

RELEVANCE OF KADDISH TO MOURNERS

There is a Jewish custom for a mourner to recite the Kaddish prayer every day for about a year. The version of the Kaddish prayer that mourners recite includes the following 6 wishes:

(WISH 1) May His great name be magnified & sanctified - in the world He created as He wished.

(WISH 2) May His reign rule - in our lives & days, & in the lives of all Israel - very soon.

(WISH 3) CONGREGATION JOINS IN: May His great name be blessed forever & ever.

(WISH 4) May His holy name be blessed, praised, glorified, exalted, raised, adorned, heightened & acclaimed – higher than any blessing, song, praise & consolation said in the world.

(WISH 5) May there be great peace from heaven & life on us & all Israel.

(WISH 6) May He who makes peace in His heaven make peace for us & all Israel .

Encyclopedia Judaica explains that: Kadish was composed in Talmudic times and was originally intended to be recited only at the end of a rabbi's lecture. Only in the 500s (sometime after completion of the Talmud), was the practice initiated for a prayer leader to recite Kadish at the end of prayer services. And only in the 1200s was the custom initiated for mourners to recite Kadish.

I wondered: What special relevance does Kaddish have to a mourner, since Kaddish does not mention mourning or death?

I believe (based only on personal reasoning) the answer is the following: The connection between Kaddish and a mourner is found in the following 2 ancient Jewish sources:

(1) SEFER IYOV (Book of Job), which is a book of the Bible about a man named Job who lived about 2500 years ago and presents Job's response to being informed that his children died.

(2) MEDRASH IYOV which recounts a comment made a rebbetsin named Bruriah who lived about 1900 years ago in response to her children having died.

Bruriah's response expressed a Jewish concept that each beloved person in our life is (what Bruriah called) "**on loan**", from Gd, to our world for a limited time period. So, when that loved person is taken away, while we grieve for the loss, we should praise Gd for having placed that loved person into our world and our life for as long as He did.

This concept is illustrated now-a-days when we borrow a book from the library. We understand that the book is **not given** to us but instead **loaned** to us. So, we do **not fault** the library when it recalls the book; we instead **praise** the library for having left the book with us for as long as it did.

In a similar vein, when Job was informed that his children were killed in a freak accident, Job did **not curse** Gd for taking his children, as Satan thought Job would do. Job instead **praised** Gd by stating: "Gd gave. Gd took back. May Gd's name be blessed." In other words, in his grief, Job blessed Gd for having left those children in Job's world for as long as He did.

And the last sentence in Job's declaration, "May Gd's name be blessed", is paraphrased in the central declaration ("May His great name be blessed") of the Kaddish prayer.

In short, I believe a mourner leads the congregation in Kaddish to praise Gd for having placed the now-deceased loved one into the mourner's life for as long as He did.

I noticed that Kaddish's phrase "May He who makes peace in His heaven..." is apparently taken from SEFER IYOV 25:1 "He makes peace in His heaven".

I noticed that Kaddish's phrases "May His great name be **magnified & sanctified** - in the world He created as **He wished**... May His holy name be **exalted**" is probably taken from:

- Yechezkel 38:23 "I (Gd) will be **magnified & sanctified**" (והתגדלתי והתקדשתי) and

- Daniel 11: 36 "The king (Gd) did as **He wished** and was **exalted and magnified**" (ועשה ברצנו המלך ויתרומם ויתגדל)