JEWISH MOURNING RITES— A PROCESS OF RESOCIALIZATION

Simcha Fishbane
Concordia University

Abstract: This article is based on fieldwork among members of an Orthodox Jewish Congregation in North America. The author examines contemporary Jewish death and mourning rituals with particular attention to the duties and rights of the deceased's surviving kin. The latent (but sometimes overt) function of such rituals is to re-integrate the survivors into the religious community so that they may become active participants in it. The social facts thus outlined are an excellent illustration of the body of theoretical knowledge developed by Van Gennep and by Durkheimians past and contemporary (Hertz and Mary Douglas).

Résumé: Cet article est basé sur un recherche effectuée parmi les membres d'une congrégation orthodoxe juive nord-americaine. L'auteur examine la mort et les rites funèraires chez Juifs, en particulièr les devoirs des proches parents dans la communauté religeuse ou ils reprennent un rôle actif. Les phénomènes sociaux décrits dans cet article se placent dans la foulée théorique des écrits de Van Gennep et de Durkheim, de même que des disciples de ce dernier, tels que Hertz et Mary Douglas.

Introduction

Social scientists have argued that religious rituals reflect the Zeitgeist of society. Emile Durkheim (1954) and his heirs R. Hertz (1907), A.R. Radcliffe-Brown (1952), M. Douglas (1970, 1975, 1979), V. Turner (1969), P. Berger (1969) and Berger and Luckmann (1984) have further developed this argument. The Durkheimians argue that the unity of a society is maintained by means of its collective representations including rituals. Rituals not only reflect society, but are an important variable in the creation and perpetuation of the social system. Moreover, these ritual acts, which are intrinsically valued by their actors (Bird 1980), are fraught not only with explicit but also with implicit meaning (Douglas 1975:66, 75). All these aspects and functions of ritual are enhanced by the dramatic character of ritual behaviour (Turner 1969, 1974). In a cultural setting, one group of rituals will illuminate a wide

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range of related configurations in the overall cultural structure. Such a set of rituals may be termed a "ritual complex." Indeed it is often the case that a ritual complex acts as a symbolic representation of the social system as a whole.

Where Durkheim, Hertz, Radcliffe-Brown, and Douglas stress the use of ritual in the maintenance of social control, Turner sees in ritual an opportunity to air the tensions implicit in, but not otherwise acknowledged by collective representations. Additionally, participants are able to explore patterns of communal experience precluded by quotidian social structure.

This paper first analyzes the mourning rites[1] *as prescribed* by Rabbinic Judaism.[2] It attempts to demonstrate how mourning rites, which communicate explicit and implicit meaning, are structured to serve the welfare of the social unit. This analysis further supports the theoretical models proffered by Douglas, Turner, and Berger. Second, the study of the rites in question is conducted in connection with their *actual* performance by persons affiliated with a modern orthodox synagogue situated in the suburbs of a major Canadian city. This analysis of modern practice, unlike the study of Rabbinic texts, offers more support to orthodox Durkheimian theory than to Turnerian interpretation.

The socio-economic profile of this synagogue community can be described as middle to upper-middle class. Most of its eight hundred member families belong to the managerial and entrepreneurial class. No more than ten families of the non-clerical synagogue members identify themselves as halachically observant Jews (popularly referred to as orthodox Jews).[3]

Problematical, Methodological and Theoretical Perspectives

Hertz (1960 [1907]:38) states: "death has a specific meaning for the social consciousness; it is the object of collective representation." In their studies of mourning rituals, social psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists have discussed the welfare of individual survivors. Hertz (ibid.:86) summarizes this discussion:

> For the collective consciousness death is in normal circumstances a temporary exclusion of the individual from human society. . . . In the final analysis, death as a social phenomenon consists in a dual and painful process of mental disintegration and synthesis. It is only when this process is completed that society, its peace recovered, can triumph over death.

Hertz's basic hypothesis is that mourning rites are concerned with the resocialization (whether psychological, or sociological) of the individual survivor as well as the body and soul of the deceased. The rituals concerned with death have a latent function: the intense emotions of individuals are social-

ized; that which has the potential for social disruption is channelled in communally approved directions.

There is a complementary level of analysis which concerns neither the survivor nor the disposition of the deceased but the welfare of society. In her concise, insightful survey of the facts surrounding the complex of death rituals, Mary Douglas writes that:

> rituals of warm support for the bereaved are consistent with their status being ruthlessly exploited for group purposes in funerary rhetoric. Everyone goes to funerals; they are judged as a major ceremonial form and how to lay on a good one is common knowledge. By contrast, without strong *group*, death having socially no place as such is no subject to celebrate publicly. (Douglas 1979:32)

Douglas has chosen to view the complex of death or mourning rites within our complementary level of analysis. Moreover, one may perceive the "group's" exploitation of rituals as a means of implicitly conveying to the member its message of communal authority, and thus reinforcing the boundaries of the society. Therefore, mourning rites, an example of a ritual process performed within a group structure, serve to strengthen the group norms.

