

Beth Haverim Shir Shalom Mourner's Guide



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Introduction

The Beth Haverim Mourner's Guide was prepared by the Ritual Committee, Kim Hausner chairman, and the Funeral Committee, Elyse Victor Berman chairwoman, under the guidance of Rabbi Joel Mosbacher. A note of thanks to Dr. Pam Straining for providing assistance in writing the section on talking to children about death; Elyssa Mosbacher for editing and proofreading the final draft; and Ellen Mass for formatting the document and putting it on Beth Haverim's website.

It is intended to provide members of Beth Haverim Shir Shalom (BHSS) with basic information about Jewish rituals and customs associated with death and mourning, as well as the ways that BHSS can help its members through these difficult moments. The information is arranged in sections that correspond to the stages of mourning defined by Jewish tradition.

Each section describes a different stage of mourning and the practices and customs associated with it. Anyone who is interested in delving further into Jewish mourning customs may want to look at the books listed in the bibliography.

Where appropriate the guide will note differences in practices between Orthodox and Reform. Information about the *minhag* (custom) of BHSS will be provided.

If you and your family are dealing with a serious illness or the imminent death of a loved one, please call BHSS at (201) 512-1983. *You are not alone.* At BHSS the clergy and volunteers are here to help.

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The death of a family member

Jewish customs and practice at the end of life

It is customary for a Jew to recite the *vidui*, a statement of confession, when facing death. The confession concludes with saying the *Sh'ma* as an affirmation of faith. The *vidui* may be recited by the person facing death or by a loved one, or by the rabbi or the cantor. The prayer is an act of *teshuva* (repentance), a turning back to God, so that the dying person's last act will be a return to God. The text of the *vidui* prayer can be found at the end of this guide.

If the family wishes, the rabbi or cantor should be contacted so that they can be with the family as the end approaches. The actual passing is traditionally met with the words "*Baruch Dayan Emet*," "Blessed is the righteous Judge," which is the basic expression of faith at the hour of loss.

Just as we are not alone when we enter the world, so we should not leave it alone. In the last moments of a person's life, he or she should, if possible, be surrounded by the family that was so much a part of his or her being. However, if being in the presence of a dying person presents the danger of a severe psychological trauma or of physical illness to any family member, that individual should leave the room.

Organ donation

Jewish authorities across the religious spectrum encourage organ donation. You should consult the rabbi if you have questions.

Autopsy

Judaism discourages autopsies; they violate the *halachah* (Jewish law) that prohibits the mutilation of a body. An autopsy may be allowed to save a life, when there is an immediate application of the autopsy results to the living, and when required by state law. For example, in cases where the deceased had an infectious disease that would be contagious or had died of a genetic disorder, an autopsy could be performed. It is a serious matter, and you may wish to consult with the rabbi before making any decision.

The Caring Committee organizes volunteers to help member families cope with illness and mourning. Please make a call to the synagogue to let us know you need assistance.

So long as we live, they too shall live, for they are now a part of us as we remember.

When death occurs: What to do, who to call

When a family member dies or is seriously ill, please call Beth Haverim Shir Shalom at (201) 512-1983, or contact a member of the clergy at home. One of them will call you to see how BHSS can help. Next call a funeral home to begin making arrangements for the burial. When death occurs out of town or in another state, call the local funeral home that will perform the burial. They will arrange the transportation of the body. There is no need for you to contact a funeral home where the death occurred.

If you intend for a member of the clergy to officiate at the funeral and/or *shiva* (see p. 10), do not finalize plans before speaking to the clergy. Once the final arrangements have been made, the custom of the congregation is to notify the membership via e-mail so that they might be able to express their condolences. The clergy will also want to arrange a meeting with the family if at all possible, so that they may express their condolences in person and discuss further the details of the funeral itself.

