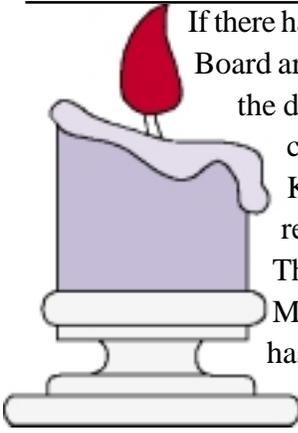


קְדִישׁ יְתוּם

Mourner's Kaddish



If there has been misunderstanding about Judaism, the Mourner's Kaddish and Yartzeit Board are tops on the list. Jews have been accused of praying to the dead, calling up the dead and everything in between. The Torah prohibits anyone from trying to contact the dead so this accusation is false. Why do we say the Mourner's Kaddish and place the names of deceased relatives on a board of remembrance?

There are two reasons in answer to that question. The first reason we say the Mourner's Kaddish is to thank HaShem for the parents and grandparents He has given to us. Just because our parents have died does not mean that we should cease being *thankful* that G-d gave them to us. The second reason we recite the Kaddish is to be obedient to the command to *honor* our parents. Honoring parents goes on even after they have died. By remembering them and thanking G-d for them we continue to fulfill the command to "honor your father and mother" (Ex 20:12).

There is nothing mystical or magical about honoring one's parents after they are dead. We are in many ways the living legacy of our parents. On the anniversary of their death the Kaddish allows us to honor their memory. It is appropriate to visit their graveside and leave flowers in their honor. It is also a Jewish custom to place a rock on the grave stone to mark each visit. The honoring of parents is something that must be restored for those whose parents are no longer alive. The Mourner's Kaddish and the Yartzeit (German meaning "year time" = anniversary) Board allow one to start again or continue the command to honor one's father and mother.

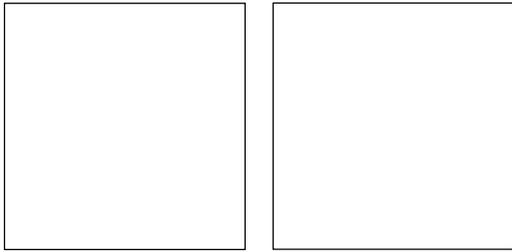
Some of you have had parents who did not honor HaShem in their lives and you have difficulty doing anything to remember them. Perhaps your father was absent, neglectful, or even abusive and you find it difficult even in his death to honor him. The Mourner's Kaddish holds open the door so that healing and forgiveness can begin within those who have had negative parental experiences. The hurts and pain of the past must ultimately be given over to Yeshua Who alone can bring healing. For many the Mourner's Kaddish will be a time of remembering the healing and restoration of a Heavenly Father who only does good to His children.

During the first year after a person's death, family members stand every Shabbat and recite the Kaddish during the synagogue service. The second year and every year thereafter one stands only on the Shabbat closest to the anniversary of the loved one's death. The Yartzeit board is a visual reminder of that anniversary date, with a light lit when the anniversary has arrived.