An additional hypothesis that must be considered in our discussion of mourning rites is Van Gennep's processual analysis (1960 [1909]) as developed by Turner. Turner's analysis emphasizes (as did Van Gennep's) society's needs as well as the individual's. Although the rituals concerned with these rites of passage are performed most frequently for the individual rather than for the collective, Turner asserts that their implicit function serves the group as a whole. They give expression to the group's definition of itself. Death and the complex of mourning rites, a time of crisis for the individual and society, is an example of a rite of passage. Turner speaks of the period of transition as a liminal stage. He defines liminality as being located "where time and place of withdrawal from normal modes of social action can be seen as potentially a period of scrutinization of the central values and axioms of the culture in which it occurs" (1969:167). Turner goes on to distinguish between two types of liminality, one that pertains to rituals of status elevation, and a second which he terms "rituals of status reversal." The former almost always is related to life crisis rites and the latter to calendrical rites (ibid.:169). For the purpose of our discussion we will only be concerned with the former. To be elevated in status, the group member must descend the status ladder in order to ascend, all of which Turner sees as occurring during the liminal period. Also according to Turner's paradigm, the liminal phase unfolds within an "anti-structured" or uninstitutionalized setting. The actor is placed in, or belongs to, a space outside of society. The outward symbols and tokens of status are thus stripped to efface the initiate's normal social status. Only when released from liminality does he return in his newly elevated

status to the institutionalized order of society. Structure and liminality are therefore, for Turner, two diametrically opposed phenomena.

Although most of Turner's hypothesis is applicable to our study of Jewish mourning rites, we question whether liminality necessarily entails an undifferentiated state of affairs. If this be true one can then question Turner's hypothesis that when liminality expires those undergoing the "ritual passage" are reincorporated into society. The survivor is never jettisoned from his group nor does he seriously alter his "normal" status. One might argue that such anti-structural behaviour, may have taken place during the performance of Jewish mourning rituals in the early rabbinic period, the culture where the rites were first introduced. But Jewish mourning rites performed during a period of liminality function today in an institutionalized society where the survivor never leaves the social order. Rather than conforming to Turner's model of anti-structure and liminality contemporary performances display merely a state of transition between structural entities. Although the actor remains in the institutionalized culture and is supported by other members of the society, he or she is undergoing a period of transition. This transitional or liminal state is symbolized by the actor's deviant religious and general behaviour, including dishevelled apparel and changed hygienic habits, but all this time the structure of society provides a frame of reference.

As stated above, this paper will explore the historical development of Jewish mourning rites, in *halachah*, as well as their performance in contemporary Judaic society. The mourning rituals, as codified in the *halachah*, continue to be practiced by the rabbinic or observant Jew. Therefore, to analyze the change in the ritual process as practiced by the non-orthodox Jew, it is imperative that we explore the history of the ritual. In this paper, we assume the halachic laws of mourning to represent this history. Turner, who advocates the appropriation of history as a means to explain ritual, states in his discussion of the Franciscan Order:

> In considering the early history of the Franciscan Order, it becomes clear that the social structure is intimately connected with history, because it is the way a group maintains its form over time. Structureless communitas can bind and bond people together only momentarily. (1969:153)

Lightstone in his discussion of M. Douglas' "Cultural Bias" further develops this concept and writes:

> Viewing variation in ritual patterns as movement along an historically given continuum seems particularly salient in the study of contemporary religions. In the modern period a community's ritual forms often arise in a context which stresses an historical consciousness and self-awareness of how one does things differently than another closely related community. (1988:8)

Subsequent authors have reiterated the theories and interpretations mentioned above, but there has been no attempt to apply the concepts to particular case studies of Jewish rites and rituals in law and in practice. Some application of this theory to social data appears called for, if theoretical constructs are to be validated.

Before proceeding, let me provide a brief account of how the ethnographic data were collected. This study of mourning rituals is part of a larger collaborative research project concerning the meaning and function of ritual for contemporary members of the synagogue. The author attended weekday and Sabbath services at the subject synagogue for approximately two years. Furthermore, he participated in ten funerals and attendant rites at the mourners' homes. In addition to such participant observation, mourners and the Rabbi of the synagogue were interviewed regarding the members' religious observance and beliefs. The occupational and social involvements of the subjects, and their attitudes to the synagogue, to the Jewish community, and to its institutions, complemented the data on mourning rites.

Mourning Rites in Judaism

Rabbinical Judaism

For the purpose of this analysis I will use Mary Douglas's social structural typology (Douglas 1970, 1979). Rabbinic Judaism can be equated with what she identifies as "strong-grid, strong-group," or otherwise terms "a bounded structure system" (Douglas 1979:20).[4] Rabbinism created tight group boundaries that constrained the exit of its members and the entrance of strangers. This tight social structure offers "a life support system" (Douglas 1979) as well as direction for the behaviour of its members. But to retain this social structure, strict control of members is a necessity.

