

Time to Prepare

A Guide to Mourning



**THE COMMUNITY
SYNAGOGUE**

In Case of a Death

Our clergy are always available to assist you at your time of loss. At whatever time of the day or night, when a death occurs please call The Community Synagogue (516-833-3144). If someone is not immediately available, a message will direct you to one of our Rabbis or to our Cantor. If a death occurs at night, please note that arrangements for funerals cannot be made until the next day, although the funeral home of your choice (and which you call directly) can pick up the deceased at any hour. For any additional support, counsel, or question you may always contact any of the clergy.

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This Booklet is written as a guide to provide comfort and consolation as expressed by our Jewish tradition

בְּאַבְרָתוֹ יִסָּךְ לָךְ וְתַחַת כְּנָפָיו תִּחְסֶה
כִּי מַלְאָכָיו יַצִּיגֶה-לָּךְ לְשִׁמְרָךְ בְּכָל-דֶּרֶכֶיךָ

May you find refuge under God's wings. God's angels will guard you wherever you go and carry you in their hands.

Psalm 91:4 and 11

The Temple in ancient Jerusalem had a separate path and entrance for mourners. Walking along this path, those in mourning came before the other members of the community who greeted them with the blessing we use as part of the modern funeral service:

הַמָּקוֹם יְנַחֵם אֶתְכֶם בְּתוֹךְ שְׂאֵר אֲבֵלֵי צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם.

May God comfort you among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

With a clear prescribed path to follow, mourning in ancient Jerusalem may have seemed easier for both those experiencing a loss and their community. At times, mourners feel disconnected from family and friends, feel that their emotions are inappropriate or “not normal” and would-be comforters do not know what to say or how to say it.

Therefore, the purpose of Jewish mourning practices is to guide the one who has experienced a loss - from the initial shock to a resumption of normal living. The process is gradual and depends upon the sensitivity of friends and the community. It is offered not as a set path, but as a resource for every individual looking for the healing and consolation we pray comes to the mourner.

Introduction

No one is ever fully prepared for one's own death - or for the death of a loved one. Bereavement is not always a surprise, but it is always a shock. Still, an understanding of how Judaism views death and funerals can help one make reasonable decisions when overcome with emotion.

This booklet is written from the perspective of Reform Judaism. It accepts that many of the traditional practices of Judaism help us face our grief, but also believes that there may be acceptable alternatives for Jews who wish to be true to the spirit of both Jewish observance and modern sensibilities. What is suggested here is founded in the notion that there are four central values Judaism teaches us concerning death and mourning:

- Judaism teaches us to **express our grief**, not to suppress it or "be strong". This is the purpose of sitting shiva, receiving condolence calls, and reciting kaddish. The period of mourning enables us to express and then moderate our grief and return slowly to a more normal life.
- Judaism urges us to **recognize the reality of death**. One of the normal stages of grief is a temporary unwillingness to accept what has happened, and even to harbor the illusion that the loved one is still alive. Our people seemed to know instinctively that this was unhealthy, and thus the funeral, the burial, and the customs of mourning encourage us to accept our loss and begin to mourn.
- Judaism teaches **respect for the dead**. Everyone deserves a proper burial. Traditionally, when there was no family to make funeral arrangements, the Jewish community acted as the deceased's family.
- Judaism teaches **equality in death**. Poor or wealthy, well known, or unknown, all are equal in death. The funeral service, the coffin, and the manner of burial reflect that equality.

Thinking Ahead

It is advisable that families, in their awareness that death is inevitable, give thought to this reality.

PURCHASE OF PLOTS

The Community Synagogue has gravesites in a section of Beth Moses Cemetery in Farmingdale. Purchase of these graves can be made through our synagogue.

When a temple member, his or her children or parent dies, The Community Synagogue's sanctuary is available for the service (barring other scheduled events), or a funeral chapel may be used. Funeral services for other relatives of Temple members are done at the discretion and availability of our clergy, and can be held at one of the local funeral chapels. Funerals can also be held at the graveside. In the case of interfaith marriage, please consult the clergy regarding questions about the purchase of plots or any matter related to funeral preparation.

DONATING ORGANS

According to Jewish tradition *שׁוּקֵי נֶפֶשׁ* *pikuach nefesh* (the saving of life) takes precedence over nearly everything. Therefore, Reform Judaism regards the donation of the organs of one's body for the purpose of transplantation in order to save a life or heal a deficiency to be a mitzvah.

