The Kaddish

1. As it has been already explained, it is a special merit to have the Tefilot taking place in the house of mourning during the first seven days. However, if it is not possible to get a Minyan in the house, the Abel must participate in the Tefilot in any of the available daily Minyanim of the community. The main participation of the mourner in the Tefilot is by reciting the Kaddish.

2. With the exception of the Kaddish said at the cemetery (Kaddish deHu atid, which is said by the Abelim only at the time of burial) the Kaddish has no direct reference, to death, mourning or tragedy. The main theme of the Kaddish is the Greatness of God, who conducts the entire universe, and especially each individual human being, with careful supervision. In the Kaddish we admit that no matter how much we try to praise God, His true praise will always lie beyond our comprehension. The Kaddish ends with a petition to God to grant us peace, livelihood, good health and forgiveness.

3. The Kaddish is said several times during the services. The mourners normally say two Kaddishim: one is call “Al Israel” and the other one: “Yehe Shelama”. Kaddish Yehe Shelama is also known among Ashkenazim as Kaddish Yatom, the Kaddish said by the orphans. In our community, Kaddish Yehe Shelama it is said two times in Shacharit (the morning prayers), at the end of the services, before “Kave” and after “alenu leashabeach”, and one time in Mincha (afternoon prayer) and ‘arbit (night prayer), before Alenu Leshabeach.

4. Kaddish al Israel, also known as Kaddish deRabanan, includes an additional paragraph in honor of Torah Scholars and their students. This Kaddish is said after a Mishna or any other rabbinical text is studied or recited, and/or after a debar Torah (words of Torah). In Sephardic communities, this Kaddish is usually introduced by the recitation of the Mincha

“Rabbi Chananya ben Aqashia omer….”.

5. The Abelim for father or mother say the Kaddish for twelve months, counting from the moment of burial. However, at the end of the eleventh month, the recitation of the Kaddish is interrupted. There are some communities in which this interruption takes one or for two weeks, and others who suspend the Kaddish for the whole twelfth month. In some communities, the Kaddish ‘al israel is still recited by the mourners, even when no other Kaddish is recited.

6. When reciting the Kaddish all the Abelim should say it in unison, following those who said it slower. So not to leave behind those who do not say it as fast. The Kadish is recited exclusively in the presence of a Minyan, a quorum of 10 men older than 13 years, but a boy younger than 13 can say Kaddish for his parents together with other Abelim or with the Chazan.

7. Women do not say Kadish. In case that the deceased did not have sons, or that there are only daughters left, a third-person can be given the duty to recite the Kaddish. When it is not possible for a male to say Kaddish, or when a woman wants to elevate the memory of her loved one, there are other ways to honor the memory of the deceased that Rabbis would recommend. Studying Torah or hosting a class of Torah is probably one of the highest honors one can pay in Jewish tradition.