

**A JEWISH GUIDE
TO DEATH AND MOURNING
IN CHAMPAIGN-URBANA**

5776 / 2016

Chevra Kadisha Committee (Jewish Burial Society)
Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation
503 E. John St.
Champaign, IL 61820

Cemetery Committee
Sinai Temple
3104 W. Windsor Rd.
Champaign, IL 61822

CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

For a complete listing
of contacts and resources and updates,
see inside back cover or visit
Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation
website: www.cujf.org.

An electronic version of this booklet
is also available at www.cujf.org.

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For a detailed account of the origins of earlier versions of parts of this document, see Acknowledgments.

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DEDICATION

To Raymond D. Spooner

in gratitude
for his passionate and creative contributions
to the Champaign-Urbana Jewish community
and
for sharing his journey with us,
while teaching us all to cherish the ride.

Peace, love, and midwives

OVERVIEW

This guidebook provides information for the Champaign-Urbana Jewish community in carrying out duties and mourning rituals following the death of a Jewish person in our area. Part I provides practical information needed to arrange a Jewish funeral and burial. Part II provides detailed information on Jewish traditions and practices from a religious and historical perspective. Part III describes the work of the Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial Society) and explains how to engage its assistance. Part IV lists important issues related to advanced planning. Parts I-IV may be read independently, as well as collectively, so there is some repetition.

The activities and support described here are available to the entire local Jewish community, regardless of affiliation. In situations of severe hardship, financial support may be available through Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation, Sinai Temple, Chabad, and/or the funeral home. Approximate local funeral home and cemetery costs, which are surveyed annually by the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Champaign County, are available online (see www.funerals.org). A complete list of local contacts and resources appears on the inside back cover of this booklet (visit the Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation website, www.cujf.org for updated information).

Because this document is intended to be useful to everyone in the local Jewish community, many variations in belief and practice are described. However, the work is not exhaustive. To keep the booklet a manageable length and to acknowledge that many individuals adopt practices from more than one branch of Judaism, most variations are described as traditional or liberal, rather than belonging to a specific denomination. Since the vast majority of local residents are of Ashkenazi background or adoption, Sephardi and Mizrahi variations are, regrettably, not included.

The name of God is considered sacred in Jewish tradition. Because prayers are printed in this booklet using the name of God, please treat this booklet as you would a prayer book.

Prayers in Part II appear in Hebrew or Aramaic, in transliteration, and in English translation. Elsewhere, foreign words appear in Roman type and are defined in the Glossary at the end of this document. Extremely familiar Hebrew, Aramaic, and Yiddish words, like Shabbat and mitzvah, are defined only in the Glossary. Less common foreign words are also defined in the text the first time that they appear in each major section (Parts I-IV).

PART I:

**Arranging a Jewish Funeral and Burial
in Champaign-Urbana**

Introduction

Immediately following the death of a loved one, many decisions need to be made, seemingly all at once, at a time when the family is often tired, emotions are intense, and thoughtful planning is difficult. To ease the burden of arranging a funeral and burial, this section lists and prioritizes basic tasks and decisions; explains choices facing the family; identifies and describes relevant individuals, agencies, and resources in the community; and addresses special situations. A checklist to assist you in organizing your activities and decisions appears at the end of Part I.

Tasks Immediately Following Death

The sequence of activities presented below is common. The optimal order for you will depend upon your situation.

Contact Closest Family and Friends

Certain family and friends may need to be notified immediately, while others may be notified later. First contacts might include close family and those traveling long distances. Families in the habit of communicating electronically may be comfortable sending notification by this method instead of, or in addition to, by telephone.

Contact Civil Officials

If the person dies in a hospital, hospice, or nursing home, staff will pronounce the death and document it appropriately. If the person dies at home, you will need to call the Champaign County coroner to do this. There is no charge for the coroner's services. If police officers or an ambulance crew are involved, they will know what to do. Sometimes autopsy is indicated or required for medical or legal reasons, in which case it is permissible according to Jewish tradition.

Contact Rabbi

A rabbi can provide you with guidance and comfort. The Sinai Temple rabbi usually officiates at funerals and graveside services in the Jewish section of Mt. Hope Cemetery in Champaign. Other rabbis (for example, Chabad and Hillel) may also officiate at or assist with funerals and burials, and rabbis from congregations in nearby communities (for example, Springfield and Bloomington) may substitute when the rabbi at Sinai Temple is unavailable. If the funeral and/or burial will be out of town, consultation with a rabbi in Champaign-Urbana as well as with a rabbi in the distant location may be helpful. If you plan to have someone who is not an ordained rabbi officiate at a service in the Jewish section of Mt. Hope Cemetery, you must coordinate plans with the Sinai Temple rabbi.

Since Jewish burials usually take place quickly, it is important to arrange the time of the burial as soon as possible. The rabbi that you have chosen will meet with you to plan the funeral service, to talk with you about the deceased in preparation for a eulogy, and to arrange for services during shiva (the period immediately following burial, traditionally seven days). Do not finalize the date and time of the funeral service until the rabbi's availability is confirmed.

Part I: Arranging a Jewish Funeral and Burial in Champaign-Urbana

Contact Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial Society)

At the request of the family, the local Chevra Kadisha provides shomrim (volunteers to sit with the deceased from the time of death until burial) and/or to perform taharah (prepare the deceased for burial according to Jewish tradition). If you wish to engage the participation of the local Chevra Kadisha, call Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation, notify the funeral home, and discuss this with the rabbi as soon as possible, so that calls to Chevra Kadisha volunteers may begin immediately. Cremation and other departures from Jewish tradition do not necessarily preclude involvement of the Chevra Kadisha.

Choose and Contact Funeral Home

Several funeral homes in Champaign-Urbana have basic knowledge of how to follow Jewish custom, but bear in mind that they are not experts in Jewish matters. If burial will be delayed beyond 24 hours, it is important to consider the availability of on-site refrigeration. Also, if you want the Chevra Kadisha to arrange volunteers to sit with the deceased from death until burial, check to see that the funeral home you select will permit this. Most will allow 24-hour coverage, but a few permit volunteers to sit with the body only during business hours.

Call the funeral home of your choice, and its staff will transport the deceased to its facility. Costs vary depending upon the funeral home you select and your choice of funeral home services. If the person dies outside the Champaign-Urbana area and is to be buried here or if the person dies here and is to be buried elsewhere, funeral directors at either end can advise you about costs and make arrangements for transportation.

Contact Sinai Temple Cemetery Committee (for Mt. Hope Cemetery Plots)

The Sinai Temple Cemetery Committee administers the sale of burial rights in Jewish sections of Mt. Hope Cemetery in Champaign for the entire area Jewish community (affiliated and unaffiliated, alike). Non-Jewish spouses of Jewish community members may be buried in Jewish sections of Mt. Hope Cemetery. Note that if non-Jewish clergy are to participate in a burial at the cemetery, you must coordinate plans with the Sinai Temple rabbi. Burial of cremated remains is permitted, as is burial of individuals who have committed suicide.

The purchase price of a burial plot includes perpetual care, but not associated fees such as opening and closing the grave. If the family already owns a plot, you should inform the Cemetery Committee of the death, to help Mt. Hope Cemetery management identify the location of the burial plot. Do not finalize the date and timing of burial without first consulting cemetery staff.

Arrange Meal of Condolence

Often following the funeral and burial, there is a community meal, called the meal of condolence. Traditionally, this takes place in the family home of the deceased, but may occur elsewhere. Community members provide food, supplies, and logistics, often coordinated by a family friend. If you would like assistance, contact the rabbi.

Next Steps: Arranging a Funeral and Burial

Once the most urgent tasks described above have been accomplished or at least initiated, the next steps are to meet with the funeral director and to make arrangements with the cemetery. If you wish, a member of the Chevra Kadisha and/or the Cemetery Committee may accompany you to provide information and/or support.

Basic Funeral Home and Cemetery Services and Requirements

Feel free to ask the funeral director exactly what is and is not included in the basic package, as options and costs differ substantially from one funeral home to the next. For this reason, funeral homes are required by federal law to provide itemized listings of their services at the outset, when you visit their facilities. If a funeral home hesitates or refuses to do this, look elsewhere.

- Transportation

Basic services provided by a funeral home include transportation of the body from the place of death to the funeral home and from the funeral home to the cemetery. Additional transportation usually incurs additional charges.

- Preparation for Burial

The funeral home will prepare the deceased for burial unless you ask for the Chevra Kadisha to do so. Remind funeral home staff that embalming is not part of Jewish tradition. With funeral home preparation, you may choose to have the deceased wrapped in a sheet or dressed in ordinary clothing. When Chevra Kadisha volunteers are involved, they dress the body in a traditional shroud.

- Casket

By Jewish tradition, coffins are unfinished pine without nails or other metal fixtures and are usually considerably less expensive than other caskets. The price of a casket is not usually included in the base price for funeral home services. Local funeral homes can generally obtain a casket via overnight delivery, if one is not already in stock.

- Concrete Vault

Purchase of a concrete, outer vault (also called a grave liner) is required by nearly all cemeteries in Champaign-Urbana, including Mt. Hope Cemetery and Mausoleum. The vault is charged as part of the opening and closing of the grave and may be billed by the cemetery or a vault company rather than by a funeral director.