Generally, a hospital or funeral home representative may ask about organ donation. If not, it is important to raise the issue if this was the wish of the person who died. Whether a person dies at home or in a hospital the organs can be donated providing the deceased did not have a transmittable disease. In New York State a person of any age who dies can "gift" his or her organs. For more information see <http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/donor/>, which includes a registration form to be an organ and/or tissue donor.

THE HEALTH CARE PROXY

A Health Care Proxy document designates an agent to make medical decisions on your behalf if you should become unable to do so.

Your family members have no legal right to make health care decisions on your behalf unless they are designated as your health care agent in your health care proxy. This person would make decisions if, for example, you were in a coma, unconscious, or suffered from advanced dementia. You should also designate an alternate to act as your agent if the primary person you choose is not available.

It is very important to discuss your desires regarding end of life decisions and the use of life-sustaining measures with the people you plan to designate. This way you can be certain that they know your wishes and understand their obligation to carry them out.

It is not unusual for people to have difficulty choosing an agent. Some people are very clear that they want a spouse, partner, particular family member, or friend to be their agent. Others are not sure they want to put those closest to them in the position of making these difficult decisions. Be sure that both you and your agent are comfortable with your choices and that your agent understands and is willing to carry out your wishes.

It is important to note that in New York State, a parent is not legally permitted to make health care decisions for a child over the age of eighteen, unless that parent is specifically designated as an agent for their child. Also, same-sex partners are not recognized as decision-makers unless they are so designated.

Finally, a Health Care Proxy also may include a section in which you can designate organ donation, an act of giving life that is supported by Reform Judaism. You may also prepare an additional Advance Directive, (or "Living Will") which is used to identify treatments you do or do not want to receive in specific situations, and also describes circumstances under which you would not wish to have your life prolonged by artificial means. A "Living Will" cannot anticipate every possible scenario, so it is critical to discuss your wishes with those designated by your Health Care Proxy.

When Death Is Imminent

One of the prayers recited at a Jewish funeral is the *אל מלך רחמים* *El Malei Rachamim*, God of Compassion, which asks the *שכינה* *Shekhinah*, God's compassionate and comforting presence, to shelter the one who has died. Our tradition teaches us that when someone is close to death, the *Shekhinah* comes to dwell with the departing soul. Family, friends and health professionals also offer comfort to the person who is dying. Jewish law is very specific that preservation of life is of the highest priority. At the same time, death is part of the natural order. Allowing it to come and, in certain instances, even to pray for it, are appropriate. Even when one is close to death, however, the focus should be hopeful.

Jewish rituals directly prior to and following death address the psychological needs of both the one who is dying and the mourner. The *mitzvot* of *בקרור חולים* *bikur holim* (visiting the sick) and *כבוד המת* *kavod ha-met* (honoring the dead) focus primarily on the needs of the dying.

THE VIDDUI: Prayer and Forgiveness

The one who is approaching death recites the *וידוי* *viddui*, the final confession, with the understanding that death can bring closure to spiritual and emotional wrongdoing. The *viddui* is an ancient tradition - and is said by the person to God. If the person cannot speak, one can ask for forgiveness of wrongs in one's heart.

If a *viddui* is suggested, it should be done in a way to help the person achieve a sense of inner peace. The traditional words said to comfort a dying person are, "Many have confessed and did not die and many who did not confess died. In reward for your confession, may you live, and may your words bring you to a World to Come."

THE VIDDUI

My God and God of my ancestors, let my prayer come before you. Do not ignore my plea. Forgive me for all the wrong I have done in my lifetime. Send a perfect healing to me and all those who suffer. My God and God of my ancestors, I acknowledge that my life and recovery may depend upon You. May it be your will to heal me. But if, in Your wisdom, my life here has now come to an end, I accept Your decree. I approach You, God, with clean hands and a pure heart. May I atone for all the wrongdoings which I have committed before You. Shelter me in the shadow of Your wings and grant me a share in the world to come. God, Parent of orphans, Defender of widows, protect my beloved family, with whose soul my own soul is bound. Into your hand I deposit my soul. You have redeemed me, God of truth.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְיָ אֶחָד.

Shema Yisrael, Adonai Elohenu, Adonai Echad.

Hear O Israel, The Lord is our God, God is one.

יְיָ הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים

Adonai Hu Ha'Elohim.