*“Birth is a
beginning and
death a
destination.
But life is a
journey, a sacred
pilgrimage”
-Alan Fine*

Funeral homes and cemeteries

Although the synagogue makes no formal recommendations, the following are some of the funeral homes used by Jews in our community:

Louis Suburban Chapels

13-01 Broadway (Rt 4), Fair Lawn, NJ (201) 791-0015

Robert Schoem's Menorah Chapel

West 150 State Highway 4, Paramus, NJ (201) 843-9090

Gutterman-Musicant

402 Park Place, Hackensack, NJ (800) 378-1892

Hellman Memorial Chapels

15 State Street, Spring Valley, NY (845) 356-8600

It should be noted that the use of a chapel service is of recent origin. Originally the major service was held at graveside, but subsequently the difficulty in reaching distant cemeteries, and the wish of large numbers of family and friends to be present for at least part of the funeral, led to chapel services. Either chapel or graveside services are acceptable today.

Our clergy encourage families to make funeral and cemetery arrangements in advance to ease pressure on survivors during this emotional time. It is also financially prudent to make such advance arrangements.

Talking to children about death

Death is a tragedy, and it requires dealing openly with the feelings that occur. We cannot protect ourselves from the reality of death, nor can we protect our children.

Many psychologists feel that children should attend funerals unless they are under 7 years of age. That said, each child is different, and parents are the ones who can make the most informed decisions about how to speak to their children about sensitive matters, and about what aspects of the mourning rituals the children will be able to handle.

Talking to your children about death when you're not sure what you think or believe can cause you to feel anxious and uncomfortable. The result may be shutting off your child's questions, and that is the last thing you want to do. So before talking with your children it is important for you, as parents, to take the time to work through your own thoughts about death. Most people, adults as well as children, find it difficult to come to terms with death. There are no "good" answers, no "right" answers. What is important is to have some way of understanding death so that you are able to talk openly with your children and help them come to some kind of understanding. To help you gain that understanding there is a wealth of Jewish teaching, philosophy, and tradition to draw upon. The bibliography lists books you may find helpful.

Death should not be seen only as frightening. Children need to be able to talk about other feelings, feelings of loss and grief and sadness. As a parent it is important to give children a vocabulary to express other feelings and emotions besides fear. Adults should welcome their children's questions as opportunities to explore the issue. Parents should let their children tell them how they feel about death, what they think, what they know, and what they want to know. Children are able to understand the meaning of death at age-appropriate levels.

Our clergy can also be helpful in these considerations and conversations. By participating in the burial rituals with the family, children can work through normal feelings about grief and mourning. However, if a child is unwilling, he or she should not be forced to participate. At a later date, he or she may be given an opportunity to visit the cemetery and see the grave. It is important to help children feel comfortable exploring their feelings about death.

Death to burial (*Aninut*)

What is *aninut*?

Aninut is the period from death to burial. The mourner is free of any social or ritual obligations except observance of the Sabbath and the funeral arrangements. During *aninut* the focus is on the deceased and showing respect to the vessel that once contained a Jewish soul.

Jewish funeral and burial customs

When to hold the funeral

The funeral should take place as soon as possible after death, within 24 hours if possible. Preparations for burial are made on any day except Shabbat, High Holidays, and festivals. Though Reform Jews will at times delay a funeral for special reasons, the force of tradition should not be lightly dispensed with. According to Jewish custom, mourning, and therefore the work of healing, cannot begin until the burial has taken place.

Ritual washing of the body (*taharah*)

Taharah is the ritual washing of the body in preparation for burial. The washing is usually done by a *Chevra Kadisha*, a group of Jews who perform this service. The body is then customarily wrapped in a plain white shroud. In death we are all seen as equal, so expensive clothes are generally deemed inappropriate. If you choose to, the funeral home will arrange for *shomrim*, literally “watchers,” who will sit with the body and read Psalms until the funeral service. Talk to the rabbi for more information about these customs.

It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men.

Ecclesiastes 7:1-2

Embalming and viewing the body

Embalming is discouraged except when required by law. Judaism prescribes that the body should be allowed to return to the dust from which it came. Jewish tradition is opposed to public viewing of the deceased in an open casket. The Jewish traditions of respect and honor for the dead reflect a healthy embrace of death's reality.