- Opening and Closing Grave

The basic rate for opening and closing the grave applies for a burial taking place 9 am-3 pm, Monday-Friday. Other times of day and Sunday burial are considerably more expensive, while cremation burials

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are less expensive. Depending upon the season, the cemetery may require 24 to 48 hours notification to prepare the gravesite, which can conflict with the Jewish tradition of prompt burial. By custom, Jewish burials do not occur on the Sabbath, Jewish festivals, or at night.

Some funeral homes list grave opening and closing costs as an additional item on their own bill and then transfer your payment to the cemetery, but others require that the fee be paid directly to Mt. Hope Cemetery. When death is imminent, opening/closing costs can usually be paid in advance of death or burial, which may be a convenience for the family.

- Interment Order

Once the opening and closing fee has been paid, a family member must sign an interment order at Mt. Hope Cemetery. If a family member is not available, a member of the Sinai Temple Cemetery Committee may sign instead.

Additional Choices and Considerations

- Costs

Other funeral home and cemetery choices are available, often at additional cost. Federal law requires that an itemized price list be presented to you by the funeral home and cemetery when you are making your decisions and that your choices be itemized on your bill. An honorarium for the officiating rabbi is appropriate if the deceased was not a member of his or her congregation or if the rabbi is traveling from out of town. If the Chevra Kadisha is involved, a donation to Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation (designated in support of the Chevra Kadisha) is appropriate to defray the costs of burial shrouds and other supplies, training and education, and burial of the indigent.

- Sitting with the Deceased (Shomrim)

If you ask for the Chevra Kadisha to arrange for people to sit with the deceased, shomrim (volunteers from the local Jewish community) will be present at the funeral home continuously and will accompany the body to the funeral service and/or burial. If family members wish to be part of this process, it is appropriate for them to serve as shomrim, but it is not required.

- Preparation for Burial (Taharah)

If you chose for the Chevra Kadisha to prepare the body, trained volunteers will wash and dress the deceased in a traditional white shroud, usually muslin. The body may be buried with the deceased's own tallit (prayer shawl) and/or kippah (skull cap) or ones newly purchased by the family or supplied by the Chevra Kadisha.

- Funeral Service Options

The least complicated and least expensive funeral is a simple graveside service without the use of tent or chairs. This is often called direct or immediate burial. Transportation to another location is usually an

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extra cost. During inclement weather, the non-denominational chapel at Mt. Hope Cemetery may be an option for the funeral service. Facility charges will be added for services held at Sinai Temple, a funeral home, or the Mt. Hope Cemetery chapel.

- Preparation at Gravesite

Erection of a tent and placement of ground covers and chairs at graveside are additional charges. Keriah ribbons (for tearing as a symbol of mourning) and Kaddish cards (containing the Mourner's Kaddish in Hebrew and in transliteration) may be as well.

- Filling the Grave

It is Jewish custom to scatter earth on the coffin with a trowel or shovel. You may choose to use a small, symbolic amount of soil or to have enough earth available at graveside to completely fill the grave. Be sure to specify in advance of the burial which you prefer and clearly communicate your choice to cemetery personnel. They will provide a trowel or shovels and sufficient earth to fulfill your request. Also, discuss with the rabbi and the cemetery in advance how you want the mechanism that lowers the vault and casket into the grave to be set up, as the initial position of the concrete vault may be either at ground level or at the base of the grave.

- Announcements and Obituaries

Death notices may be sent by email to the local Jewish community at no cost through Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation, Sinai Temple, and/or Chabad by contacting the relevant offices. Note that each organization maintains its own list and that, while the lists overlap, they are far from identical. These messages can include a brief biography, a list of survivors, and information about services, meal of condolence, shiva, and charitable donations. This information can be sent out quickly through Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation and should usually be limited to one or two messages, as details become available. Sinai Temple prefers to send out only one complete announcement. A form to guide you in preparing such announcements and a sample obituary appear at the end of Part III. Engaging the Chevra Kadisha.

Death notices and obituaries may also be distributed in print and online through *The News-Gazette*. The following information is available on its website, along with further information about how to prepare an obituary:

The News-Gazette offers families the opportunity to memorialize their loved ones in their own words through personalized obituaries. It will publish a basic obituary with limited information at no charge. It will also publish a free death notice when complete funeral services have not been arranged. There is a charge for personalized obituaries and photos. *The News-Gazette* only accepts obituaries from funeral homes, cremation societies, or comparable entities that are in charge of arrangements. It only accepts obituary information directly from family members when no funeral professionals are involved. In such circumstances, the newspaper confirms the death through an independent source such as a coroner, police, or clergy.

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- Guest Register and Note Cards

The funeral home may offer an optional, bound, guest register for those who attend the funeral and/or shiva to sign. Alternatively, if you choose to provide one, you may purchase your own.

The funeral home may also offer two types of memorial note cards. One type, containing brief information about the deceased, is given to those attending the funeral. The other type, sent later by family members, acknowledges receipt of food for the meal of condolence, memorial donations, and/or sympathy cards. Families can usually obtain their own note cards at lesser expense.

Non-Traditional Choices and Considerations

- Cremation

Although historically not part of Jewish tradition, some families choose cremation. In this community, cremation does not preclude families from following traditional practices before the cremation. If desired, the Chevra Kadisha will arrange for shomrim and/or wash and dress the body. Purchase of a casket, however, is not required. Cremation ashes (also called cremains) may be kept, buried in a cemetery, or disposed of privately. Various containers for cremains are available through funeral homes and online. Note that scattering of ashes is not allowed in some public parks and municipalities.

- Crypt

Similarly, although burial below ground is the Jewish norm, there are families who choose burial of the body in an above-ground crypt (i.e., a mausoleum). According to a 1981 Reform Responsa from the Central Conference of American Rabbis in answer to a question submitted by Rabbi Isaac Neuman of Champaign, "There is nothing in Reform Judaism which would preclude burial in a mausoleum." A Jewish section of crypts is available at Mt. Hope Cemetery. Unlike plots in the Jewish section, which are sold exclusively through the Sinai Temple Cemetery Committee, crypts in the mausoleum are purchased directly from Mt. Hope Cemetery. Be aware that cemetery policy requires embalming prior to entombment in the mausoleum. If desired, the Chevra Kadisha may still be involved.

- Embalming

Traditional Jewish burial includes all parts of the body of the deceased, even fluids. For this reason, embalming is not done. Except in the case of entombment in a crypt (see above), any funeral home professional who tries to pressure you into embalming or indicates that it is required is incorrect.

- Visitation and Viewing

Judaism teaches that a mourner is not truly capable of consolation until after burial of the loved one. Judaism also teaches that it is a violation of the dignity of the deceased to view the deceased. For these reasons, visitation before burial, with or without viewing, is not part of traditional Jewish practice.

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- Anatomical Gift Associations

If a person has chosen to contribute his/her body to an anatomical gift association for scientific purposes, such donations are not generally free and must be arranged by the family well in advance of death. Transportation of the body can be expensive and negotiations may be protracted. Compatibility with Jewish custom depends upon circumstances.

Other Tasks and Special Circumstances

Organ Donation

Although Jewish tradition assumes burial of the complete body, organ donation is considered meritorious when it is life-saving. Organ donation is usually possible only when death occurs in a hospital. If organ donation is considered, hospital staff should be made aware of this before death, as soon as possible. Donation of individual organs is normally done at no cost to the family. If you wish to be an organ donor, it is important to register your status through your driver's license and/or medical advance directives. It is also advisable to inform family members of your choice.

Death by Non-Natural Causes

Even if an individual dies as a result of violence, accident, or suicide, traditional Jewish practices may be observed. Involvement of the Chevra Kadisha, rabbinical participation, and burial in the Jewish section of Mt. Hope Cemetery are unaffected by these tragic circumstances.

Shiva

Shiva typically begins the day of the funeral, immediately following burial. Shiva services are usually held at the family home and may be arranged and conducted by a rabbi or by another member of the Jewish community. Prayer books are obtained through the rabbi or the minyan (prayer group) to which the officiating community member belongs. The number of days that shiva is observed varies depending upon family tradition. Most often, it is three or seven days. Some funeral homes offer a shiva candle, which burns for seven days. Such candles may also be obtained from the Chevra Kadisha at no cost or purchased from the Sinai Temple Gift Shop.

Out of Town Issues

If the deceased will be buried out of town, the body may be prepared locally or at its destination. The funeral director will know how to arrange for shipping by ground or air, which may be expensive in either case. Delays in obtaining medical declaration of death or clearance by the coroner may occur, especially during weekends or holidays. Delays may also be expected for deaths that occur outside medical facilities or where suicide or cremation is involved.

Preparation of the body (with or without involvement of a chevra kadisha) may be arranged locally or out of town, but this option may not be available in smaller communities. Despite what officials may claim, embalming is rarely required for domestic or overseas shipment. It is not generally necessary to ship the

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body in a casket, as standard containers are available and a casket may be provided at the destination. Minimizing the number of funeral homes involved usually reduces costs.

Shiva may occur in or out of town, depending upon the needs of the family.

Considerations for Veterans

You may ask the funeral home to contact a local post of Veterans of Foreign Wars to provide a color guard to play taps at burial of a veteran and to present a United States flag to the family. There is no charge for this service, although donations to the VFW are welcomed. In other cities, the VFW, the American Legion, and/or the Jewish War Veterans of the USA may provide this service.