Adonai is God.

God the Judge is God the Compassionate.

When Death Occurs

Whatever time of the day or night, when a death occurs The Community Synagogue should be called (516-883-3144). If someone is not immediately available, a message will direct you to one of our Rabbis or to our Cantor. If a death occurs at night, please note that arrangements for funerals cannot be made until the next day, although the funeral home of your choice (and which you call directly) can pick up the deceased at any hour. The support and counsel of our clergy is always available. In most instances, when a death occurs at night, you may call any of our clergy early the following morning to make the necessary arrangements (including finding a funeral home in the area).

Traditionally in Judaism, autopsies are not performed. An autopsy is permitted if it is deemed necessary by the hospital or civil authorities. Also, a post-mortem exam may be acceptable if, through the autopsy, the lives of others suffering from the same ailment can be saved or prolonged

The day and hour of the funeral service should be decided only after consultation with the officiating Rabbi and/or Cantor. If the service is to be held at the synagogue, the clergy will arrange the time for the funeral with our Temple Administrator. *Please do not assume that a time for the funeral is set until this is confirmed by the clergy.*

In Judaism, funerals occur as soon as possible after death as a means of honoring the dead and allowing the grieving process to begin. Though the funeral need not be arranged to take place on the day of death, or even the day following death, it should not be delayed beyond the third day, unless awaiting the arrival of next of kin traveling from a distance. Funeral services are not held on Shabbat, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Shavuot, the first or last days of the festivals of Passover and Sukkot, or on Simchat Torah/Shmini Atzeret.

DEATH OF BABIES, STILLBIRTHS AND MISCARRIAGES

Our traditions do not demand the same degree of stringency with regard to the burial and mourning of infants who die under the age of 30 days. In modern times, however, such cases are sufficiently rare and traumatic enough that various ways of marking the death might be helpful and important to the parents and family. In the case of miscarriages some means of grieving may also be helpful. The clergy should be contacted in any of these situations.

The Role of the Clergy

Your Rabbis and Cantor are here to support and comfort you at many times: before death occurs, when making preparations for the funeral, and in the weeks and months after a loved one dies. Our clergy can respond to your questions and pain, help you understand the wisdom of Jewish traditions regarding death and dying and be spiritual guides in coping with the finality of life.

The officiating clergy like to visit the family prior to the funeral service to offer them personal comfort, answer any questions pertaining to Jewish ritual and to give advice. In fact, many families find that the opportunity to share memories is an important first step of healing. At that time - or at any point - any and all questions regarding funeral and mourning procedures can be directed to the clergy. For the eulogy, the Rabbi or Cantor will want to obtain from the family information about the deceased, something of his/her life work and interests. The clergy work closely with each family to offer a personal touch that will honor a loved one, yet also are sensitive to the many emotional issues that a family may face at this time of tragedy.

At the funeral the immediate mourners (in Jewish tradition this includes parents, children, siblings and a spouse) should not offer words, for it is they who ought to be comforted by others.

We encourage you to allow the clergy to speak about the legacy of the person who died. The clergy work closely with family and friends to offer a personal remembrance that will honor a loved one, while being sensitive to the many needs of those in mourning.

It is important to note that the process of grieving often takes many months, or even years. We wish to note again that the Rabbis and/or Cantor at The Community Synagogue are always available to counsel those who have lost a loved one.

Before the Funeral

PREPARATION OF THE BODY

While the body is but part of who we are, after death the body of a loved one is still treated with reverence. The traditions associated with the preparation of the body for burial are based in this belief.

טְהָרָה *tahara* is the ritual cleansing of the body for burial and can be performed by any Jewish funeral home, if you so wish.

Traditionally, the body is clothed with shrouds, which are simple, white linen garments. The body can also be dressed with a **טלית** *tallit* (prayer shawl) and a **כִּפָּה** *kippah* (head covering). If you choose, regular clothing may be used for dressing your loved one

שְׁמִירָה *shemira* is the watching of the deceased until members of the family assemble for the funeral service so that the deceased is not left unattended. Some feel that this is a way of comforting the newly departed soul, while others feel that it honors the dead. The **שׁוּמְרִים** *shomrim* (guards) sit with the body around the clock and recite passages from the book of Psalms. This may be done by friends or family as an act of loving kindness.

Embalming is contrary to Jewish law and should not be practiced unless required by law (for example, for transporting a body to or from out of state or country).