In a bounded structure system, stratification, leadership and subgrouping must be developed. Clear definition of roles is demanded. At the same time, society's security necessitates involvement of the individual within the group. Significantly, observance of rabbinical law requires Jews to live in areas of dense Jewish population, thereby promoting intense social and religious interaction. In addition, this public social relationship places the member in open view of society, thus allowing the Jew's role to develop and be reinforced by social recognition. This role and status is also enhanced by means of the members' public proclamation through religious ritual. In the subject community, the members, although they are not orthodox, have chosen to reside in close proximity to the synagogue and are thus subject to the above social pressure, support, reinforcement and involvement. Thus the implicit intent of the rabbinic law and ritual will also apply to these non-orthodox Jews who retain enough identification with rabbinic tradition to affiliate with an orthodox synagogue.

This social map was developed in view of the rabbinical authorities' perception of the diaspora milieu and of Jewish needs therein. Rituals evolved as a tool of rabbinical leadership, thus defining the articulated social structure. The religious rites then enabled the authorities to retain the "tight" social structure. Ritual symbols accordingly expressed and set a high value upon control. The purpose of these rituals or codes, taken for granted by adherents, was not expressed in explicit terms. The rites implicitly conveyed a message or substained a specific need. "It is a system of control as well as a system of communication" (Douglas 1973:55).

The Family

The rabbinic Jew's society is divided into compartments consisting of family units. These are the parts that constitute the whole, the building blocks of society. Family roles are clearly defined, with parents located at the apex of the hierarchy. In addition, this unit has its own set of rites and rituals, which differ from those of society as a whole. The family thus diverges in its social construction from the total social map. Halachic obligations for the observant Jew, in the family context, differ from his requirements in the larger social matrix. Rabbinic society, however, retained for itself the power to define, create and reinforce the roles and rites of the family. Exercising such social religious power was necessary for rabbinism to survive as a whole, for any threat to the compartment would thus be seen as a threat to society. A threat to the part is a threat to the whole. Social scientists studying contemporary North American Jews have also emphasized family solidarity as a factor serving to guarantee the traditional Jewish social structure.[5]

One example is the death of a parent. This results in a leadership role being vacated. Society must identify new actors to fill the role of leadership in the family thus securing its structure. Not to fill this role or to allow it to evolve its own hierarchy would leave Jewish society partly undefined and at risk.

Funeral Rites

The mourner commences the observation of the Jewish mourning rites (in contrast to *onen* rituals) immediately following the interment ceremony at the cemetery. Halachah recognizes the identity of the survivor according to two distinct time periods. Prior to the burial (*steemat hagolel*) one is designated as an *onen* or "in the period of *aninut.*" The survivor is not yet classified as a mourner (*avel*). Only following the burial does one become a mourner thus commencing the period of mourning (*avelut*). Although the focus of my study is the period of mourning, specific *onen* rituals prepare the survivor and society for a later identification of roles. The redefinition of the new role begins with a public proclamation of a new status. This declaration first

entails rending of the survivor's outer garment (*kriyah*) at the moment of awareness of the death. Halachah further requires that if the clothes are not torn at the moment the relative is aware of the death, the rite should be observed either immediately prior to the funeral service or before interment at the cemetery. The mourners of our subject synagogue perform this ritual at the funeral home immediately prior to the funeral service. A representative of the funeral home offers the women a black kerchief and the men a black tie which he directs them to tear. This behaviour, although it is not in accordance with the traditional custom (where one tears his own garment), still does not negate halachah. The Christian influence of wearing "black" garments has been introduced.

The *kriyah* ritual is observed by and for seven relatives: father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, and spouse. The tear which must be plainly visible, is made over the heart at least on the outer garment. It should not be torn along the seam and must be a "purposeful scar" (Lamm 1969:42). A mourner for parents severs the garment in public and on the left side of the body. Persons mourning for other relatives may rend their vestment in private and on the right side. As mentioned above the subjects of our study perform the ritual at the funeral home. It is done in private and on the appropriate side of their body. The torn garment is worn until the completion of the seven-day mourning period. The *kriyah* ritual which is executed during the *aninut* period has publicly singled out the survivor, still an *onen*, for social change.

During the period of *aninut* additional rules and rites can be identified as a public announcement of the new status. An *onen* is forbidden to shave (for males[6]), cut hair, or bathe. One is forbidden to study Torah or to work, thereby being conspicuously absent from daily public social involvement. Furthermore, the *onen* is forbidden to attend a party or participate in public merrymaking. He or she is also exempted from specific religious rituals, whether attributed to Torah or rabbinic law.[7] The exemptions from Torah law include the wearing of phylacteries and the reciting of the "Hear O Israel" prayer. The suspended rabbinical laws incorporate general daily prayers and food blessings. The exclusion of *onenim* from the accepted religious patterns is normative for the liminal state and is therefore both their own personal and their society's declaration of the change in the survivors' social status. This exclusion is emphasized by the suspension of the male *onen's* right to complete the prayer quorum (*minyan*) or the claim to congregate with the required number of Jews to recite the public blessing after the meal (*zimun*).