Individuals contemplating burial in a national military cemetery should check well in advance of death to determine availability of plots and eligibility for burial in the cemetery of choice. Some national military cemeteries are closed to new burials and restrictions may apply for those that are open.

Veterans are eligible for a death benefit of \$2,000 to pay for burial expenses. To apply, contact the Department of Veteran's Affairs.

If the deceased was a U.S. veteran who served at least 24 months of active duty or who died while on active duty, you can also obtain a bronze veteran's grave marker free of charge from the Department of Veteran's Affairs. At Mt. Hope Cemetery, these must be set on a granite or cement base, arranged through the cemetery. A veteran's marker may be used alone as a headstone or placed as a footstone on a grave that is also marked by a headstone.

Social Security Notification

The funeral home will notify the Social Security Administration of the death (and the Department of Veteran's Affairs, when appropriate). Those eligible may receive a Social Security death benefit of \$255 for burial.

Death Certificates

You may order death certificates through the funeral home while you are arranging the funeral. Six to ten copies are usually sufficient, but more may be needed, depending upon the complexity of the deceased's financial affairs. For deaths occurring locally, additional official copies may be purchased later directly from the Champaign County Clerk's office in Urbana. The cost per copy is minimal.

Delayed Memorial Service

On occasion, families may elect to arrange a memorial service well after burial. Advance and reminder announcements may be sent via Sinai Temple, Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation, and/or *The News-Gazette*.

Cemetery Data Base

The Sinai Temple Cemetery Committee will issue to the family a deed for burial rights for a plot or plots that they purchase and will place copies reflecting ownership in the committee's files and in Mt. Hope Cemetery's files. The Cemetery Committee maintains maps that show the location of purchased plots and burials. Information about the location of burials is shared with the JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR) cemetery database.

Gravestone

Traditionally, a gravestone may be placed any time after shiva in the United States or after sheloshim (the first thirty days of mourning) in Israel. Many people choose to erect the gravestone with an unveiling on the first *yahrzeit* (anniversary of the death). For customary wording, consult Part II: Observing Jewish Death and Mourning Traditions, section After the First Year. Local monument companies can assist you. Check spelling of foreign words with a rabbi or other expert in the relevant language. Before purchase and installation, consult Sinai Temple cemetery policies and the Mt. Hope Cemetery office about appropriate monument size and placement.

Sinai Temple Yahrzeit Information Form

To record a death in the Sinai Temple *yahrzeit* database, you can use the Sinai Temple Yahrzeit Information Form appearing at the end of Part I. Sinai Temple uses this community archive to send you a reminder of the *yahrzeit* each year. The name of the deceased is printed in the Sinai Temple monthly bulletin and the appropriate Friday night program of service. It is considered a *mitzvah* to make a charitable donation annually on this occasion.

Sinai Temple Memorial Plaques

A bronze memorial plaque stating the name of the deceased and the date of death may be purchased for placement on the memorial wall immediately adjacent to the sanctuary at Sinai Temple. This purchase is tax-deductible. To order a plaque, you may use the Sinai Temple Yahrzeit Information Form appearing at the end of Part I. Memorial plaques are specially marked at each *yahrzeit*. These names are also read aloud at the Shabbat service preceding the *yahrzeit* and printed annually in the Yom Kippur *Roll of Remembrance*.

Part I: Arranging a Jewish Funeral and Burial in Champaign-Urbana

Checklist: Arranging a Funeral and Burial

- ___ Tasks Immediately Following Death
 - ___ Contact Closest Family and Friends
 - ___ Contact Civil Officials
 - ___ Contact Rabbi
 - ___ Contact Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial Society)
 - ___ Choose and Contact Funeral Home
 - ___ Contact Sinai Temple Cemetery Committee (for Mt. Hope Cemetery Plots)
 - ___ Arrange Meal of Condolence
- ___ Next Steps: Arranging a Funeral and Burial
 - ___ Basic Funeral Home and Cemetery Services and Requirements
 - ___ Transportation
 - ___ Preparation for Burial
 - ___ Casket
 - ___ Concrete Vault
 - ___ Opening and Closing Grave
 - ___ Interment Order
 - ___ Additional Choices and Considerations
 - ___ Costs
 - ___ Sitting with the Deceased (Shomrim)
 - ___ Preparation for Burial (Taharah)
 - ___ Funeral Service Options
 - ___ Preparation at Gravesite
 - ___ Filling the Grave
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 - ___ Cremation
 - ___ Crypt
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- ___ Other Tasks and Special Circumstances
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 - ___ Death by Non-Natural Causes
 - ___ Shiva
 - ___ Out of Town Issues
 - ___ Considerations for Veterans
 - ___ Social Security Notification
 - ___ Death Certificates
 - ___ Delayed Memorial Service
 - ___ Cemetery Data Base
 - ___ Gravestone
 - ___ Sinai Temple Yahrzeit Information Form
 - ___ Sinai Temple Memorial Plaques

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Form: Sinai Temple Yahrzeit Information

Attention: Cemetery & Memorial Committee

Names of deceased family members are mentioned at the Friday evening Shabbat service held in the week prior to observance of the yahrzeit (anniversary of the death). Family members will be notified by mail in advance of the date of observance. Please list the names of those you wish to be remembered in this way. If you know only the Hebrew date of death or only the civil date, we can determine the other date for you. If you wish to order a memorial plaque for the individual, check that option and enclose a check for \$325 made out to "Sinai Temple Memorial Plaque Fund." The plaque will bear the *name of the deceased as submitted below* and the *civil and/or Hebrew date(s) of death as specified below* and will be placed on the Memorial Wall in the Temple lobby. Please print clearly. Submit completed forms to:

Sinai Temple
3104 West Windsor Rd.
Champaign, IL 61822-6104
(217) 352-8140

Full name of deceased _____

Hebrew name of deceased _____

Full name & address of survivor(s) and relationship to the deceased _____

Civil (English) date of death (month/day/year) _____ / _____ / _____ After sunset? _____

Hebrew date of death (month/day/year) _____ / _____ / _____

On which date do you want the yahrzeit to be observed? ___ Civil date ___ Hebrew date

___ *I also wish to order a memorial plaque for this person (check enclosed).*

Which date(s) do you want to show on the plaque? ___ Civil ___ Hebrew ___ Both

PART II:

Observing Jewish Death and Mourning Traditions

Introduction

Judaism speaks of death as an integral part of life. In an effort to honor the dead and comfort the mourning, many meaningful traditions have evolved. We prepared this booklet to help the Champaign-Urbana Jewish community understand these traditions and to observe them. Recognizing that members of our community have various approaches to Jewish practice, we include descriptions of traditional and liberal customs alike. In this way, we hope to aid mourners in choosing the Jewish traditions that will help them ease the burden of their grief and guide others in comforting them.

Traditions Immediately Preceding and Following Death

Most of this booklet is concerned with how families handle the death of a loved one within a Jewish context. But first, there will be some discussion about the needs of the dying.

Final Prayers

If a person is conscious as death approaches, he or she can recite a confession or hear it read aloud by another. The traditional Jewish deathbed confession is a personal prayer consisting of the following:

I acknowledge before You, Adonai my God and God of my ancestors, that my life and death are in Your hands. May it be Your will to heal me. But, if death is my fate, then I accept it from Your hand with love. May my death atone for whatever sins I have committed before You. In Your mercy, grant me the goodness that awaits the righteous and bring me to eternal life.

Protector of the orphans, Protector of the widows, guard my loved ones to whom my soul is joined. Into Your hands I return my spirit, for You will redeem me, eternally faithful God.

The Shema follows the personal prayer:

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְיָ אֶחָד.

Sh'ma yisrael, adonai eloheinu, adonai echad.

Hear O Israel: Adonai is our God, Adonai is One.

Confession concludes with the following words:

יְיָ הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים. יְיָ מֶלֶךְ, יְיָ מֶלֶךְ, יְיָ יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Adonai hu ha'elohim. Adonai melech, adonai malach, adonai yimoloch l'olam vaed.

Adonai is God. Adonai reigns, Adonai has reigned, Adonai will reign forever and ever.

Many Jews today recite only the Shema. The custom of reciting the Shema in this way has been practiced

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for over 1,500 years, as countless Jews affirmed their faith even at the moment of death. During these last moments, the dying person should not be left alone. If possible, he or she should be surrounded by family and loved ones, as an act of love and caring.

Guarding the Deceased

When death comes, Judaism teaches that the body of the deceased is sacred, like an impaired Torah scroll, and should be respected because of the purpose that it served in life. As a sign of respect, Jews traditionally do not leave the deceased alone after death. Rather, they arrange for shomrim (guards) to sit with the body and recite psalms until the time of burial.

Rending a Garment

In Jewish tradition, an avel (mourner) is an immediate relative of the deceased: father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, or spouse. Traditionally, these relatives perform a special act of mourning, keriah (the tearing of a garment). Other family members who wish to participate may consult their rabbi about the appropriateness of doing so. Rending of garments is a sign of grief and despair dating to Biblical times. Jacob tore his clothing upon hearing of Joseph's supposed death (Gen. 37:34). David rent his garments when told of Saul's death in battle (II Samuel 1:11) and again in mourning for his son Absalom (II Samuel 3:31).