BURIAL, CREMATION AND THE CASKET

The traditional practice of our people has been burial of the dead as the natural means of fulfilling the verse “dust to dust”. Though cremation is discouraged, it is allowed by Reform Judaism.

Jews traditionally buried their dead in physical contact with the earth, and without caskets or vaults. This fulfilled the tradition of our returning to the dust from which we were formed. Even when caskets became the norm, wooden ones were used by Jews. A funeral director will meet with the family to determine a choice of casket and to make financial arrangements. The casket should be simple and inexpensive, reflecting the Jewish focus on the equality of all people. In lieu of flowers, Judaism encourages the giving of *tzedakah* (i.e. money donated to a righteous cause, including the synagogue) which honors the deceased and brings blessings to the living.

NOTIFICATION OF FAMILY MEMBERS AT TIME OF DEATH

In traditional Judaism, mourners consist of seven relationships: mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and spouse. This limitation of formal mourners is not to deny the grief others feel, but not to demand of other relatives the restrictions that are traditionally placed on mourners. Thus, for example, if a grandchild wishes to mourn for a grandparent, this is acceptable.

It is considered praiseworthy to notify all family members at the time of death, even when certain relatives may be estranged. The period of family mourning can promote reconciliation. First, by reaching out to the people from whom we are estranged, we may find that they may respond more favorably to us in the future. Second, the mutual life-long connection to the deceased and shared grief may promote emotional bonding and healing. Finally, death reminds us that the issues that divide us are often petty, and that love is the most lasting gift, which eases the pain that comes with death.

In discussing mourning practices, issues may sometimes arise for Jews with non-Jewish family members. As the *shiva*, and *yahrzeit* are a means to give comfort to the living, they may be observed for a non-Jewish loved one. Additionally, the Mourner's Kaddish may be said for a non-Jewish loved one. If you have any questions on these matters, please do not hesitate to contact the clergy



The Funeral

K'RIAH

Upon hearing of the death of a loved one, Jews traditionally tear their garments to represent their torn hearts. This practice began in the Bible with Jacob, who tore his coat when his sons brought Joseph's bloody cloak to him. Tearing a garment represents severing a physical relationship and symbolizes the heart which is broken. Today this practice, called קריעה *k'riah*, usually takes place at the synagogue, the funeral home or at the cemetery just before the actual burial. Though an article of one's clothing may be torn, many mourners cut black ribbons as symbol of the *k'riah*.

The ribbon is worn on the left side when a parent has died (as it is closer to the heart) and on the right side for other relationships. The torn clothing or ribbon is worn throughout the week of mourning except on Shabbat.

When the cloth is torn, the mourner recites a blessing that praises God, the True Judge.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם דין האמת.

Baruch Ata Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, dayan ha-emet.

Praised are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe the Judge of Truth.

THE SERVICE

A traditional Jewish funeral service consists of the reading of several Psalms, a brief eulogy and the *אל מלך רחמים* *El Malei Rachamim*, a prayer for the soul. This prayer calls upon God to embrace the soul of the deceased with compassion as it is called up into the bonds of eternal life.

The casket is kept closed during the service. This not only shows respect for the deceased, but also allows us to remember this loved one as he or she was in life, rather than in death.

EULOGY

Generally, the clergy offer the primary eulogy at the funeral. There is a trend in recent years to have more and more people offer eulogies. Numerous eulogies can be a burden on the time of those who attend a funeral and be needlessly repetitive. In addition, given the complex emotional relationships in families, when one person offers a eulogy, guilt or a misplaced sense of obligation to speak may be aroused in other mourners present. It may be appropriate for a limited number of people who knew the person to speak, remembering that recalling a life and helping those present to grieve are the purposes of the eulogy. Bearing this in mind, we do ask that you limit the number of people who offer memories or readings.

Another option (and the one we prefer) is to encourage family and friends who want to formally express their memories and feelings to do so during one of the *shiva minyan* services.

The honor of being a pallbearer is reserved for close friends as well as in-laws, cousins, etc. Women can, and are encouraged, to be pallbearers. Traditional mourners (parents, children, siblings or spouse) do not serve as pallbearers. Non-Jews may serve as pallbearers. You may choose to allow the funeral home to provide pallbearers, as well.