As discussed earlier, the *onenim* studied are affiliated with an orthodox synagogue, but they are not "committed," observant Jews. They do not practice the halachah on a regular basis. Thus the suspended laws of phylacteries, prayers and blessing are not relevant. On the other hand, halachot for the *onen*, such as not cutting one's hair or abstaining from merrymaking, are

observed. The subject synagogue's Rabbi usually visits with the survivors prior to the funeral and instructs them in these laws. The Rabbi also presents the *onenim* with a book that states and explains the laws and rituals concerned with death and mourning. The time prior to the funeral is usually spent by the future mourners with preparations for the burial. The funeral home is visited, a coffin is chosen and other technical details are concluded. This might include meeting incoming visitors at the airport. Thus, although only the newly introduced rituals are practiced, the *onen* has entered the state of liminality.

Aninut is climaxed at the funeral ceremony. Rabbinic Judaism requires the interment to be completed within a day of death. Halachah also stresses the importance of every Jew participating in the funeral service. The performance of many Judaic commandments is deferred to permit the Jew to attend the service. To encourage attendance, rabbinic sources state that the Jew's participation in the funeral service will gain him the right to the "next (post-mortem) world" (Levine 1985:389).

Attendance at the funerals studied varied in numbers of participants. The popularity of the deceased and his or her family seemed to be the criterion for attendance. On one occasion, in addition to the immediate family of the deceased, approximately 125 additional participants were present. The Rabbi explained that on the rare occasions when there are fewer than 10 men, the quorum required for the prayers recited, he or the funeral home will organize the quorum. Thus, the group's "life support" system is maintained.

Much importance is attached to the eulogy during the funeral service. Levine (1985:343-345) in his discussion of rabbinic eulogies enumerates the themes to be incorporated by the eulogizer. Motifs such as the family, the role of the husband and children, are suggested. The eulogizer, society's spokesman, and in our case the synagogue Rabbi, implicitly informs the survivor of his standing at the threshold of his new role and its duties. The Rabbi explained this: "I speak about the person and his family the way they should remember the deceased." Thus, as Douglas (1979:32) rightly states: "rituals of warm support for the bereaved are consistent with their status being ruthlessly exploited for the group purposes in funerary rhetoric." A society structured as "strong-group, strong-grid," such as rabbinic Judaism, and considered so to be by the leadership of the modern orthodox synagogue studied, demands that its members make the funeral a public affair; thus rabbinic society or its leadership serves its own needs. At the funerals I observed, the eulogy followed the same model discussed, but was delivered by the Rabbi in the funeral chapel, not at the graveside as is often done in other orthodox Jewish communities.

A society may choose to stress one or more of the various points in the process of death, burial and mourning in the encoding of liminality. Hertz, for example, argues that for the Dayaks the period between the first and second burial is particularly important. Rabbinic authority, by naming the *aninut* period, has marked the gap between death and burial as worthy of special attention. According to Hertz, collective representations and collective ritual activity surrounding death are related directly to the body and soul of the deceased. Rabbinic mourning rituals begin immediately after the corpse is covered. Lamm (1969:66-67), in his guide to Jewish mourning rites, speaks of the recessional from the graveside as a redirecting of the concerns of society from the deceased to the mourners. "It marks the transition from *aninut* to *avelut*, the new state of mourning which now commences."

Exit and Entrance Rituals

The *kaddish*, thought by the uninformed to be a prayer for the dead, is to the rabbinic Jew a prayer to celebrate the glory of God. Of the five forms of *kaddish* that exist, only one deals with death and that obliquely. The other forms are used in the general everyday services but the death-oriented *kaddish* is recited by a male survivor once at the graveside immediately after the deceased has been interred. The burial *kaddish* differs in its opening lines:

> Magnified and sanctified be His great name. In the world which He will renew, reviving the dead and raising them to life eternal, rebuilding the city of Jerusalem and establishing therein His sanctuary; uprooting idol worship from the land and replacing it with the Divine worship—May the Holy One, blessed be He, reign in His majestic glory. (Lamm 1969:172)

This particular *kaddish* engages the topic of death but avoids any mention of the deceased in question. Instead, it transcends the immediate situation and links a generalized concept of the death to messianic ideals: "In the world which He will renew, reviving the dead, and raising them to life eternal, rebuilding the city of Jerusalem and establishing therein His sanctuary." Furthermore, the reference to the Jerusalem temple and the glory of God in the burial *kaddish* reaffirms God's authority and therefore rabbinic authority as a timeless entity supported by society into the most distant future.

At the onset of the recital of the burial *kaddish*, the *onen* is declared a mourner. Through this prayer he formulates and pronounces his acceptance of the new leadership role bestowed upon him by society. In leading this recital he appears to take upon himself a new role, as leader. The deceased symbolizes society's acceptance of that chapter of life and the renewal of structure through the new speaker who is reciting the prayer. The mention of

death in the burial *kaddish* reflects the acceptance of the exit role by the survivor.