Cremation and mausoleums

Traditional Jews feel that the body must be interred in the earth and therefore do not permit cremation. Jewish tradition requires below-ground burial. Reform Judaism maintains strong reservations with regard to both cremation and mausoleums.

The casket

A plain wooden casket is traditional and expresses the Jewish value of equality in death. Elaborate coffins and expensive arrangements are not necessary. A kosher casket is made entirely of wood, with wooden dowels rather than metal fasteners, and vegetable glue instead of animal glue. God made Adam from clay, so we in effect come from the earth, and it is to earth that we return. A plain wooden casket will not impede the process.

Flowers

Flowers and any kind of floral display are discouraged. Rather, mourners are encouraged to give *tzedakah*, a charitable donation, in memory of the deceased. Please let the office know to which charities you would like people to make donations.

And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins, and mourned for his son many days.
Genesis 37:34-35

Ritual tearing of garments (*kriyah*)

The custom of *kriyah*, tearing of one's clothes, comes from the Torah. Jews mourning a family member will tear a piece of clothing or a black ribbon. The relatives who are supposed to observe this custom are son, daughter, father, mother, brother, sister, and spouse. The relative should be over the age of 13. Reform Jews usually perform this ritual at the beginning of the funeral service. A cut or tear is made on the left side when mourning a parent and on the right side for all other relatives. The garment or black ribbon should be torn (or cut) while standing and the words "*Baruch atah Adonai Elohenu Melech ha'olam dayan ha'emet*" are spoken [O God, ruler of the universe, the true judge]. The torn garment or ribbon is worn for seven days except on Shabbat, High Holidays and any festival day. The period of time is customarily extended to thirty days when mourning for a parent.

Eulogy

It is the responsibility of the mourners to provide for a eulogy. The eulogy may be given by one of the mourners or a family friend, or by the rabbi. It may be given at the chapel or at the cemetery prior to burial. The eulogy should include *hesped*, praising the deceased, and *bechi*, an expression of the grief experienced by the mourners. Any person who would wish to offer memories about the person who has died is welcome to do so, provided they have written down in advance what they wish to say. The clergy will discuss the eulogy with you at the initial meeting.

Lowering the casket

At the end of the ceremony at the cemetery, the casket will be lowered into the ground. It is a mitzvah for family and friends to help fill in the grave. Some rabbis see it as helping the mourners to accept the finality of death.

Recessional

The recessional is a custom that takes place after the burial. Those people who are present form two lines and the mourners walk between as they leave the grave site. Until now the focus has been on the deceased, on caring for the body that once held the *neshamah* (soul) of the person we loved. Now the focus shifts to the mourners and their grief. The period of *aninut* is over and the period of *shiva* (see p. 10) has begun.

Upon returning home

It is customary to light a seven-day memorial candle upon returning home from the cemetery. The funeral home should, upon request, provide one.

*He will destroy death
for ever; and God will
wipe away tears from
off all faces...*
Isaiah 25:8

The practice of covering mirrors in a house of mourning is relatively recent—it is not mentioned in medieval writings. Various reasons are given for this custom. One reason is that mirrors are associated with grooming and vanity, both of which are inappropriate for a house of mourning. Another explanation is that prayer services will be held in the house and it is forbidden to pray before a mirror. This tradition is a matter more of custom than law; individual families should follow their own tradition.

Washing of hands

It is traditional for those who attended the funeral and return to the house of mourning to wash their hands before entering the house. The washing is done with a pitcher and a bowl. The pitcher is used to pour water over both hands and into the bowl. The custom became common practice during the Middle Ages. Some rabbis believe it started as a way to remove “uncleanness” caused by “demons” that were thought to inhabit cemeteries.