AT THE GRAVESIDE

At the cemetery, the service is kept quite simple and consists of prayers affirming God as the True Judge and concludes with the recitation of קדיש יתום the Mourner's *Kaddish*. It is recited by all those in mourning. While the traditional *Kaddish* said at graveside mentions death, it does so in the context of the Jewish belief that something of us lives for eternity. Most versions of the *Kaddish* (including the Mourner's *Kaddish*) focus on God's power in the world. It hints at the Jewish focus on life, and suggests carrying on the values of those who have died. The *Kaddish* is recited in the presence of at least a minyan (ten Jewish adults) at a service.

A Jewish funeral ends with one of the most potent rituals and reminders of death. One by one, family members and friends of the deceased file past the grave and fill the grave with earth. This custom teaches that those who knew, respected and loved the person should help place the loved one in their final place of rest. Some, as a sign of identity with the Jewish homeland of Israel, place dirt from Israel in the grave. As the shovel turns, the earth may hit the coffin with a distinctive sound, reminding the mourners that their loved one is truly dead. This occurs until all those who wish to add earth to the grave do so. We encourage, but do not require, mourners to perform this final physical act of love and honor.

SHOULD CHILDREN ATTEND?

It is both proper and beneficial for a youngster to attend a funeral and burial. If the deceased was a close relative or friend, that child should be given the opportunity to participate in the traditional Jewish customs of mourning. Psychologists suggest that youngsters aged six or seven and older can be encouraged to attend. Keeping youngsters away from funerals, burials and mourning in an attempt to shield them is almost always wrong. Such an attitude on the part of adults adds to children's fantasies about how horrible the experience must be. These fantasies are, of course, much worse than the realities. Funerals and burials are often sad, but are not "scary." Attending a funeral service may help a youngster begin to accept the inevitability of death while experiencing the Jewish rituals of death and grieving in the company of loving family and friends.

CAN PREGNANT WOMEN GO THE CEMETERY?

Jewish law does not forbid pregnant women from attending a funeral or visiting a cemetery. The idea that a pregnant woman should not visit the cemetery is due to superstition or, more specifically, a belief in the "evil eye." As Reform Jews, we encourage parents to emphasize to their children that Jewish traditions value family devotion over superstitious beliefs. In addition, we hope parents will help their children to see the cemetery as a "house of life" (as it is called euphemistically in Hebrew), rather than a place to fear. We therefore urge pregnant women to be with their loved ones at the funeral and cemetery.

After the Funeral

It is customary to leave water outside of the home to wash the hands when returning from the cemetery. No blessing is said. There are many explanations as to why we do this. One is that this hand washing by anyone who returns from the cemetery is an act of affirming life over death (as water is a symbol of life and sustenance).

On return from the cemetery a candle is lit in memory of the deceased - symbol of the person's soul that remains bright - which burns for seven days. Though there is no blessing said for lighting the candle, these words (from the book of Proverbs 20:27) may be recited, along with the *Sh'ma*:

נִשְׁמַת אָדָם נֵר יְהוָה

Nishmat adam ner Adonai.

The human spirit is the light of the Adonai, the Eternal.

Mourners then eat a סֻעֻדַת הַבְּרָאָה *seudat havra'ah*, 'meal of consolation'. This meal is a physical means of teaching that life continues, even after a loss. It is intended as a way to cut through the numbness which might make one forget to eat and risk falling ill. The mourners should not be hosts nor should they be expected to serve those who have come to comfort them. Rather, it is fitting and appropriate for close friends or neighbors to prepare this first meal for the mourners. Eggs, lentils and herring (signs of life) are among the foods traditionally offered at this meal immediately after the funeral.

Periods of Mourning

SHIVA

שִׁבְעָה *Shiva* is a seven day period of intensive mourning beginning immediately after burial. Mourners stay at home and members of the community visit, reaching out to the grieving family with solace. During the period of *shiva*, mourners are exempt from most obligations of economic, social and religious life and are encouraged to focus upon their loss. If a mourner will suffer financially, then the *shiva* may end after three days, although all other aspects of mourning should be observed. In calculating the number of days, part of a day equals a full day. For example, if the funeral is at 10 a.m. on Monday, the second day of *shiva* begins at sunset on Monday evening, with the *shiva* ending the following Sunday morning.

In the case of holidays (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Passover or Shavuot) *shiva* ends with the holiday. In the case of a funeral held in the middle of Sukkot or Passover, *shiva* is delayed. For details, please speak directly to our clergy.