The fact that this speaker begins a new leadership role in society explains why, in traditional rabbinic Judaism, only men recite the *kaddish.* However reflecting the social dialectics of modern society, some women now recite *kaddish*, a result of the changes in the social map of North America. Among the mourners I observed there were two women who recited the *kaddish* on a regular basis during the synagogue's daily prayers. The Rabbi informed me that since the halachah does not forbid this behaviour (though it does not encourage it), he allows the women to recite the kaddish. At the cemetery he invites *all* mourners to recite and during the year of obligation (to be discussed later) the women recite the *kaddish* from their section of the sanctuary.

The exit-entrance ritual at the cemetery comes to a close when all present form two lines facing inward and the mourners walk away from the graveside between the lines. Turning their backs on death, the mourners pass through a symbolic portal into their newly adopted role. The people present close ranks behind the mourners and the social units can concentrate on the restoration and maintenance of the prior structures.

Shiva, the First Period of Mourning

The mourners are brought directly from the cemetery to the house of the deceased or the *shiva* house. Before entering the home hands are ritually washed in water prepared by "supporters." This ritual may also be performed at the outside borders of the cemetery. The totality of the experience of death and contact with the pollution of the dead is placed behind the mourners in symbolic closure when the pollution is ritually washed away from their hands after departing from the cemetery and before entering the house of mourning. In contrast to many other religions,[8] the Jewish mourners do not undergo any specific entrance rituals before entering the house of mourning. The entrance rites have been completed at the cemetery when they passed between the two lines of participants. The mourners remain in the *shiva* house for seven days as they proceed through the process of confirming their new roles. The *shiva* or mourning house is preferably located in the home of the deceased rather than that of the survivor. If this is not possible, then one of the survivors' houses is used. The emphasis upon the home of the deceased rather than that of the mourner symbolizes the transfer of the mantle of the deceased's role onto the shoulders of the survivor.

Upon entering the *shiva* house, the mourners remove their shoes. Symbolically. the mourners, who have altered the accepted norm, now devoid of shoes, cannot leave until this stage of the process is brought to a close. While

thus incarcerated, the mourners' attention is focused on the demands of their new role in society, and others can proceed with the task of reinforcing these roles. This procedure of confinement for the mourners is not strange in religious mourning rites, but the uniquely Judaic activities which take place in the *shiva* house are significant. The core activities and functions involve food. I do not concern myself here with a Douglas-type analysis of food-related rituals,[9] although within the framework of my hypothesis, food is seen here as a convenient catalyst through which the main events can be played out.

Immediately after entering the house and removing their shoes, the mourners are served the meal of condolence (*seudat havrah*). The food is provided and served by neighbours or friends. Thus we see the introduction of outsiders into the house of mourning. Since the mourners are not yet perceived as being fully integrated into their new roles, they are not yet ready for incorporation into society. Furthermore, the mourners eat alone lest they form the quorum that would require them to recite the public blessing after the meal (*zimun*). The mourners interviewed, since they are not orthodox, do not recite this prayer at any time, nor are they careful about sitting separately.

The menu of the meal consists of bread and eggs. Eggs are often seen in rabbinic literature as associated with the Temple or the destruction of the Temple. They serve as a constant reminder that rabbinic authority derives its power through the "Bible" and the Temple, God's manifestation on earth. This allusion to rabbinic authority and its derivation from Temple society are persistent themes in the rituals of mourning. They are also found in the rituals related to the fast of *Tisha b'Av* and the passover *seder.* This motif was already seen in the *kaddish* at the cemetery. Additional examples of the concept include, first, the expression used to comfort the mourners: "May the Lord comfort you among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem." This statement is first recited while the mourners pass between the two lines at the cemetery. The Rabbi articulates the "comfort" both in Hebrew and in English. It is continually employed whenever one takes leave of the mourner during the *shiva* interim.

Secondly, there is a reference to the Temple in the portion added to the blessing after the meals when (if) recited in the house of mourning. It reads:

> O comfort, Lord, our God, the mourners of Jerusalem and those who mourn this sad event. Console them from their mourning and gladden them from their grief, as it is said "Like a man whose mother consoles him so I will console you, and in Jerusalem you will be consoled." Blessed are you Lord, Comforter of Zion through the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Amen. (Scherman 1984:199)

The visit by the neighbours is not fortuitous. Rabbinic Judaism emphasizes the obligation for all Jews to visit the mourners' house and comfort them, a

ritual which continues to be widely practised even among today's non-observant Jews. During these seven days of *shiva*, the mourners alter their normative pattern of sitting and sit on low stools or even on the floor, while the influx of visitors continues. Beyond providing comfort, this procedure of differentiation provides both mourners and visitors an opportunity for the collectivity to apply group reinforcement in adopting their new roles.

In addition to these rituals a further series of rites are in force. Some of these rituals are brought forward from the *onen* period, but several other ones are added. A partial list of *shiva* rites, laws and prohibitions are summarized by Krentzman (1986:5-18). All are deviations from the normative patterns of Jewish ritual. They are: location of *shiva*; burning of *shiva* candles; covering mirrors; meal of condolence; sitting on low stools or floor; prohibition of cohabitation; prohibition of anointing; prohibition of bathing; prohibition of marriage; study of Torah; prohibition of wearing shoes; prohibition of work; prohibition of *tefilin*; prohibition of *talit*; prayer held in *shiva* house, instead of synagogue; ending of *shiva*; The mourners I observed adhered to the "public" rites. I can assume that others, such as avoidance of cohabitation and bathing, were not observed.