Meal of condolence

It is customary for friends and members of the community to provide the first meal after the funeral. It takes place when the family returns from the burial. It is usually a simple meal of dairy products. There is also a tradition of serving boiled eggs, lentils, and bread, symbols of life. The meal is a way to show the bereaved that life goes on, and that the community is there to support them.

Prayers

The prayers usually recited by mourners may be found at the back of this booklet in English, in Hebrew, and in transliteration.

El Malay Rachamin is often sung (or recited) after the eulogy. The burial *Kaddish* is recited at the cemetery after the grave has been filled with earth.

The first week of mourning (*Shiva*)

What is *shiva*?

Shiva is the second phase of mourning. The word comes from the Hebrew for “seven” and refers to the seven days that the period traditionally lasts. It is a time to remember, to reminisce, and to share stories. It is a mitzvah to pay a *shiva* call, that is to visit someone sitting *shiva* and to help make a *minyan* for the prayer services. There are many interfaith families at BHSS, and it is entirely appropriate for relatives of other faiths to visit and console the bereaved.

Shiva starts immediately after the burial and upon returning home. The day of the funeral counts as the first day if you return home before sundown. *Shiva* ends the morning of the seventh day. The first three days are considered to be the most intense. Congregants most commonly sit *shiva* for three days. You should discuss this with the rabbi or cantor if you have questions.

Shabbat and other holidays during *shiva*

Shiva is temporarily suspended for Shabbat. It is entirely appropriate to attend Shabbat services if you are able to. *Shiva* is ended by the High Holidays (Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur) and the festivals (Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot). During *shiva* you may not recite a Torah blessing or read Torah. *Halachah* concerning festivals and holidays during the period of mourning is complicated, and you should consult with the rabbi if you have questions.

Customs and practices

A daily *shiva minyan* service is held at the mourner's home. At BHSS it is an evening (*ma'ariv*) service. The rabbi or cantor will, if possible, lead some of the services. Any of the mourners who are able to may lead the service. Beth Haverim Shir Shalom uses the prayer book “*Mishkan T'Filah* for House of Mourning.” It is a short service with a combination of Hebrew prayers and English readings. Many of the prayers are the same ones recited in a Shabbat service.

And Yosef went up to bury his father...they held there a very great and solemn lamentation; and he observed a mourning period of seven days for his father.
Genesis 50:7,10

The Ritual Committee will arrange for volunteers to lead the services for you when the rabbi and cantor are not available.

Mourners traditionally sit on low stools, if they are physically able to, and do not shave or groom themselves during this time. As noted above, it is customary to cover the mirrors in a house of mourning. The Reform movement does not require the observance of these customs, though at BHSS many choose to observe some or all of them.

At BHSS this is, again, a matter of personal choice. Jews may, if they choose to, sit *shiva* for a non-Jewish relative and say Kaddish for them.

Why dost thou forget us forever, why dost thou so long forsake us? Turn us to thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned: renew our days as of old...

Lamentations 4:20-22

When friends come to bring condolence

The loss of a loved one is a difficult time for any person or family. It is during this time that people need to know that they are not alone and that there are those nearby who care. It is a *mitzvah* to go to the house of mourning to comfort the mourners. As a mourner, you have no obligation to host or entertain those who come to visit; only to accept their condolences.

If you are the one visiting the mourner, it is customary to wait to speak until after the mourner speaks. But once you are acknowledged, all you need say is, "I'm sorry." That simple phrase, a touch, a hug, will mean more to the mourner than you can ever know.

Shiva is a time when we reminisce, remember, recapture memories of a loved one. As such, what we usually do during a condolence visit is to listen to those memories that the mourner wishes to share or to talk about other subjects initiated by the mourner. It is appropriate to focus conversation, if at all possible, on the deceased. It should be remembered that grief continues after the *shiva* period, and it would be a kindness to maintain contact with the bereaved.

Saying Kaddish

Kaddish is the prayer recited at funerals, during Yizkor services, and at the closing of regular services, and is considered to be the mourner's Kaddish. Kaddish extols the greatness and holiness of God and God's name. There is no mention of death or grief in the prayer. It is one prayer that must be recited in its original language. The text of Kaddish can be found in the Appendix.