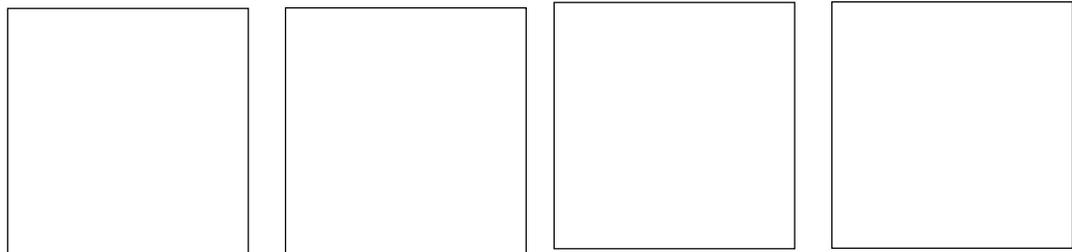
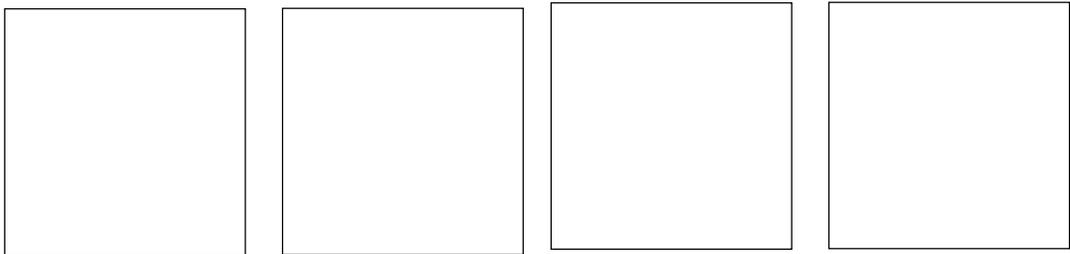
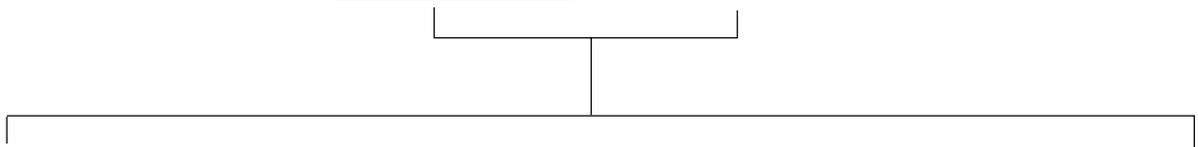
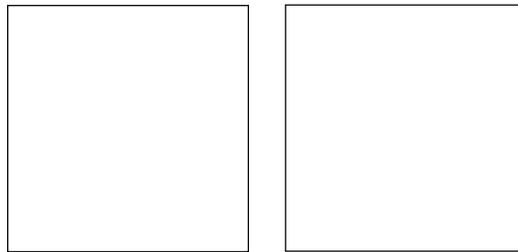
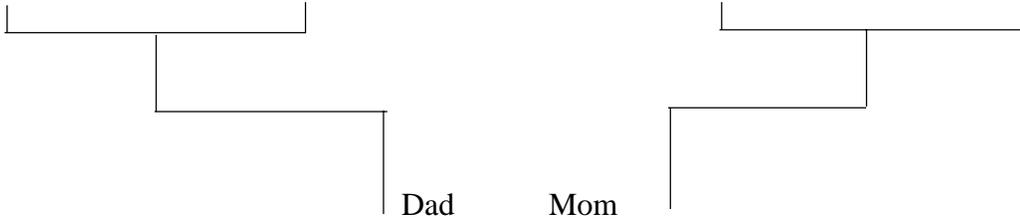
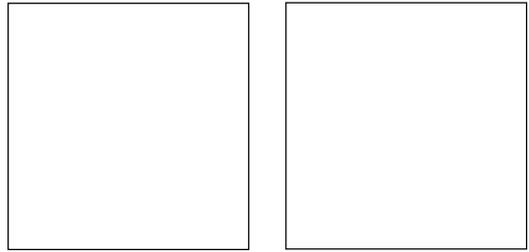
The Kaddish itself is not a blessing over the dead but a blessing of G-d's name for His protection and sustaining provision. The prayer itself simply asks that G-d's peace would rule in every situation. The fact that the Kaddish is said in Aramaic (a sister-language of Hebrew) reminds us that this prayer is ancient, for the Jewish community of the exile transformed this heart-felt prayer into their common language. Ultimately, we have learned that to know where we are going we must know where we've been. Looking back to those who have taught us is a step in admitting who we are, and an aid in directing us into the future.

Family Tree

Your Dad's Mother & Father



Your Mom's Mother & Father



Draw a picture to represent each of the relatives in your family tree.
Also write the name of each relative under their picture.