Official mourners (immediate relatives) recite the following prayer when they first hear of the death and/or while performing keriah:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו, מלך העולם, דין האמת.

Baruch ata, adonai, eloheinu, melech ha'olam, dayan ha'emet.

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe, the True Judge.

Other (non-official) mourners say the same prayer or an abbreviated version:

ברוך דין האמת.

Baruch dayan ha'emet.

Blessed is the True Judge.

Some add:

יי נתן ויי לקח, יהי שם יי מברך.

Adonai natan v'adonai lakach; y'hi sheim adonai m'vorach.

Adonai has given and Adonai has taken; praised be the name of Adonai.

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Keriah is traditionally recited while standing, just as Job “stood up and rent his clothes” while grieving for his children (Job 1:20). There are many laws and customs as to how keriah should be performed: what garments should be rent, where and how they should be torn, or how long they must be worn. Traditional Jews may tear their actual clothes and never mend the torn garment, as a symbol of the permanent tear in their lives. Liberal Jews often tear or cut a black ribbon and pin it onto their clothing. Today, many Jews in America choose to perform the ceremony of keriah not at the moment of death, but directly before the funeral service.

Preparations for Funeral, Burial, and Mourning

When death occurs, the family notifies the rabbi and begins making arrangements for the funeral, preparation of the body for burial, and the period of mourning. Although Champaign-Urbana has no Jewish funeral home, several local funeral homes work closely with the Jewish community. Champaign-Urbana also has a Chevra Kadisha (Jewish burial society), whose volunteers assist in caring for the deceased upon request by the family. For more information, see Part I: Arranging a Funeral and Burial in Champaign-Urbana and Part III: Engaging the Chevra Kadisha.

During this time, decision-making is difficult. Nevertheless, families need to be aware, as they work with the funeral home, that all decisions are to be made by them, not by the funeral home, particularly in regard to Jewish customs. Funeral home directors in Champaign-Urbana can be very helpful, but they have varying degrees of experience with Jewish customs and burial practices. The rabbi chosen by the family and the Chevra Kadisha can provide information and guidance.

Because of stress felt by mourners during funeral preparations, Jewish tradition exempts them from the responsibilities of everyday life. During this time, discussions traditionally center on the positive personal qualities of the deceased. Mourners often recite Psalms 23 and 91 (see liturgy section at the end of Part II, section Prayers and Readings), which speak of consolation and hope.

Mirrors in the house of mourning are often covered. In modern times this is done to help the mourners be free of distractions concerning personal appearance.

Timing of Burial

Until the moment of burial, attention is directed toward the deceased. Jewish tradition specifies that burial should take place within 24 hours of death, out of respect for the dead, although legitimate delays often extend the 24-hour period. Deuteronomy 21:23 states, “Thou shalt surely bury him the same day.” Historically, embalming was not utilized because the body was, and still is, considered to be holy and, therefore, should not be altered. This belief rendered swift burial necessary for health reasons. It was also felt that delay put undue stress on the family. In our day, loved ones may need to come from far away, the Sabbath may intervene, or it may not be possible for funeral arrangements to be completed within one day. Still, Jews bury their deceased as soon as possible.

Casket

Genesis 3:19 states: “For dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.” In Israel today, the deceased is not

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buried in a casket, but is lowered onto a bed of reeds, thus returning the body directly to the earth. In America, where caskets are almost always required, traditional Jews use a plain wooden coffin with wooden pegs, which allows the body to return to dust symbolically. A small amount of earth from Israel (available from the Chevra Kadisha) is often placed in the coffin with the deceased, symbolizing the unity of the Jewish people and the importance of Jerusalem and Israel.

The great Jewish scholar Maimonides first encouraged the importance of a simple wooden box as a casket, to stress that all people are equal in death. Today, Jews in our community usually choose plain, wooden caskets, although other types are permitted and do not preclude involvement of the Chevra Kadisha.

Burial Garments

Even earlier, Rabbi Gamaliel stressed equality in death by instituting a practice that all Jews be buried in the same type of garment, a simple, handmade shroud. It has no pockets for holding material possessions, emphasizing equality, dignity, and purity. In Champaign-Urbana, according to the wishes of the family, the deceased may be buried in a burial shroud, suit or dress, or other clothes. Some men may have owned a white garment called a kittel (robe), which may be used with a shroud as part of the burial raiment. In addition, men traditionally wear a kippah (skull cap) and/or a tallit (prayer shawl) with one of the tzitzit (fringes) cut. Today, women may also be buried wearing a tallit and/or kippah, if desired.

Chevra Kadisha and Taharah

Jewish burial societies developed in the fourth century (possibly earlier) and continue to this day. Such a society is called a chevra kadisha (holy society). Chevra kadisha volunteers wash and dress the deceased and guard the body from death until interment. Serving in a chevra kadisha is considered to be a great mitzvah and an act of chesed shel emet (true loving kindness), since the deceased can never thank them. Volunteers accept no money for their services, so that all can be buried in accordance with Jewish law.

An important function of a chevra kadisha is ritual cleansing of the body (taharah). Taharah is considered to be both a physical cleansing and a spiritual purification of the deceased. During taharah, the body and hair of the deceased are washed. After this physical cleansing, a spiritual cleansing takes place. As water is poured in a continuous stream over the body, specific prayers and psalms are recited. The deceased is then dressed in a shroud and placed in the casket.

Procedures that artificially alter the body, such as embalming, autopsy, and cremation, are not part of traditional Jewish practice.

Embalming

Embalming removes all blood from the deceased and replaces it with embalming fluid, which is contrary to Jewish practice because the tradition is to bury the *entire* body. It is true that both Jacob (Gen. 50:2-3) and Joseph (Gen. 50:26) were embalmed, but this was done in accordance with Egyptian, not Jewish, custom and was motivated by the need to preserve their bodies until they could be returned to the land of Israel and buried there. Embalming was developed before refrigeration was available and today is no longer necessary even if burial is delayed.

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Embalming is related to the practice of using cosmetics to prepare a body for final viewing. In American funeral custom since the Civil War, the deceased is restored to a look of health before family and friends come to visitation. However, Jewish tradition is to accept the reality of death, so cosmetic restoration, viewing of the body of the deceased, and visitation are not part of Jewish custom. Since Talmudic times, not viewing the dead served to differentiate Jews from those who sought to preserve the aura of life (Talmud tractate Moed Katan 27a). In the rare cases when Jews choose visitation prior to the funeral service, the casket is not present or remains closed.

Autopsy

Jewish tradition rejects autopsy performed for non-essential reasons. However, in the 1700s, the Jewish scholar Rabbi Ezekiel Landau of Prague ruled that if autopsy could save the lives of others in his community, then it could be justified. Rabbi Landau's ruling is still used as a rationale today. Acceptable reasons for autopsy include, for example, hereditary or infectious diseases and legal investigations.

Cremation

Historically, Jews also considered cremation to be a violation of Jewish law. In Talmudic times (Talmud tractate Sanhendrin 46b), if the deceased had requested cremation, the wish was to be ignored. By the eighth century, all authorities agreed that burial was commanded by the Torah. The issue of cremation became more complicated after World War II because images of Jewish bodies burning in a crematorium became associated with the Shoah (Holocaust). Although no Jewish denomination encourages cremation, in recent years some Jews make this choice. Some rabbis, including some local ones, officiate at funerals where the deceased has been cremated; and some Jewish cemeteries, including Mt. Hope Cemetery in Champaign, permit burial of cremains.

Crypt

Burial in a mausoleum is permitted; but, because of the Biblical injunction to bury our dead in the earth, the vast majority of American Jews do not elect to be buried in a mausoleum. Nevertheless, there is a Jewish mausoleum section at Mt. Hope Cemetery (for which embalming is required).

Tzedakah

It is Jewish custom to honor the memory of the dead by giving tzedakah (making a charitable contribution). Since the Middle Ages, Jews have given tzedakah instead of sending flowers. The use of flowers as a funeral tribute was considered ostentatious and contrary to the commandment not to waste resources, so Jews sought a more enduring tribute. Because contributions to needy causes help the living, in Jewish tradition, charitable contributions, not flowers, are an expression of respect for the deceased and of affection and support for the family of the deceased.

Funeral Service and Interment

The Jewish laws of death and mourning are governed by two basic principles. The first principle is *kevod hamet* (treatment of the deceased with reverence and respect). The second principle is *kevod hechai* (concern for the welfare of the living). Consideration of *kevod hamet* largely influences Jewish law and tradition from the moment of death through the interment. Only after the burial does *kevod hechai* become the dominant focus. These practices do not ignore the needs of mourners during the time before interment. Rather, Jewish tradition recognizes that, in the beginning, mourners are best consoled by placing emphasis on respect for the dead.

Members of the Jewish community express their respect for the deceased by attending the funeral and burial. Because there is no visitation in Jewish tradition, it is at the funeral service that the community first comes together to honor the deceased. Even if one is very busy with daily affairs or barely knew the deceased, it is appropriate to attend the funeral service, to escort the body to the cemetery, and to be present for the interment.