Unlike other prayers, Kaddish is written in Aramaic.

Reform Judaism places a strong emphasis on a *minyan* (quorum) of ten Jews over the age of 13 being present to say Kaddish. The Reform movement counts women and men equally in making the number for a *minyan*. The congregation can help make a *minyan* when necessary; please contact the clergy to make these arrangements.

The URJ's website, data.urj.org/onglist, can help you find a congregation when you are traveling.

Kaddish is recited by the immediate mourners—children, spouse, parents, or siblings of the departed. Orthodox mourners recite Kaddish, preferably with a *minyan*, at the close of each thrice-a-day service. It is the custom to recite Kaddish daily for eleven months, either at home or in the synagogue. Others recite Kaddish regularly at Shabbat services in the synagogue. At BHSS, all present in the congregation rise for the mourner's Kaddish, so that the mourner feels everyone present is joining in his or her grief.

The first thirty days of mourning (*Shloshim*)

What is *shloshim*?

And the Israelites bewailed Moses in the steppes of Moab for thirty days.

Deuteronomy 34:8

The word *shloshim* comes from the Hebrew for “thirty.” *Shloshim* is the thirty-day period of mourning following the burial and including the seven days of *shiva*. During the days of *shloshim* that follow *shiva*, the mourner begins the return to his or her daily routine and community. Most of the restrictions of *shiva*, the first seven days, are now lifted.

Customs and practices

It is customary to abstain from social events, entertainments, and sporting events during the period of *shloshim*. After sitting *shiva* a mourner may attend religious celebrations, a bar/bat mitzvah, a *brit milah*, or a wedding.

Traditionally mourners would recite Kaddish with a *minyan* every day of the thirty-day period. The practice is not widely followed by the Reform movement or at BHSS. Mourners are encouraged to attend weekly Shabbat services and say Kaddish with the congregation.

The headstone or memorial plaque may be set up any time after *shloshim*. Mourners may visit the grave once the thirty days of mourning are over, though it is recommended they wait until the *yahrzeit* (the annual commemoration of the death of a family member). Some believe the custom of waiting a year originated with superstitions about the souls of the dead wandering about and taking time to settle into their grave. Others see it as a practical matter. During the first year there is little need for the reminder of a headstone. Also, the family might find it painful to deal with selecting and placing a headstone while their grief is still so raw.

When *shloshim* is over

A festival (Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot) or High Holiday (Rosh HaShanah or Yom Kippur) that occurs after the seven days of *shiva* will cancel the rest of *shloshim*. Otherwise *shloshim* will end on the morning of the thirtieth day following the burial. Remember, the day of the funeral is counted as the first day if you return from the cemetery before sundown.

The year of mourning (*Shanah*)

What is *shanah*?

Shanah is Hebrew for “year.” The mourning period for a parent is extended to eleven months and is called *shanah*. It begins following the burial and includes *shiva* and *shloshim*. Traditionally a person mourning a parent would recite Kaddish daily throughout the eleven months. Again, the practice is not widely followed within the Reform movement or at BHSS. Anyone who chooses to observe *shanah* is encouraged to attend weekly Shabbat services and say Kaddish as part of the congregation.

Unveiling

Then I looked at all the works that my hands had wrought, and at the labor that I had labored to do: and behold; all was vanity and a striving after wind...

Ecclesiastes 2:11

The unveiling marks the formal setting of the headstone or memorial plaque. It is a brief ceremony, usually attended by immediate family and close friends. The service includes the reading of Psalms, a few words of remembrance about the deceased, and Kaddish and *El Malay Rachamim*. The service may be led by a rabbi or a cantor, or by a family member. The unveiling is a recent American custom that is widely observed. Often it will be planned for the first anniversary of the death of the family member.