The confinement of the mourner to the *shiva* house precludes his attendance at daily prayers at the synagogue. Therefore, additional visitors must come to the house of mourning. These comforters are required to be present at specified times each day to fulfill rabbinic prayer obligations and constitute the *minyan*. Whereas in the *onen* period the survivor was not included in the *minyan*, in the *shiva* house he not only is included, but is also encouraged to lead the prayers. Thus the mourner, by his participation in the prayer service, continues to proclaim his newly adopted status in public. The visitors in turn encourage and reinforce the incorporation of these roles by the mourner. The majority of the mourners studied had the *minyan* in their house of *shiva*. In instances when the minimum of ten males were not present the Rabbi either provided the missing number of persons or permitted the mourners to attend the synagogue. If the mourners could not read Hebrew and were therefore not able to lead the prayers, transliterations were supplied by the synagogue to enable them to recite the *kaddish*.

Psalm 49 is added at the completion of the liturgy in the house of mourning. Even though this prayer refers to death in general, it emphasizes the adherence to Torah law, hence rabbinical authority. This is a reminder similar to those discussed above.

Completion of Shiva

Halachah does not stipulate any entrance or exit rituals at this point. The entrance rituals into the new status were completed by the mourner at the cemetery site. This new status is perceived as enduring and unbridgeable.

Therefore, with the mourner entrenched in this new status, there is likewise no stipulation for exit rituals at the completion of the two additional mourning periods.

As with many North American Jews, our subjects perform a ritual to end the *shiva* with a "walk around the block." Krentzman (1986:18) in his *Practical Guide to Mourning Rites*, states that this is "a formal act to demonstrate their rejoining the community." In my discussion with Rabbi Krentzman, he pointed to research which indicates that this ritual, which originated in Eastern European Jewish communities, was adopted mainly by the non-orthodox community in North America. Since many of these Jews (but not our subjects) end their mourning rites with *shiva*, they have introduced an exit ritual. I suggest that, furthering this interpretation, one may note that the non-observant Jews do subscribe to the full authority of rabbinism. They are, however, selective with regard to their observance and do not fully incorporate the roles required by the social unit as defined by rabbinism. Hence, the exit rite serves to signify the completion of their involvement with rabbinic mourning rituals. However, the mourners observed for this study did not terminate the mourning rites with the completion of *shiva*, but did perform the ritual "to walk around the block." I will further discuss this implications of this phenomenon in the conclusion of the paper.

Sheloshim and the "Year-Long" Period of Mourning

The *sheloshim* period begins at the completion of the *shiva* and extends for thirty days after burial. The "year-long" period continues for an additional eleven months.

As the survivor moves from one period to the next there is a corresponding reduction in number of required mourning rituals practiced. Lamm (1969:145,148) summarizes these laws as follows:

> The following prohibitions continue in force to be observed during *shiva* and during *sheloshim* under normal circumstances:
> - haircutting, shaving, nailcutting, bathing, and the wearing of new clothes or newly laundered clothes
> - getting married
> - attending parties
>
> Following is a brief survey of the observance of the 12 month period:
> - haircut, technically prohibited for twelve months, is permitted upon the occasion of social reproach after the *sheloshim*, as indicated above
> - similarly, the wearing of new clothes is permitted upon "social reproach" after the *shloshim* and after being worn for a brief period of time by others, although, technically it is a twelve-month observance
> - the mourner should change his usual seat in the synagogue at prayer. On the Sabbath he may sit in his usual place
> - regulation pertaining to the recital of *kaddish*

These rites are almost all public in nature and continually serve to mark the mourner as a person learning to adopt new roles. The subject mourners, as in the period of *shiva*, adhere to the public rites, thereby receiving community exposure, support and encouragement.

As the survivors pass through the stages of mourning and their level of commitment increases through their incorporation into their new roles, society's need to draw attention to them is reduced. Hence, the number of public mourning rituals decrease. The most significant of the remaining public mourning rites is the *kaddish*, a prayer the mourner is obliged to recite at each of the three daily liturgies (*minyan*), numerous times.

Kaddish

The *kaddish* is not a prayer for the dead but a glorification of God. It is recited during prayer services. Recitation of this prayer requires a *minyan* and must be recited standing. In the observed synagogue the mourners assemble as a group close to the ark and in full view of the congregation for the recital of the *kaddish* prayer. Within the liturgy four variations of *kaddish* appear, all of them being concerned with the glorification of God. These need not be expanded upon here. Some of them are recited by the mourner and the remainder are chanted by the prayer leader (*shaliach tzibur*) alone. Rabbinism therefore encourages the mourners to lead the prayers, thus enabling the mourners to gain multiple opportunities to recite *kaddish*. The mourner is asked to lead the services depending upon which stage of mourning he is observing. Even in the case of our subject mourners, who have weak Hebrew reading skills, the service is led by a *kaddish* sayer. The survivors with limited skills make a conscious effort during the year of mourning to improve their Hebrew and thus be able to lead services. They will usually begin with leading the short afternoon prayers and then they will attempt the lengthy morning service. The adult education program in the synagogue offers Hebrew and prayer classes which are often visited by the mourners. Once again these public rituals confirm my hypothesis that society publicly and manifestly singles out the mourner.