In the past, Jewish funerals usually took place in the home of the deceased or at the cemetery. Funerals were held in the synagogue only for renowned scholars and community leaders. Today in Champaign-Urbana, funerals are usually conducted at graveside, a funeral home, or a synagogue.

The funeral service is simple, consisting of the following elements:

Recitation of Psalms

Psalms are chosen that are appropriate to the deceased. Examples of such psalms are included at the end of Part II: section Prayers and Readings.

Delivery of the Hespel (Eulogy)

Jewish eulogies praise the virtues of the dead and express the grief and loss of the mourners and the community. Well before the funeral, the family shares with the rabbi details about the life and accomplishments of the deceased, including memories and anecdotes, so that the eulogy can be honest and capture his or her unique qualities. Others, including family members, colleagues, and/or good friends designated by the family, may deliver the eulogy instead of, or in addition to, the rabbi.

El Malei Rachamim (God, Full of Compassion)

The *El Malei Rachamim* prayer is offered at the conclusion of the funeral service or just before the *Kaddish*, if the funeral is held at graveside. The prayer asks God to give the rest and peace of the Garden of Eden to the soul of the deceased.

Procession

Pallbearers, who are chosen from among family members, colleagues, and friends, carry or escort the casket from the funeral home or synagogue to the hearse and from the hearse to the burial site. This custom of

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carrying the casket and depositing it in the grave dates back to the Torah, when Jacob's children carried him to his last resting place. Carrying the casket to the grave is considered an act of *chesed shel emet* and is an honor.

The rabbi leads the procession and may choose to halt at certain intervals, traditionally seven times. The pallbearers process with the casket, and the mourners and congregation follow. Psalm 91 and *Tzidduk HaDin* (Justification of Judgment), a prayer consisting of scriptural passages of consolation and acceptance of the divine decree, are recited during the procession. The casket is put in place and the mourners assemble at graveside. Following concluding prayers, the casket is lowered into the grave.

Reciting Kaddish

Kaddish is then recited. There are several versions of the Kaddish. Most Jews recite the one known as the Mourner's Kaddish, which is recited at graveside by all those in attendance at the funeral. There is another version, called the Kaddish *Le'itchadeta* (the Burial Kaddish), also known as the Kaddish *Hagadol* (the Great Kaddish), which refers to a world that will be renewed. In more traditional congregations, this too, is recited at graveside, but only by official mourners. Most of the funeral homes in Champaign-Urbana have copies of the Mourner's Kaddish available for use. Those making funeral arrangements should consult with the funeral home in advance if they wish to provide copies of the Mourner's Kaddish at graveside.

Filling the Grave

Traditionally, family and friends of the deceased share the duty and honor of covering the casket with earth. The act of shoveling the earth offers mourners a personal good-bye while helping them accept the finality of death. Mourners may choose to add a single shovelful of soil to the grave as a symbolic act, to entirely cover the casket, or to fill in the grave completely. The cemetery staff needs to be advised, at the time that funeral arrangements are being made, to provide an adequate amount of earth and shovels to fulfill the family's needs.

Recessional

At the conclusion of the service, friends may form two lines through which the mourners pass as they leave the gravesite. For those who wish to use the traditional words of consolation at this time, they are:

הַמָּקוֹם יְנַחֵם (אֶתְכֶם/אוֹתָךְ/אוֹתָד) בְּתוֹךְ שְׂאֵר אֲבֵלֵי צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם.

Hamakom y'nacheim (etchem/otcha/otach) b'toch sh'ar aveilei tziyon virushalayim.

May God comfort you together with all the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Following the funeral service or after the grave is filled, as the family chooses, the mourners and those in attendance return home for the meal of condolence. Friends and family are encouraged not to remain at the graveside or engage in conversation. This allows the family to return home immediately, so that *shiva* (the intense period of mourning immediately following burial) and the process of recovery may officially begin.

First Year of Mourning

After burial, Jewish mourning practices proceed through three distinct stages: shiva, sheloshim (the first 30 days after burial), and the year of mourning. These stages help the mourner move from intense mourning at the time of the burial to the full resumption of daily life.

Shiva

Shiva begins upon returning from the cemetery to the house of mourning. The establishment of seven days (shiva means seven in Hebrew) as the most intense period of mourning is an ancient custom. Joseph mourned for seven days for his father Jacob (Gen. 50:10). Thus, the custom of shiva dates from very early in recorded Jewish history. In counting the days of shiva, a fraction of a day is counted as a complete day; and the day of burial is counted as the first day, even if interment is concluded only a few moments before nightfall.

The expression “sitting shiva” refers to the custom of the mourners to sit on low stools or seats of lower than usual height during shiva. This practice is traced back to the friends of Job who comforted him after the death of his children. “So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spoke a word unto him; for they saw that his grief was very great” (Job 2:13).

Jews observe varying lengths of shiva. Traditionally, Jews sit shiva for seven days; but, in liberal Judaism, some Jews choose to sit shiva for three days or sometimes only one day. The custom of sitting shiva for three days is derived from the traditional distinction that the first three days of mourning are the most intense.

When the mourners return from the cemetery, the house and meal of condolence will have been prepared by community volunteers or family and friends. A pitcher of water and paper towels are traditionally set outside the door for a symbolic cleansing of the hands before entering. Chairs and stools are in place. Mirrors may be covered. Mourners enter the home and light a shiva candle, which is kept burning for the entire seven days in memory of the deceased. The meal of condolence includes bread or rolls, considered to be the staff of life, and hard-boiled eggs and lentils, symbolic of the continuous nature of life. Even if they do not want to eat, mourners should be encouraged to partake of the meal as an affirmation of life.

During shiva, mourners traditionally remain in the house of mourning, except to attend Shabbat services, and refrain from such usual activities as working, attending to personal hygiene, wearing leather shoes, engaging in marital relations, and studying Torah. But the laws of shiva are flexible. Mourners who might become physically ill from observing some of the laws of mourning are exempt from those laws. Those who would suffer irretrievable financial loss from not working at all during shiva are permitted to work. Other exceptions are allowed when the welfare of the mourners is concerned.

Traditionally, mourners recite the Mourner's Kaddish daily during shiva and in the weeks and months that follow. The Kaddish praises God and God's will, affirming our faith in God and life. It was originally a prayer of celebration and became associated with the dead during Talmudic times, when it was recited in services honoring the memory of scholars.

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Originally, only a son was commanded to recite Kaddish for his parents, but, in some settings, women began to recite Kaddish, as well. Traditionally, although women are not required to recite Kaddish, many Modern Orthodox congregations now support women who wish to do so. Today, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Reform branches of Judaism all encourage both men and women to recite Kaddish for a deceased parent.

In time, mourners began to say Kaddish for their siblings, children, and spouse, as well as parents. Customs about how long to say Kaddish for which relatives vary across and even within denominations. For example, in Reform Judaism a child usually recites Kaddish for twelve months in memory of a parent, corresponding to the full period of judgment. In Orthodoxy, however, a child recites Kaddish for a parent for only eleven months, indicating that the parent was a good person, not requiring the full year of judgment. For relatives other than parents, in Orthodox and Conservative traditions, a mourner recites Kaddish for only 30 days. Reform Judaism, by contrast, encourages mourners to recite Kaddish for a year for any immediate relative.

Traditionally, Jews recite the prayer three times each day, in the morning, afternoon, and evening services. Many Jews recite the Kaddish only at Shabbat services. Although a convert is not obligated to recite Kaddish for non-Jewish parents or family members, most sources agree that converts may say Kaddish for non-Jewish relatives.

Traditionally, when reciting Kaddish, mourners pray with a minyan (a quorum). In Orthodoxy, a minyan consists of ten Jewish men. In Conservative Judaism, a minyan includes both men and women. In Reconstructionist and Reform Judaism, although a minyan is not required for public prayer, participation by ten Jewish adults is strongly recommended. Therefore, it is important for members of the community to gather in the house of mourning so that mourners may say Kaddish.

Community members also give their support to the family by making condolence calls. Based on Isaiah 40:1, “Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people,” these visits help the mourner through the initial period of loneliness and despondence. As a way of recognizing the intense grief felt by family members, friends, colleagues, neighbors, and acquaintances paying condolence calls traditionally refrain from the usual forms of casual greeting and idle conversation. Visitors show support merely by their presence and need not engage in lengthy conversation unless initiated by the mourners. Mourners need not rise to greet visitors or feel obliged to participate in conversation.

At the conclusion of shiva, following the morning service on the last day, it is the custom of some mourners to go out of the house and walk for a short distance, usually around the block. Sometimes they are accompanied by a few friends or by the rabbi or by others who have been asked to linger after the morning service. This symbolizes a return to the world from which they have withdrawn.

Sheloshim

Sheloshim refers to the 30-day period following the death of a relative. Once shiva ends, mourners continue to recite Kaddish, but now they do so at the synagogue. They also resume ordinary obligations of everyday life, but, traditionally, without participation in events that are purely social. In liberal practice, individuals resume social activities at their discretion. At the end of sheloshim, the traditional mourning period for loved ones other than parents of the bereaved is concluded.

Year of Mourning

The twelve-month period following death is the full mourning period for those who are mourning parents, just as the sheloshim is the full mourning period for other relatives. Traditional Jews continue to recite the Mourner's Kaddish for their parents for eleven months, and there are many laws and customs defining acceptable social activity during the year-long period. Reform Jews usually follow the Talmudic custom of continuing to say Kaddish for twelve months following the death of a parent, although they resume social activities as they choose.