Yahrzeit

Yahrzeit is a Yiddish/German word that means “a year’s time.” It refers to the annual commemoration of a person’s death. The date is determined by the Jewish calendar. It is customary to attend the Shabbat service closest to the date of the yahrzeit or anniversary and recite Kaddish. Men and women recite Kaddish in the Reform movement and at BHSS. It is also customary to light a candle at home that will burn for 24 hours. Such candles are fittingly called yahrzeit candles. The name of your loved one will be read annually in the synagogue on the Shabbat preceding the anniversary of their death according to the Hebrew calendar. You will receive a letter each year indicating the date on which the name will be read and offering you the opportunity to participate in the synagogue service in their memory if you so desire. You may also want to give *tzedakah*, a charitable donation, in memory of the deceased.

Usually people will observe the *yahrzeit* of their parents. It is appropriate, if you so choose, to observe the *yahrzeit* of any beloved family member or close friend. A ritual for lighting the *yahrzeit* candle is included in the Appendix.

Saying Yizkor

Yizkor is from the Hebrew for “remembering.” It is a prayer service held at the synagogue on Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Passover, and Shavuot. The service includes reading Psalms, prayers, and reciting *El Malay Rachamim*. It is customary to light a *yahrzeit* candle at home on the eve of these Yizkor days, and to make a charitable contribution to the synagogue or another organization in memory of your loved one.

Some Jews will not attend a Yizkor service if their parents are still living. Opinions differ as to the origin of the practice. Some believe it is bad luck and tempting fate. Some believe that those who have lost a parent will feel it all the more keenly if they see others whose parents are still living. Another school of thought is that everyone should attend a Yizkor service whether their parents are alive or not. Some consider it a *mitzvah* to attend a Yizkor service. Some of the reasons to stay for Yizkor are to remember martyrs, to remember those who have no family to say Kaddish for them, and to show support for those who have lost parents.

Prayers

In the Valley of the Shadow-- *Vidui as death approaches*--וְדוּי

This prayer is read by the patient if possible, otherwise by another loved one who is present.

Everlasting God, Creator of all that lives; although I pray for healing and continued life, still I know that I am mortal. Give me courage to accept my kinship with all who have come before me.

Alas, over the year, I have committed many wrongs; I know, too, I left many undone. Yet I also know the good I did or tried to do. That goodness imparts an eternal meaning to my life.

And, as You are with me, so, I know, are You with my loved ones. This comforts my soul, O God my Rock and my Redeemer.

בְּיָדוֹ אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי, בְּעֵת אִישׁוֹן וְאֶעֱרָהּ, וְעַם רוּחִי גְּוִיָּתִי,
יִי לִי וְלֹא אֵירָא.

B'yado afkid ruchi; b'eit ishan v'a-ira v'im ruchi geviati; Adonai li v'lo i-ra.

Into Your hands I commend my spirit, both when I sleep and when I wake. Body and soul are Yours, O God, and in Your presence I cast off fear and am at rest.

יִי מֶלֶךְ, יִי מֶלֶךְ, יִי מֶלֶךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד
מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

*Adonai Melech, Adonai Malach, Adonai Yimloch l'olam va'ed.
Baruch shem k'vod malchuto l'olam va-ed.*

Eternal One: You reign, You have reigned, You will reign for ever.
Praised for ever be God's glorious majesty!

יְהוָה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים.

Adonai hu ha-Elohim.

The Eternal One alone is God.

שמע Sh'ma

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, *SH'MA YISRAEL ADONAI ELOHAYNU*

יְיָ אֶחָד. *ADONAI ECHAD.*

בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ *BARUCH SHEM K'VODE MALCHUTO*

לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. *L'OLAM VA-ED.*

Hear O Israel, Adonai is our God, Adonai is one!
Blessed is God's glorious dominion forever and ever.