Rabbinic Judaism differentiates between mourning for parents as opposed to mourning for the other five relatives mentioned (brother, sister, son, daughter, and spouse). Mourning rites including recitation of the *kaddish*, are concluded at the end of one month in the case of the five relatives, but maintained throughout the "year" at the loss of a parent. This differentiation can be understood, if we examine the level of threat to the social fabric on the loss of each category of relative. The loss of a parent who provides a leadership role in the social unit causes a serious rupture in the social network, hence the social necessity of ensuring that a replacement has adopted each of the vacant roles, both functionally and structurally. This necessity is

reflected in the fact that mourning rites and the evolving emphasis on the saying of *kaddish* are extended to "one year." In the modern context the death of a parent is a particular threat to an individual's continued participation in Jewish observance, since many Jews attend synagogue and maintain other traditional rituals and practices mainly for the sake of aging or elderly parents. The loss of the other five relatives engenders less threat to society and hence requires less ritual.

In support of my hypothesis that mourning rites serve to re-establish the pre-death social order, I point to the prescription of rabbinic Judaism that only males are required to recite *kaddish.* Krentzman (1986:32) writes: A daughter should not recite *kaddish* in the synagogue, but should answer "amen" from the women's section. This stipulation is based upon the rabbinic intention that the male survivors adopt the leadership roles lost to society as a result of the death, hence it is the man that society must "incorporate" into these roles. As we noted earlier, as a result of the values of contemporary society, the women subjects are permitted to and do recite the *kaddish* in synagogue. The implication of this modification will be discussed below.

Since rabbinic Judaism is based on male-dominated leadership, women represent a threat to the structure. This may explain why the woman is only accorded by halachah equal ritual status to the man when she is dead. No longer a threat to the social system, she is buried in the same ritual way as a man. The male-dominated structure is further strengthened through the death of the woman since it is the male survivor who recites *kaddish* for her, thus publicly emphasizing his role. Contemporary Judaism is more dependent upon female support than was the case in the past. Accordingly, women have been granted a greater ritual role in recent years and in some orthodox synagogues have been encouraged to recite *kaddish.*

Discussion

In our analysis of mourning rites it has been necessary to modify Turner's theory of liminality. Contrary to Turner's framework, during the Jewish mourning period the transformation is not anti-structural. The group, through the symbolism of ritual and public dissonant behaviour, has maintained and supported the initiates as they enter their new roles. I have argued that in rabbinic Judaism the initiate or mourner is elevated to a new status. However, under the influence of contemporary society, the majority of Jewish families have adopted a modern structure where roles are not clearly defined. These mourning rites were intended to facilitate passage of the mourner to a new status. This new status, however, is ambiguous in our modern society. Therefore, mourning rituals are in danger of being transformed into a ritualism[10] or simply becoming defunct. But the Jewish society, rather than disregard the mourning rites, has subtly and subconsciously reoriented them and thus

allowed them to have an impact upon the family and Jewish continuity. The retention of mourning rites is effected through the community which informs its members what to do and how they must conform to what is considered proper practice. The Jewish mourners attribute importance to the mourning rites because the community tells them to do so, and there is a public consensus that this is proper behaviour. However, the Jew in our subject synagogue only accepts the funeral rites as long as they do not infringe more than minimally upon the family's lifestyle.

In North American public civil Judaism, as practiced in the observed synagogue, the Jewish family remains a constant in the continuation of Jewish identity.[11] Judaism today is aware that the dilution of the family unit threatens its continuity. The construction of the mourning rituals, as we have seen above, continues to foster family solidarity and to emphasize communal needs. It is interesting to note that, as the Rabbi explained to me, during the *shiva* he encourages the mourners to discuss their changed family relationships and obligations resulting from the death. Thus Judaism continues to emphasize the observance of the mourning rites taking into consideration the changed family structure, and thus, for example, does not discourage women from reciting the *kaddish.*

A Concluding Observation

Following the model proposed by Merton in his analysis of functionalism (1957:77) I would like to note additional latent or implicit functions of Jewish mourning rites. These functions which are never necessarily intended or recognized by the survivor operate so as to fulfill the needs and support the continuation of Jewish society in general and the subject synagogue in particular. The study of mourning rituals for this purpose does not exclude the possibility that community exigencies may be served by additional rituals. These other rituals may serve the community's needs in the same way that a specific ritual may fulfill divergent functions. In the case of mourning rites, however, significance must be attached to what Merton defines in his discussion of Durkheim, as a "recurrent activity, . . . [that is] the part [the activity] plays in the social life as a whole and therefore the contribution it makes to the maintenance of the structural continuity" (Merton 1957:77).