There are traditional outward forms of mourning prescribed during this period for those who wish to participate. Traditionally, hair is not cut, one does not shave or wear make up and the mourners sit without shoes on low benches or boxes. Reform Judaism recognizes that these observances are not necessary for one to feel the loss of a loved one, and they may be observed as one wishes.

From the moment of death until the end of *shiva*, there is a custom of covering the mirrors. While the source of this practice is not clear, we know that after a loss, we need to focus on internal issues of the soul, not on external concerns. Again, you may choose to follow this practice, but are not obligated to do so.

A prayer service will be conducted in the house of mourning upon request of mourners, except on Shabbat, festivals and on the High Holy Days. Our synagogue provides סידורים *siddurim* (prayer books) and כפות *kippot* for this service. The clergy are generally available to lead the services at the home. However, we encourage knowledgeable family or friends to also lead these services as a means of honoring the person who has died.

On Shabbat, *shiva* is interrupted and mourners should attend synagogue services as a way to feel part of the community, to be reminded of the continuity of life and to derive solace from others.

CONDOLENCE CALLS

One goes to the *shiva* house to provide human companionship and a sympathetic ear. Mourners should be encouraged to talk about the deceased. Although the mood, quite clearly, should not be festive, enjoyable moments and memories of the departed are most appropriate to share with the mourners. It is proper to bring food, a physical means of sustaining life, to the *shiva* house to eliminate the family's concern with meal preparation during this period. Keeping in mind the purpose of the call, it is appropriate for those who visit to take care of the mourners (not for the mourner to be a host).

SHLOSHIM

The first thirty days following the burial takes its name from the Hebrew for "thirty" שלשים *shloshim*. During this period, mourners should refrain from attending parties, though may attend weddings previously arranged. If you are planning to celebrate at a *simcha* (for example, a wedding) the celebration is tempered in respect for mourning. It is appropriate to attend the *simcha*, but not to remain for music or dancing. Thereafter, mourners return to normal activities in accordance with their personal desires.

For the period of *shloshim*, the month after the death, the name of the deceased is read at our services on Shabbat.

Traditionally, the Mourner's *Kaddish* is recited for parents for a year (some suggest 11 months, but Reform Judaism encourages a full year of mourning). For all other loved ones the tradition is to recite the Mourner's *Kaddish* only during *shloshim* (the thirty days after the funeral) although you may (and many do) say it for a longer period of time.

During the year of mourning, many mourners take on a regular weekly commitment to attend Shabbat worship and recite the Mourner's *Kaddish* (some may even say *Kaddish* daily). Reform Judaism encourages such a commitment in honor of the deceased and for support of the mourner.

Yahrzeit

This is the anniversary of the death. Since the Jewish day begins at sunset, a candle is lit in the evening that begins the *yahrzeit* in memory of the deceased. The family is encouraged to choose the Hebrew or English date of the *yahrzeit*, to honor together the memory of a loved one.

The deceased's name is read as part of the Shabbat service the week of the anniversary of death. At The Community Synagogue, we commemorate either the Hebrew or English date in accordance with your wishes. Following traditional practice, the custom in our synagogue is that only those who are in the year of mourning or are observing a *yahrzeit* are asked to rise and recite the words of the Mourner's *Kaddish* (though others may choose to do so). Please note that this prayer can be said wherever one worships. If you cannot attend The Community Synagogue, we urge you to go to another synagogue to recite the Mourner's *Kaddish* at the time of your loved one's *yahrzeit*.

Yizkor

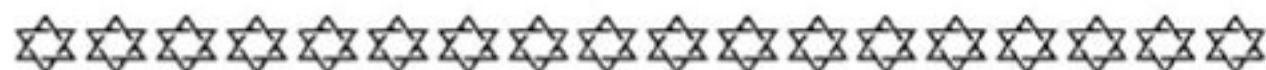
The Jewish calendar recognizes that the process of mourning takes a lifetime. We may grow and form new relationships, but the past is always with us, a part of who we are. In Judaism, therefore, we recognize the ongoing need for healing with the *יִזְכוֹר* *Yizkor* prayer. This prayer is said four times during the year - on Yom Kippur and during the three major festivals of Shmini Atzeret/Simchat Torah, Passover and Shavuot. Prayers in memory of the dead, as well as the Mourner's *Kaddish*, are read by the entire congregation during these services. The nature of the *Yizkor* service provides us with opportunities to reflect not only on death, but also on life and its meaning. We remember those who were close to us and what they taught us through their words and actions.