קדיש--Kaddish memorial prayer

תגדל ויתקדש שמה רבא. בעלמא די ברא כרעותה, וימליך מלכותה
בחיכון וביומיכון ובחיי דכל בית ישראל. בעגלא ובזמן קריב ואמרו
אמן:

הא שמה רבא מברך לעלם ולעלמי עלמאי:
יתברך וישתבח, ויתפאר ויתרום ויתנשא ויתהדר ויתעלה ויתהלל
שמה דקדשא בריך הוא לעלא מן כל ברכתא ושירתא, תשבחתא
ונחמתא, דאמרו בעלמא, ואמרו אמן:

הא שלמא רבא מן שמאי וחיים עלינו ועל כל ישראל, ואמרו אמן:
עשה שלום במרומו הוא יעשה שלום עלינו ועל כל ישראל, ואמרו
אמן:

*Yit-ga-dal v'yit-ka-dash sh'mei ra-bah. B'al-ma di v'ra chi-ru-tei
v'yam-lich mal-chu-tei b'chai-yeh-chon uv-yo-mei-chon uv'cha-yei d'chol
beyt Yisrael. Ba'a-ga-la uviz-man kariv v'im-ru: Ameyn.*

Y'hei sh'mei raba m'va-rach l'a-lam ul-al-mey al-ma-ya.

*Yit-ba-rach v-yish-ta-bach v'yit-pa'ar v'yit-ro-mam v'yit-na-sei
v'yit-ha-dar v'yit-a-leh v'yit-ha-lal sh'mey d'ku-d'sha brich hu. L'ey-la
min kol bir-cha-ta v'shi r'-a-ta, tush-b cha-ta v'ne-che-ma-ta,
da'a-mi-ran b'al-ma, v'im-ru Ameyn.*

*Y'hey sh'mey ra-ba min sh'ma-ya v'cha-yim, a-ley-nu v'al kol Yis-ra-el,
v'im-ru, A-meyn.*

*O-seh shalom bim-ro-mav, Hu ya-a-seh shalom a-ley-nu, v'al kol
Yis-ra-el, v'im-ru, Ameyn.*

Magnified and sanctified be the great name of the One by whose will the world was created. May God's rule become effective in your lives, and in the life of the whole House of Israel. May it be so soon, and let us say:
Amen.

May God's great name be praised to all eternity.

Blessed and praised; glorified, exalted and extolled; lauded, honored and acclaimed be the name of the Holy One, who is ever to be praised, though far above the eulogies and songs of praise and consolation that human lips can utter, and let us say: Amen.

May great peace descend from heaven, and abundant life be granted, to us and all Israel, and let us say: Amen.

May the Most High, Source of perfect peace, grant peace to us, to all Israel, and all the world. Amen.

On lighting a Yahrzeit candle

The family gathers at sundown on the eve of the anniversary of the death.

One might say:

At this moment, I pause for thought in memory of my beloved...

I give thanks for the blessing of life, of companionship and memory. I am grateful for the strength and faith that sustained me in the hour of my bereavement. Though sorrow lingers, I have learned that love is stronger than death. Though my beloved is beyond my sight, I do not despair, for I sense my beloved in my heart as a living presence.

יהוה רַעִי, לֹא אֶחְסָר.

Adonai Roi, loechsar.

The Eternal One is 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 paths of righteousness for Your name's sake. Yes, even when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; with rod and staff you comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have annointed my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Eternal God for ever. [Psalm 23]

A group or individual might tell a story about or share a memory, pictures, or food which remind them of their loved one, and then say:

Sustained by words of faith, comforted by precious memories, I kindle the Yahrzeit light in remembrance. As this light burns pure and clear, so may the blessed memory of the goodness of my dear... illumine my soul.

The light is kindled.

For a male, say:

זְכוֹרוֹנוֹ לְבִרְכָה.

Zichrono livracha. His memory is a blessing.

For a female, say:

זְכוֹרוֹנָהּ לְבִרְכָה.

Zichrona livracha. Her memory is a blessing.