Rabbinism is aware that the collectivity is no longer the Jewish communal world, but specifically the synagogue. Rituals that have previously served the social consciousness of the macro-rabbinical society now are directed to function for the micro-rabbinical social structure; the synagogue. The ritual of reciting the *kaddish* is employed for this purpose, while other mourning rites are considered less compelling after *shiva.*

The subject synagogue and its mourners were chosen to validate the hypothesis that mourning rites cohere with the contemporary Jewish social map. The synagogue achieves its religious legitimacy through prayer services which are held daily, morning and evening. The *kaddish* sayers constitute the majority of the *minyan* group thereby helping to legitimize the religious aspect of the synagogue. The synagogue, then, functions not only as a weekend religious gathering place, or an office for the Rabbi, but also endeavours to develop its complementary social and educational services and to act as a community centre. Without the foundation of the daily *minyan*, the wider synagogue activities might not have a legitimate base from which to function. It is the *kaddish* sayers who in essence maintain this on-going service. Rabbinism encourages the psychological need to recite *kaddish*; as people continue to die, the continuation of the synagogue through the collectivity of the survivors is guaranteed.

The strength of the synagogue society is furthered by a reduction in fees for the "new members." The synagogue society socializes these *kaddish* sayers in their roles as skilled participants in the liturgy. Classes are offered in prayer, as well as written and oral Hebrew language. A system of "honours" motivates skilled participation. The most skilled participants are proffered reinforcements such as the following: leading services, honours related to the reading of the Torah, and publicly reading the prescribed Torah portions.

My research has also shown that the majority of members who have a greater involvement in the synagogue have been recruited from the *kaddish* sayers. The *kaddish* period is for them a liminal period after which they are incorporated as active participants in the synagogue community. Furthermore, the incorporation of the *kaddish* sayer will attract his immediate family; they too become involved in the overall synagogue activities, hence, augmenting the committed synagogue membership.

A dynamic based on "positive feedback" evolves. Increased membership enhances the status of the synagogue in the wider Jewish society, which in turn attracts more synagogue adherents. The greater the population base of the synagogue community, the more likely its function will succeed and further enhance its membership. A larger population base will also increase the financial capacity of the synagogue to mount services, which in turn attracts new adherents.

To conclude, I have shown how the mourning rituals of rabbinic Judaism cohere with a specific social structure. The rituals can be seen as a particular model of "strong-grid," "strong-group" society as presented by Douglas which are enacted during a period of liminality as developed by Turner. Lastly, I have attempted to show how rabbinism has utilized the mourning rituals within a contemporary North American Jewish society to enhance syna-

gogue life. The latter has been transformed from an encompassing rabbinic "world," to a Jewish "corporation."

Glossary of Hebrew Terms[12]

Aninut	The state of mourning between death and interment.
Avel (-im, pl.)	A mourner.
Avelut	The period of mourning.
Halachah	Jewish law.
Kaddish	The prayer recited for the deceased.
Kriyah	The rending of the garment of the mourner after the death occurs.
Minyan	A quorum of at least ten Jewish males above the age of thirteen.
Onen (-im, pl.)	A mourner between the time of death and interment.
Seder	The religious festive meals held on the first two nights of Passover.
Shaliach tzibur	A prayer leader.
Sheloshim	The thirty-day period following interment.
Steemat Hagolel	The covering of the grave.
Tallit	Prayer shawl.
Tefillin	Phylacteries.
Tisha b'av	The ninth day of Av, which commemorates the destruction of both ancient Temples. It is observed through fasting and semi-mourning.
Zimun	A quorum of at least three males above the age of thirteen which will thus permit them to recite specific prayers following a meal.

Notes

1. For the purpose of this paper I do not differentiate between the terms rites and rituals. I refer the reader to F. Bird's (1980) characterization of ritual action.
2. The halachic sources I researched for mourning rites were *Tur Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah*; *Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah*; *Aruch Hashulchan Yoreh Deah*; Code of Jewish Laws: section on mourning laws; Tzokensiki 1980; Lamm 1969; Levine 1985; Krentzman 1986.
3. For additional data and analysis of the subject synagogue see Fishbane 1987.
4. Scholars have argued that Douglas' hypothesis is not applicable to a modern pluralistic and industrialized society. I suggest Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's (1984) discussion of socialization as a complement to Douglas's mapping of society and an answer to this criticism.
5. For example, see Goldscheider 1986.
6. The topic of women shaving their legs is absent from the rabbinic literature. The subject rabbi, when asked if this type of shaving was permitted replied, "It is not appropriate but I would not prohibit it."

7. Rabbinic Judaism attributes a greater importance and therefore encourages stricter adherence to laws stated to be either explicit or deduced from the Torah.
8. See Huntington and Metcalf 1980.
9. See for example Douglas 1975:249-275.
10. See Bird 1980.
11. See Hirschberg (1988) whose multivariate analysis of parental and educational factors in the development of Jewish identity included many of the same subjects as in this study. He concluded that on all measures, the most significant predictor of the children's ethnicity, was parental and family factors.
12. The translations are adapted from Lamm (1969:251-257).

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