The מצבה Matzevah (Gravestone)

The Hebrew word for gravestone is מצבה *matzevah*. In the Bible stone columns were erected to commemorate oaths, to delineate boundaries and to mark moments of great triumph and connection with God. In North America, the custom is to place a monument to mark the gravesite at any time during the year of death after the period of *shloshim*. However, most dedicate the stone about a year later in order to give time for the immediate grief to subside. The grave may be visited anytime after *shloshim*.

UNVEILING

Some families wish to have a formal service to unveil the gravestone. This can be done anytime after the first thirty days after burial, but is often connected with the year anniversary of the death. The unveiling is a custom which has arisen in Jewish practice in North America, but is not required by Jewish law. There is no formal liturgy for an unveiling and a member of the clergy is not required to perform the service. At The Community Synagogue we have service booklets available so that you can lead the service on your own. In addition, you can meet with one of the clergy prior to the unveiling to guide you through the ceremony. The unveiling is usually a private family affair that is meant to focus on the life of the person being remembered and to dedicate our own lives to the values expressed by the life of that loved one.



Remembering the Dead

NAMING A CHILD

In *Ashkenazic* (Eastern European) Jewish tradition, it is customary to name children for deceased members of the family. The name is meant to recall the special characteristics of the deceased and render a lasting tribute to them. As a point of interest - *Sephardim* (Jews from the Mediterranean, Africa and the Middle East) have the custom of naming after a living relative. Families can use the actual name of the deceased or a name which begins with the same Hebrew letter. This name is used at the child's *Brit Milah* (circumcision), *Brit Bat* (naming ceremony for a daughter), *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* and wedding. A child can be named for more than one person. The Rabbis and Cantor are available to assist you with a choice of names.

מַעֲשֵׂים טוֹבִים MA'ASIM TOVIM (Righteous Deeds)

AND

צְדָקָה TZEDAKAH (Righteous Giving of Money)

The measure of an individual's life is, in part, marked by the influence or impact that person had upon others during his or her lifetime. Memories of their kind deeds, teachings, love and compassion enhance our lives. As our loved ones displayed their own special characteristics through action, we can honor their memory through action. Thus, in Judaism we translate memory into the creative work of helping others.

There is no more meaningful way of remembering than to continue in the spirit of their lives with acts of *tzedakah* and גְּמִילוּת חַסְדִּים *gemilut hasidim*, deeds of loving kindness.

The Community Synagogue is available to assist your family in the fulfillment of this *mitzvah*. There are many ways which you can become involved with Temple life to honor the memory of one whom you loved. Sensitive support is provided with consideration to the qualities of the deceased, the needs of the family and the needs of both the Temple and community. As well, there are several funds and endowments for the specific purpose of perpetuating the memory of a loved one in a way which will enhance the quality of Jewish life today.

VISITING THE GRAVE

While visitation of the grave is permitted at almost any time, excessive visits are discouraged in Judaism. When visiting the grave it is appropriate to say Psalms and a prayer called *אֵל מֵלֵא רַחֲמִים* *El Malei Rachamim*, "God, full of compassion." There is a special pamphlet of prayers available in the clergy office for your use at the grave of a loved one.

Many people place a stone on the grave. There are a number of reasons given in Jewish sources. Some say it is a way of showing that the deceased is remembered. Others claim that it is a vestige of an earlier practice of placing grass on the grave, a reminder of resurrection (from Psalm 72:18: "They shall spring up as the grass of the field").

Finally, there are those who claim that this placing of stones is a way of honoring the deceased, showing that others continue to care for them.

MEMORIAL PLAQUES

Memorial plaques are displayed in our synagogue lobby. These plaques perpetuate the name and cherished memory of those departed from our lives. For further information, and to purchase a plaque, please contact The Community Synagogue office.

קדיש יתום Mourner's Kaddish

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא. בְּעֲלָמָא דִּי בְרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ, וְיִמְלִיךְ
מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיֵּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעָגְלָא
וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

*Yit-g'dal v'yit-ka-dash sh'mei ra-ba b'alma di-v'ra chir-u-tei, v'yam-lich
mal-chu-tei be-cha-yei-chon u-ve-yo-mei-chon u-ve-cha-yei de-chol beit
Yis-ra-el, ba-a-ga-la u-vi-z'man ka-riv, ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.*

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלָם וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא:

Ye-hei sh'mei ra-ba me-va-rach le-a-lam u-le-al-mei al-may-ya.

