

Congregation Beth Am TNT Mitzvah Project: Hesed Shel Emet/Honoring the Dead and Comforting Mourners

And when the time approached for Israel to die, he summoned his son Joseph and said to him, "Do me this favor, place your hand under my thigh as a true act of kindness: please do not bury me in Egypt."

Rashi: "A true act of kindness" -- kindness that is done for the dead is a true act of kindness, since one does it without expecting repayment.

Mitzvot remind us of many sacred relationships; our relationship with our parents, our relationship with God, our relationship with our synagogue, and also our relationship with the land. One aspects of these relationships is how we deal with them when they are broken. As many different relationship are involved in being a part of the Jewish community, Caring for the deceased thus is a necessary part of living in a community.

This project will focus on Mitzvot related to the comforting Mourners & Honoring the dead. Please have your mitzvah done prior to next event.

Remember for each mitzvah take a picture, and write a one paragraph summary!

1. Check the weekly news bulletins from Beth Am. When you read about someone who has passed away in the community, find out if they are sitting Shiva. You can do this by asking your parents, and if they don't know call Rabbi Earne or Bonnie Cohen. If they are, make a Shiva visit and show the mourner that their community cares about him/her. If you have the time but don't know how to act, feel free to call Rabbi Earne before you go, he will guide you on what to do.
2. At Congregation Beth Am, there is a committee called the *Hevrah Kadisha*. They are involved in preparing a Jewish body for burial. They wash and purify the body. If you know of someone who is part of that committee, please contact them and interview them with 5 questions. If you don't know someone, schedule a time with Rabbi Earne and interview him with these questions.
3. Find a local psychologist, or social worker and interview them about how a person mourns. If you have time take your results and share them with Rabbi Earne. Please also share any recommendations for the synagogue to best provide for the needs of a mourner.

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4. One way we recall the memory of a loved one is by giving charity in their name. Think about someone you have lost in your own life and think about a charity that would best represent the values this person lived their life by. Then make a donation to this charity or volunteer an hour of your time to support this charity/cause.
5. If you are 13, or you are a girl and are 12 years old, volunteer your time and support your synagogues minyan on:
 - Sunday morning at 10:30 am
 - Tuesday evening at 6:00 pm
 - Wednesday morning at 7:00 am.

A minyan is a prayer group that allows people to say the mourners Kaddish, a prayer said in honor of someone how has passed away. In order for someone to recite this prayer, they need to be in the presence of at least 10 Jewish adults. Help them do this!

6. Rabbi Kornberg was involved in bringing the *Hevrah Kadisha* to Congregation Beth Am (See #2). Prepare a 5 question interview for Rabbi Kornberg and then interview him! Ask him why he thought this was an important service for Beth Am. Also, ask him what the *Hevrah Kadisha* might use, and if you can, donate it to the committee.