Monument

Placing a matzevah (monument) to mark the gravesite dates back to our patriarch, Jacob. It is written in Genesis 35:19-20, "And Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob erected a tombstone on Rachel's grave."

The monument purchase is part of the process of honoring the deceased, so that the name of the person will not be forgotten. Planning and arrangements for the gravestone may begin any time after the funeral and shiva. During shiva, the family may wish to discuss the shape and size of the monument and its inscription. In America, it is customary for Jewish monuments to be inscribed with the following information:

- Hebrew name of the deceased,
- Secular name of the deceased,
- Hebrew calendar dates of birth and death,
- Secular calendar dates of birth and death.

In addition, the family may wish to choose an appropriate symbol and Hebrew inscription for the monument. Check spelling of Hebrew, Yiddish, or other foreign words with a rabbi or other expert in the relevant language. Styles of monuments vary and there is no law that dictates the shape of the stone. In the Jewish section at Mt. Hope Cemetery, a monument is placed at the head of the grave, upright or laid flat. A flat stone or bronze plaque may be placed at the foot. The size of the stone is also not mandated by Jewish law; but in all choices, families are encouraged to respect the Jewish emphasis on equality, dignity, and especially simplicity in honoring the dead. Consult Mt. Hope Cemetery policies for the Jewish section so that monument size is in keeping with its requirements.

Unveiling

The unveiling ceremony is a graveside service marking the formal dedication of the monument. This tradition, which was borrowed from American custom, became popular in American Jewish life after the turn of the twentieth century. Since there is no religious obligation to have an unveiling ceremony, in America, the unveiling can take place any time after shiva is over and before the conclusion of the year of mourning. In Israel, the unveiling takes place any time after sheloshim. Some mourners set the stone at the conclusion of the year of mourning, using the unveiling service as a symbolic closure. The unveiling service is brief, with no specific, prescribed ritual. It is usually attended only by the immediate family and close friends (and a rabbi, if the family wishes). Psalms are recited. A short eulogy is said. The stone, which has

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been draped with a cloth prior to the beginning of the service, is uncovered. El Malei Rachamim and Kaddish are recited. In Jewish tradition, visitation to the grave during the year of mourning is discouraged, and family members usually do not begin grave visitations until the unveiling.

After the First Year

In Judaism, we continue to remember our dead after the year of mourning through three practices: Yahrzeit, Yizkor, and grave visitation.

Yahrzeit

The annual commemoration of a loved one's death is called yahrzeit (a year's time). The yahrzeit custom is quite old, dating back to Talmudic times, when students would visit the graves of the great Talmudic scholars on the anniversaries of their teachers' deaths.

The date of the yahrzeit is one full year from the date of death, not the date of burial. Traditional Jews use the Hebrew calendar date, while liberal Jews observe either the secular or Hebrew date. At Sinai Temple, family members may choose either the secular or Hebrew date to observe a yahrzeit.

Yahrzeit practices take place in the home, at the synagogue, and at the gravesite. At home, a yahrzeit candle is lit on the evening before the anniversary or before regular candle lighting on Shabbat and holidays. The candle, or electric light, is kindled and burns for at least 24 hours. It is customary for the candle to burn until it extinguishes itself.

In the synagogue, Kaddish is recited. In Orthodox Judaism, a son recites Kaddish for his parents, often conducts the services, and is called to recite the blessings before and after the Torah reading on days it is read. Increasingly in Orthodoxy, daughters also recite Kaddish for parents. In the Reform movement, the recitation of Kaddish is incumbent upon both men and women at congregational services held on the date of the yahrzeit or on the Shabbat immediately before the yahrzeit. Those wishing to arrange a service on the exact anniversary of the yahrzeit may contact Sinai Temple, Hillel, or Chabad to convene a minyan. If there is a memorial plaque bearing the name of the deceased, it is lit or otherwise designated at this time.

A visit to the gravesite at the yahrzeit is customary. Psalms may be said and the El Malei Rachamim prayer is recited in Hebrew or English.

To further honor loved ones on their yahrzeit, it is customary to give a donation to charity in their memory. Another means of honoring the dead is through study. Observant Jews set aside time for traditional yahrzeit study of the Mishnah or Bible. Finally, some choose, as in Talmudic times, to fast on the yahrzeit of their parents. All of the yahrzeit practices focus on remembering the dead and praising God for their lives and accomplishments.

Yizkor

Yizkor (memorial service) honors deceased relatives and friends. Unlike the yahrzeit, which is commemorated on the anniversary of a death, the yizkor service is recited by the congregation on fixed holidays throughout the year.

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Yizkor is recited on Yom Kippur and on the last day of the three pilgrimage festivals: Sukkot (on Shemini Atzeret), Pesach, and Shavuot. Thus, it became customary to recite yizkor four times a year. The Reform movement, at one time, included yizkor only on Yom Kippur and Pesach, but many Reform congregations, including Sinai Temple, have again added yizkor on Sukkot and Shavuot.

Traditionally, one begins attending the yizkor service only after the conclusion of the year of mourning, but in liberal Judaism one attends yizkor beginning with the first festival or Yom Kippur following the loved one's death. Along with El Malei Rachamim and, in liberal traditions, the Kaddish, yizkor includes a special prayer or prayers, read silently, to honor all of one's deceased relatives and friends. It is customary, in some congregations, for people to leave the sanctuary during yizkor if their parents are alive.

Traditionally, yizkor is accompanied by a gift to the synagogue or a charity and by lighting a yahrzeit candle in the home just before lighting the candles for the festival. Yizkor and its traditions are observed throughout one's lifetime to remember and honor the dead.

Grave Visitation

After the first year, Jews continue to remember the dead through grave visitation. The period of the High Holy Days is deemed especially appropriate for visiting the graves of loved ones. Visitation usually occurs during the month of Elul (before the High Holy Days), the day before Rosh Hashanah, the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and/or on the occasion of the yahrzeit. Sinai Temple offers a Jewish community memorial service, conducted at the Jewish section of Mt. Hope Cemetery, each year on the Sunday before Rosh Hashanah.

During the grave visitation, El Malei Rachamim and psalms may be recited. Some Jews choose to study Mishnah at graveside, but the study session should be short. Judaism discourages lengthy or constant cemetery visitation, as it is viewed as an obstacle to the healing process and an impediment to placing the death in its proper perspective.

Ways to Honor the Dead and Comfort the Mourner: A Review

This booklet presents many ways for the community to comfort and support mourners. Distant family members, friends, colleagues, neighbors, and acquaintances who have just learned of a death often wish to help but are unsure what is appropriate. Jewish tradition provides many opportunities to express regard for the deceased and offer help to the mourners, as summarized below:

Everyone can participate in the following customs:

1. Attend the funeral.

The entire community honors the deceased and supports the mourners by coming to the funeral, whether close to the deceased and mourners or merely acquaintances (p. 24).

2. Attend the interment.

All who are present at the burial honor the deceased by their presence and by helping to cover the casket with earth (pp. 24 and 25).

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3. Prepare and/or attend the meal of condolence.

The entire community is invited, and it is appropriate to attend this meal and offer consolation to the family, even if one is not a close personal friend of the deceased or the mourners (p. 26).

4. Make a condolence call.

Sitting with the mourners during the week of shiva or any time during the mourning period confirms that they are not alone in their grief (p. 27).

5. Attend minyan at the house of mourning during shiva.

The mourners need the community to gather in their home for daily services, in order to recite the Mourner's Kaddish (p. 25-27).

6. Attend special minyanim (plural of minyan).

Community members continue to show their support by attending minyanim during sheloshim, the year of mourning, or on the anniversary of the death, according to the needs of the family (p. 27-29).

7. Make a contribution to charity.

Contributions are an important and lasting memorial. It is not part of Jewish tradition to send flowers in memory of the deceased (p. 23).

In addition, members of the Jewish community may participate in the following activities of the Chevra Kadisha and are encouraged to call the Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation office for further information (see Contacts and Resources on inside back cover).

8. Serve as a shomer.

It is considered a great honor and an act of true loving kindness to be among those who sit with the deceased from death until burial, if the family requests this observance (pp. 40-43).

9. Participate in taharah.

You may volunteer to prepare the body for burial, if the family requests this ritual and you have received the proper training (pp. 41-43).

Prayers and Readings

Kaddish

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא,
בְּעַלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְרְעוּתֵיהּ, וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתֵיהּ,
בְּחַיִּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן, וּבְהַיְי דְּכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,
בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.
יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וּלְעַלְמֵי עַלְמֵיָא.
יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא,
וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקֻדְשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ הוּא,
לְעַלְמָא מִן כָּל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירָתָא תְּשֻׁבָּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא
דְּאַמִּירָן בְּעַלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.
יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.
עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם, עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

Yitgadal v'yitkadash she'mei raba, b'alma di v'ra chirutei, v'yamlich malchutei, b'chayeichon uv'yomeichon uv'chayei d'chol beit yisrael, ba'agala uvizman kariv, v'imru: amen.

Ye'hei sh'mei raba m'vorach l'olam ul'almei almay.