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה
וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְקַדְשָׁא. בְּרִיךְ הוּא. לְעָלָא מִן כָּל בִּרְכָתָא

וְשִׁירָתָא, תִּשְׁבַּחְתָּא וְנַחֲמָתָא, דְּאָמִירָן בְּעֲלָמָא, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

*Yit-ba-rach ve-yish-ta-bach, ve-yit-pa'ar ve-yit-ro-mam ve-yit-na-sei, ve-
yit-had-dar ve-yit-a-leh ve-yit-ha-laal she-mei de-ku-de-sha, be-rich hu,
le-ei-la min kol bir-cha-ta ve-shi-ra-ta, tush-be-cha-ta ve-ne-che-ma-ta,
da-a-mi-ran be-al-ma, ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.*

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ
אָמֵן:

*Ye-hei she-la-ma ra-ba min she-may-ya ve-cha-yim a-lei-nu ve-al kol
Yis-ra-el, ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.*

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

*O-seh sha-lom bim-ro-mav, hu ya-a-seh sha-lom a-lei-nu v'al kol Yis-ra-
el ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.*

אל מלא רחמים El Malei Rachamim

For a man:

לזכר: אל מלא רחמים שוכן במרומים. המצא מנוחה נכונה
תחת כנפי השכינה. במעלות קדושים וטהורים כזהר הרקיע
מזהירים את נשמת ופלוני בן פלוני ופלונית שהלך לעולמו.
בגן עדן תהא מנוחתו. לכן בעל הרחמים יסתירהו בסתר
כנפיו לעולמים. ויצרור בצרור החיים את נשמתו. יי הוא
נחלתו: וינוח בשלום על משכבו. ונאמר אמן:

God, full of compassion, dwelling on high, grant perfect rest under the wings of Your Presence, among the holy and pure, to the soul of _____, who has entered eternity. Compassionate One, gather him in the shelter of your wings; may his soul be bound up in the bond of life. Merciful God, be his inheritance; may he rest in peace, and let us say: Amen.

For a woman:

לנקבה: אל מלא רחמים שוכן במרומים. המצא מנוחה
נכונה תחת כנפי השכינה. במעלות קדושים וטהורים כזהר
הרקיע מזהירים את נשמת ופלונית בת פלוני ופלונית
שהלכה לעולמה. בגן עדן תהא מנוחתה. לכן בעל הרחמים
יסתירה בסתר כנפיו לעולמים. ויצרור בצרור החיים את
נשמתה. יי הוא נחלתה ותנוח בשלום על משכבה. ונאמר
אמן:

God, full of compassion, dwelling on high, grant perfect rest under the wings of Your Presence, among the holy and pure, to the soul of _____, who has entered eternity. Compassionate One, gather her in the shelter of your wings; may her soul be bound up in the bond of life. God, be her inheritance; may he rest in peace, and let us say: Amen.

O God, and God of our
ancestors,
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,
Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah
bless and heal
those who are ill ... *name of
person* ..

Holy One, who is blessed, may
Your compassion overflow
to restore them,
to heal them,
to strengthen them,
to enliven them.

Send them, speedily, a complete
- a healing of the soul and a
healing of the body - along with
all the ill among all Israel and
the righteous of all humanity.
Soon and speedily, without
delay.
And let us say: Amen.

מי שברך אבותינו אברהם
יצחק ויעקב, ואמותינו שרה
רבקה רחל ולאה, הוא יברך
את החולים _____.

הקדוש ברוך הוא ימלא
רחמים עליהם, להחלימם
ולרפאתם
ולהחזיקם
ולהחיותם,

וישלח להם מהרה רפואה
שלמה רפואת הנפש,
ורפואת הגוף, בתוך שאר
חולי ישראל וכל צדקי העולם,
השתא בעגלא ובזמן קריב.
ונאמר אמן.

Psalm 23

**God, You are my Shepherd, I shall not want,
You make me lie down in green pastures,
You lead me beside the still waters,
You restore my soul;
You guide me in straight paths
 for Your Name's sake,
Yea, though I walk through the
 valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me...
You prepare a table before me
 in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy will follow me
 all the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the Eternal forever.**

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Edited and Revised
By
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