The following might be read or sung:

יש כוכבים--*Yesh Kochavim*

Music: Jeff Klepper, Danny Friedlander Text: Hannah Szenesh

There are stars up above so far away we only see their light
 Long, long after the star itself is gone.
 And so it is, with people that we loved
 Their memories keep shining ever brightly though their time with us is done.

But the stars that light up the darkest night,
 These are the lights that guide us.
 As we live our days, these are the ways we remember, we remember. (2X)

יש כוכבים שְאֹרֶם מְגִיעַ אֶרְצָה
 רק כְּאֶשֶׁר הֵם עֲצָמָם אָבְדוּ וְאֵינָם.
 יש אַנְשִׁים שְׂזִיו זְכָרָם מְאִיר
 כְּאֶשֶׁר הֵם עֲצָמָם אֵינָם עוֹד בְּתוֹכֵינוּ.
 אֲזוֹרוֹת אֵלֶּה הַמְּבַהֲיָקִים בְּחֻשְׁכַּת הַלַּיִל.
 הֵם, הֵם שְׁמֵרָאִים לְאָדָם אֶת הַדֶּרֶךְ.

*Yesh kocha-vim sheoram ma-gia artza
 Rak Ka'asher hem atzmam avdu v'ainam
 Yesh anashim sheziv zich-ram meir
 Ka'asher hem atzmam ei-nam odbtochenu
 O-ort ele hamavhikim bcheshkat halayil
 Hem, hem shema'rim la-a-dam et haderech*

GLOSSARY

<i>aninut</i>	The period of mourning from death to burial
<i>bechi</i>	An expression of grief
<i>Chevra Kadisha</i>	Society of volunteers who perform the ritual washing of a body
<i>halachah</i>	Jewish religious law
<i>hesped</i>	“Praise”
<i>Kaddish</i>	The prayer associated with mourning
<i>kriyah</i>	The tearing of clothes or a black ribbon as sign of mourning
<i>ma'ariv</i>	“Evening”
<i>minyan</i>	Ten adults necessary for a prayer service
<i>minhag</i>	“Custom” or “practice”
<i>neshama</i>	“Soul” or “spirit”
<i>shanah</i>	“Year.” The year-long period of mourning
<i>shloshim</i>	“Thirty.” The first thirty days of mourning following the burial
<i>shiva</i>	“Seven.” The first seven days of mourning following the burial
<i>shomrim</i>	“Watchers”
<i>tabarah</i>	The ritual washing of the deceased
<i>teshuva</i>	“Turning back to God,” repentance
<i>tzedakah</i>	“Righteousness,” often used to mean “charity”
<i>vidui</i>	“Confession”

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Putting my house in order

Final directions and information

As a possible help to survivors, we would like to suggest that members of the congregation fill out the following form. It can be used as part of a living will and should be kept with other important papers. It is not a legal document and should not be used as such. It is strongly recommended that you consult with an attorney about your wishes concerning end of life issues. An attorney can prepare and execute a legal document that will ensure your wishes are carried out.

Two forms are provided for your convenience.

Putting my house in order (final directions and information)

Full Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

Date of Birth _____ Place of Birth _____

Date of Last Will _____ Location of Will _____

Executor's Name _____ Email or
Phone _____

Executor's Address _____

Lawyer's Name _____ Email or
Phone _____

Lawyer's Address _____

Preferred Funeral Director _____

I have/have not a pre-planned funeral _____

Organ Donations arranged with _____

Choice of Cemetery _____

Make Donations to _____

Persons to Notify _____

What I would like to say to my family and to my friends _____

Putting my house in order (final directions and information)

Full Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

Date of Birth _____ Place of Birth _____

Date of Last Will _____ Location of Will _____

Executor's Name _____ Email or
Phone _____

Executor's Address _____

Lawyer's Name _____ Email or
Phone _____

Lawyer's Address _____

Preferred Funeral Director _____

I have/have not a pre-planned funeral _____

Organ Donations arranged with _____

Choice of Cemetery _____

Make Donations to _____

Persons to Notify _____

What I would like to say to my family and to my friends _____

Notes:



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