Yitbarach ve'yishtabach, v'yitpa'ar v'yitromam v'yitnasei, v'yithadar v'yitaleh v'yithal sh'mei d'kud'sha, b'rich hu, l'eila mikol birchata v'shirata, tushb'chata v'nechemata, da'amiran b'alma, v'imru: amen.

Y'hei sh'lama raba min sh'maya v'chayim aleinu v'al kol Yisrael, v'imru: amen.

Oseh shalom bim'romav, hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu v'al kol Yisrael, v'imru: amen.

Magnified and sanctified be the name of God in the world which God has created according to God's will. May God's kingdom soon prevail, in our own day, our own lives, and the life of all Israel, and let us say: Amen.

Let God's great name be blessed for ever and ever.

Let the name of the Holy One, Blessed is God, be glorified, exalted, and honored, whose glory transcends and is beyond all praises, hymns, and blessings that we can utter, and let us say: Amen.

May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life for us and for all Israel; and let us say: Amen.

May God who establishes peace in the heavens grant peace to us and to all Israel; and let us say: Amen.

El Malei Rachamim

For a man:

אֵל מְלֵא רַחֲמִים, שׁוֹכֵן בְּמְרוֹמִים, הַמְצִיא מְנוּחָה נְכוֹנָה תַּחַת כַּנְפֵי הַשְּׁכִינָה,
בְּמַעְלוֹת קְדוּשִׁים וְטְהוֹרִים כְּזֹהַר הַרְקִיעַ מְזַהְרִים, אֶת נְשִׁמַת בֶּן
שֶׁהִלָּךְ לְעוֹלָמוֹ, בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁנֵדָרוֹ צְדָקָה בְּעַד הַזְכָּרַת נְשִׁמָּתוֹ, בְּגֵן עֵדֶן תִּהְיֶה מְנוּחָתוֹ.
לָכֵן, בְּעַל הַרְחָמִים יִסְתַּיְרָהוּ בְּסִתְרֵי כַּנְפָיו לְעוֹלָמִים, וְיִצְרֹר בְּצִרּוֹר הַחַיִּים אֶת נְשִׁמָּתוֹ.
יְיָ הוּא נִחְלָתוֹ; וְיָנוּחַ עַל מְשַׁכְּבוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם, וְנֹאמַר: אָמֵן.

El malei rachamim shochein bam'romim, hamtsei m'nucha n'chonah tachat kanfe hashchinah, b'ma'alot k'doshim ut'horim k'zohar harakiah mazhirim, et nishmat _____ ben _____ shehalach l'olamo, b'avore sh'nadru tsedakah b'ad haz'charat neshmato, b'gan eiden t'hei m'nuchato. Lachein, ba'al harahamim yastireihu b'seiter k'nafchav l'olamim v'yitsror bitsror hachayim et nishmato, adonai hu nachalato, v'yanuach b'shalom al mishcavo, v'nomar: amen.

For a woman:

אֵל מְלֵא רַחֲמִים, שׁוֹכֵן בְּמְרוֹמִים, הַמְצִיא מְנוּחָה נְכוֹנָה תַּחַת כַּנְפֵי הַשְּׁכִינָה,
בְּמַעְלוֹת קְדוּשִׁים וְטְהוֹרִים כְּזֹהַר הַרְקִיעַ מְזַהְרִים, אֶת נְשִׁמַת בַּת
שֶׁהִלָּכָה לְעוֹלָמָהּ, בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁנֵדָרוֹ צְדָקָה בְּעַד הַזְכָּרַת נְשִׁמָּתָהּ, בְּגֵן עֵדֶן תִּהְיֶה מְנוּחָתָה.
לָכֵן, בְּעַל הַרְחָמִים יִסְתַּיְרָהּ בְּסִתְרֵי כַּנְפָיו לְעוֹלָמִים, וְיִצְרֹר בְּצִרּוֹר הַחַיִּים אֶת נְשִׁמָּתָהּ.
יְיָ הוּא נִחְלָתָהּ; וְתָנוּחַ עַל מְשַׁכְּבָהּ בְּשָׁלוֹם, וְנֹאמַר: אָמֵן.

El malei rachamim shochein bam'romim, hamtsei m'nucha n'chonah tachat kanfe hashchinah, b'ma'alot k'doshim ut'horim k'zohar harakiah mazhirim, et nishmat _____ bat _____ shehalchah l'olamah, b'avore sh'nadru tsedakah b'ad haz'charat neshmatah, b'gan eiden t'hei m'nuchatah. Lachein, ba'al harahamim yastirehah b'seiter k'nafchav l'olamim v'yitsror bitsror hachayim et nishmatah, adonai hu nachalatah, v'tanuach b'shalom al mishcavah, v'nomar: amen.

For either:

Compassionate God, who dwells on high, grant perfect rest beneath the shelter of your Divine Presence, among the holy and the pure who shine as the brightness of the heavens, to the soul of _____, son/daughter of _____, who has entered eternity, and in whose memory charity is offered. May he/she rest in the Garden of Eden. God of mercy, let him/her find refuge in the shelter of Your wings forever and let his/her soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life. God is his/her inheritance, and may he/she rest in peace, and let us say: Amen.

Psalm 19: For the Leader, A Psalm of David

The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the firmament proclaims His handiwork.
Day to day utters speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.
There is no speech,
there are no words,
Neither is their voice heard.
Their voice carries throughout the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.
God placed in them a tent for the sun,
who is like a bridegroom coming forth from the chamber,
like a hero, eager to run his course.
God's rising-place is at one end of heaven,
and God's circuit reaches the other;
nothing escapes God's heat.
The teaching of Adonai is perfect,
renewing life;
the decrees of Adonai are enduring,
making the simple wise;
The precepts of Adonai are just,
rejoicing the heart;
the instruction of Adonai is lucid,
enlightening the eyes.
The fear of Adonai is pure,
abiding forever;
the judgments of Adonai are true,
righteous altogether,
more desirable than gold,
than much fine gold;
sweeter than honey,
than drippings of the comb.
Your servant pays them heed;
in obeying them there is much reward.
Who can be aware of errors?
Clear me of hidden faults,
and from willful sins keep Your servant;
let them not dominate me;
then shall I be blameless
and clear of grave offense.
May the words of my mouth
and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to You,
O Adonai, my rock and my redeemer.

Psalm 23: A Psalm of David

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths for the sake of His name.
Even when I walk in the valley of the shadow of death,
I shall fear no evil, for You are with me;
With rod and staff You comfort me.
You have set a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You have anointed 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 Lord for ever.

Psalm 91

O you who dwell in the shelter of the Most High
and abide in the protection of the Almighty;
I say of Adonai, my refuge and stronghold,
my God in whom I trust,
that God will save you from the fowler's trap,
from the destructive plague.
God will cover you with pinions;
you will find refuge under God's wings;
God's truth is an encircling shield.
You need not fear the terror by night,
or the arrow that flies by day,
the plague that stalks in the darkness,
or the destruction that ravages at noon.
A thousand may fall at your left side,
ten thousand at your right,
but it shall not reach you.
You will see it with your eyes,
you will witness the punishment of the wicked.
Because you took Adonai - my refuge,
the Most High - as your haven,
no evil will befall you,
no plague touch your tent.
For Adonai will order angels
to guard you wherever you go.
They will carry you in their hands
lest you hurt your foot on a stone.
You will tread on young lions and snakes;
you will trample lions and asps.
Adonai says "I will deliver those who love me;
I will keep them safe, for they know My name.

Part II: Observing Jewish Death and Mourning Traditions

When they call on Me, I will answer them;
I will be with them in distress
I will rescue them and make them honored;
I will let them live to a ripe old age,
and show them My salvation.”

Psalm 121: A Song for Ascents

I lift up my eyes to the mountains;
what is the source of my help?
My help comes from Adonai,
maker of heaven and earth.
God will not let your foot give way;
your Guardian will not slumber.
Behold, the Guardian of Israel
neither slumbers nor sleeps.
Adonai is your Guardian,
Adonai is your protection
at your right hand.
The sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.
Adonai will guard you from all evil;
God will guard your life.
Adonai will guard you, coming and going,
from this time forth and for ever.

Psalm 130: A Song of Ascents

Out of the depths I call You, Adonai.
Adonai, listen to my cry;
let Your ears be attentive
to my plea for mercy.
If you keep account of sins, Adonai,
Adonai, who will survive?
Yours is the power to forgive
so that You may be held in awe.
I look to Adonai;
I look to God;
I await God's word.
I am eager for Adonai
more than watchmen for the morning,
yea, more than watchmen for the morning.
O Israel, wait for Adonai;
for with Adonai is steadfast love
and great power to redeem.
It is God who will redeem Israel from all their iniquities.

PART III:

**Engaging the Chevra Kadisha
(Jewish Burial Society)**

Introduction

Although there is no Jewish funeral home in Champaign-Urbana, there is a Jewish burial society, the Chevra Kadisha (Sacred Society). When a Jewish person dies here, families may request that the Chevra Kadisha work with one of several local funeral homes so that the deceased may be cared for according to Jewish custom. Recognizing the tremendous diversity in the local Jewish community, the Chevra Kadisha offers mourners a variety of choices.

