

Seven Days of Community Mourning

אָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה: מֵת שְׂאִין לוֹ מְנַחֲמִין הוֹלְכִין עֲשָׂרָה בְּנֵי אָדָם וְיוֹשְׁבֵין בְּמִקְוָמוֹ. הֵהוּא דְשָׂכִיב בְּשִׁבְבוּתֵיהּ דְרַב יְהוּדָה לֹא הָיוּ לוֹ מְנַחֲמִין. כָּל יוֹמָא הָוָה דְבַר רַב יְהוּדָה בֵּי עֲשָׂרָה, וְיָתְבִי בְּדוּכְתָהּ. לְאַחַר שִׁבְעַת יָמִים, אֵיתְחַזֵּי לֵיהּ בְּחִילְמֵיהּ דְרַב יְהוּדָה וְאָמַר לֵיהּ: תְּנוּחַ דְעִתְדָךְ שְׁהִנְחַתְּ אֶת דְעִתֵּי.

Rav Yehudah said: In the case of a dead person who has no comforters ten people should go and sit in his place. Once, someone who died in Rav Yehudah's neighborhood had no comforters. Every day Rav Yehudah would bring ten who would sit in his place. After seven days, he appeared to Rav Yehudah in a dream and said to him: Let your mind rest for you have put my mind to rest.

(Babylonian Talmud 152a)

מֵת שְׂאִין לוֹ אַבְלִים לְהִתְנַחֵם - בָּאִים עֲשָׂרָה בְּנֵי אָדָם כְּשֶׁרִין וְיוֹשְׁבֵין בְּמִקְוָמוֹ כָּל שִׁבְעַת יָמֵי הָאַבְלוּת, וְשָׂאָר הָעָם מְתַקְבְּצִין עֲלֵיהֶן. וְאִם לֹא הָיוּ שָׂם עֲשָׂרָה קְבוּעִין, בְּכָל יוֹם וְיוֹם מְתַקְבְּצִין עֲשָׂרָה מְשָׂאָר הָעָם וְיוֹשְׁבֵין בְּמִקְוָמוֹ.

In the case of a dead person who has no mourners to be comforted- ten upright people should sit in his place for all seven days, while the remainder of the people should gather around them. And there is not a fixed group of ten, then each day a different ten from the community should gather and sit in his place.

(Maimonides Procedures of Mourning 13:4)