burning of a Torah scroll and when seeing the cities of Judah, Jerusalem, and the Temple in ruins.

Just as the seller may not repair it, so the purchaser may not repair it. Therefore, the seller is obliged to inform the purchaser that this tear may not be repaired.

Anyone who is present at the moment that someone dies, even if he is not a relative, must tear his garment...(Maimonides- from Laws of Mourning, chapters 8, 9)

When one's teacher dies, he should tear all his garments until he reveals his heart. He should never mend them. When does this apply? To one's outstanding teacher from whom one has gained the majority of his wisdom... Even if he learned only one thing from that teacher, whether it be a small or a great matter, he should stand before him and tear his garments. (Maimonides- Laws of Torah Study 5:9)

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