

CONSOLATION

by Rabbi Chaim Flom

A few months ago, Rabbi Yaacov Katz (a Rosh Chabura in the Mirrer Yeshiva) and I were among eight people who were needed to make a minyan for mourners whom we didn't know. As the other six left after the davening, they said perfunctorily "Hamakom Yinachem..." (the standard line of consoling a mourner). Rabbi Katz sat down and said to these strangers "tell me something about your mother..." We stayed there for about ten minutes listening.

"And it was after the death of Avraham that G-d blessed Yitzchok (Avraham's son)..." (Biraishis 25:11) The Gemara in Sota 14a learns that this was G-d's way of comforting a mourner, and we are supposed to emulate the ways of G-d.

That day, some of us did a mitzva of helping make a mourner's minyan, and others also really fulfilled the mitzva of consoling mourners. (By the way, no one has the real secret of what to say to mourners, but certainly showing that you are concerned and interested goes a long way.)

Have a great Shabbos !!

Rabbi Chaim Flom