This section explains the history of the Chevra Kadisha, how it cares for the dead and helps mourners, what options are available, how to engage its assistance, how volunteers participate, and what educational activities the organization provides. The information contained here may also help families better understand interactions with Jewish burial societies outside Champaign-Urbana, if they are arranging a funeral and/or burial elsewhere.

History

Written references to special groups of Jews caring for the dead date back at least to the fourth century CE. In time, each Jewish community developed its own volunteer burial society, whose members were considered to perform a great mitzvah. This chesed shel emet (act of true loving-kindness) was so named because the dead are unable to thank their caregivers. The oldest modern chevra kadisha was founded in Prague in 1564. Nine years later, this group published the earliest known codification of Jewish burial practices.

Locally, the burial society Ahavath Achim (brotherly love) was established in 1867 as the first Jewish organization in Champaign County. Although Ahavath Achim no longer exists, a new burial society was formed in 1993, the Chevra Kadisha of Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation. Today, the Chevra Kadisha serves the Jewish community of Champaign-Urbana and smaller communities within a radius of about 60 miles.

The Chevra Kadisha is staffed entirely by volunteers and supported solely by contributions. While no payment is required, a donation to Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation (designated to the Chevra Kadisha) is appropriate when the Chevra Kadisha does more than send out announcements. These funds allow the Chevra Kadisha to purchase shrouds and other supplies, to provide training and education, and to pay for funerals for the indigent.

Serving Mourners and the Deceased

The local Chevra Kadisha helps mourners and the deceased in four ways:

- Sending out email announcements when someone dies,
- Guarding (sitting with) the deceased from the moment of death until burial,
- Preparing the deceased for burial,
- Providing respectful burial for indigent members of the Jewish community.

These activities are described more fully below.

Part III: Engaging the Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial Society)

Email Announcements

Death notices may be sent by email to the local Jewish community at no cost through Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation by contacting the Federation office. These messages typically include a short biography and a list of survivors as well as information about funeral services, meal of condolence, shiva, and charitable donations. Information is sent out quickly and is usually limited to one or two messages, as details become available. A form to assist you in preparing such announcements and a fictitious example appear at the end of Part III.

Shemirah (Guarding the Deceased)

Judaism teaches that a damaged Torah scroll remains sacred, even though it may no longer be used for public readings. Likewise, the body of the deceased is revered, even though the departed is no longer able to interact with the community. As a sign of respect, the deceased is affectionately watched over from the time of death until burial, even during Shabbat, holidays, and at night. The people who sit in vigil are called shomrim (guards; shomer in the singular).

During shemirah, before the deceased is placed in a casket, he/she is entirely covered by a sheet or in a refrigeration unit. No viewing or contact occurs.

In Champaign-Urbana, shemirah usually takes place in one of several cooperating funeral homes, although occasionally it begins in the home, nursing home, or hospital. Once family members notify the Chevra Kadisha that they wish to have shomrim present, scheduling volunteers becomes the first order of business, so it is important to engage the Chevra Kadisha as early as possible. If the family wants shomrim, it is also important to consider this when choosing a funeral home. Most cooperating funeral homes allow shomrim to be present around the clock, but a few permit their presence only during business hours.

In some communities, shomrim are paid, but in Champaign-Urbana, they are all volunteers. Any adult Jew except a kohen (a descendant of the ancient priestly class) may serve. To avoid hardship, duty is shared among many people in two-hour shifts. Mourners (parents, children, siblings, spouse) and other relatives are encouraged to serve as shomrim if they feel able, but participation by the family is not required. Other members of the Jewish community will step forward.

The primary duty of a shomer is to remain with the deceased until replaced by another shomer. Any clean, modest attire is appropriate, formal or casual. Kippot (skull caps, kippah in the singular) are provided.

Traditionally, a shomer reads from the book of Psalms (also provided) during his/her watch; but other religious or serious readings may be substituted. Many shomrim bring their own reading material. No specific prayers are mandated. One does not study Torah or say blessings while serving as shomer, however, as it is considered inappropriate to engage in mitzvot and other pleasurable activities, such as eating, in the presence of the dead, who are no longer able to enjoy such activities. Similarly, casual conversation and pursuits are discouraged.

Part III: Engaging the Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial Society)

The final shomer accompanies the deceased to the synagogue, funeral home, or cemetery, wherever the funeral service is held. If the service occurs at the synagogue or funeral home, the congregation replaces the shomer and follows the hearse to the cemetery at the conclusion of the service.

Taharah (Preparation for Burial)

Taharah (ritual cleansing) of the body is performed in preparation for burial. The steps of taharah emphasize the sanctity of the dead and Jewish communal responsibility. Taharah is carried out by a group of four or five Chevra Kadisha volunteers, either men or women, depending upon the gender of the deceased.

Because some of the prayers used during taharah include the Hebrew name of the deceased, this information should be communicated to the team in advance. If you do not know the Hebrew name of the deceased, the team will use the person's secular name instead.

The family also needs to let the team know of its decision regarding the use of a kippah, tallit (prayer shawl, tallitot in the plural), and kitel (robe). Males are usually buried with all three items. Females are usually buried with a kitel, but a kippah and tallit may be included, if the family desires. If the family does not want to use the personal kippah, tallit, and/or kitel of the deceased or if he or she did not own some of these items, this is not a problem. Shroud kits always include a kitel and the Chevra Kadisha maintains a supply of kippot and tallitot.

During taharah, the body and hair of the deceased are washed (physical cleansing). Next, the deceased is rinsed with a continuous stream of water, while specific prayers and psalms are recited (spiritual purification). The body is then dried, dressed in a shroud (plain, white garments, similar to pajamas, a robe, and an outer wrapping, similar to a sheet). Finally, the deceased is placed in a plain, usually unfinished, wooden casket. A small amount of earth from Israel is placed in the casket, which is then closed. The body is not embalmed, no cosmetics are used, and the deceased is not placed on display.

Burial of the Indigent

When the family of a deceased member of the Champaign-Urbana Jewish community cannot afford proper burial without extreme hardship, the Chevra Kadisha works with the family to arrange respectful burial in a way that is both economical and compatible with Jewish tradition. The family may be assisted by Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation, Sinai Temple, Chabad, and/or the funeral home, as available resources permit. When applicable, the funeral home or the Chevra Kadisha works with the family to apply for social security and veterans burial benefits (\$255 and \$2,000, respectively) to help defray costs.

Four Options

Few Jewish burial practices are Biblically mandated. Most differ somewhat over time and place, yet the guiding principles remain constant: respect for the dead and compassion for mourners. Practices used by the local Chevra Kadisha were developed through extensive study of Jewish burial customs in Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox communities in modern America; consultation with Jewish burial societies in Chicago; and adaptation to our own, highly diverse community.

Part III: Engaging the Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial Society)

In keeping with this diversity, the Chevra Kadisha offers a range of choices to grieving families. For example, shemirah (guarding the deceased) and taharah (preparing the deceased for burial) can be selected in all possible combinations:

- Both shemirah and taharah,
- Shemirah alone,
- Taharah alone, or
- Neither shemirah nor taharah.

Whatever choice the family makes about shemirah and taharah, the Chevra Kadisha is available to help plan and coordinate arrangements and to send relevant email announcements to the community.

Recognizing that when a person dies, each situation is a little different and each family has its own needs, the Chevra Kadisha tries to strike a balance between respecting tradition and being flexible enough to accommodate a variety of circumstances. For example, if the family desires, the Chevra Kadisha will provide shomrim and/or perform taharah for individuals who are to be cremated or entombed in a crypt. Likewise, if the coroner releases the body in a timely manner and the condition of the body allows, the team is also willing to provide shomrim and/or perform taharah on someone who has committed suicide.

Nevertheless, there are a few limitations, adopted through experience. The Chevra Kadisha does not sanction photography of the exposed deceased, it does not perform taharah or provide shomrim for individuals whose funeral and/or burial will be conducted according to a religion other than Judaism, and it does not provide taharah for someone who has died of highly contagious diseases. In this last case, depending upon the mode of transmission of the disease, shomrim might still be provided.

Contacting the Chevra Kadisha

If you wish to engage the services of the Chevra Kadisha, notify the funeral home, discuss this with the rabbi, and alert the Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation as soon as possible, so that calls to volunteers may begin immediately. Please do not worry that you are placing a burden on others: Chevra Kadisha volunteers feel moved to honor the deceased in this way and to be of service to you and your family at this difficult and important time.

Volunteering

A roster of Chevra Kadisha members is updated annually. Except for kohanim (descendants of the ancient priestly class), who are ritually forbidden from being in the immediate presence of the dead, any Jewish adult living in the area may serve. To become a volunteer, simply contact the Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation office and you will be put in touch with someone who will discuss what tasks you would like to perform and what training is appropriate.

Members may sign up to serve as shomrim only, to help with taharah only, or to do both. Whatever their preference, they should be prepared to serve on short notice. Volunteers are also needed to make calls to schedule shomrim and taharah teams, to keep track of inventory and order supplies, and to be trainers and

Part III: Engaging the Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial Society)

speakers. By tradition, Chevra Kadisha volunteers are anonymous, as are the identities of members serving as shomrim or participating in taharah for any specific death. Members do not expect or receive any reward or thanks for performing these mitzvot.

Periodically, the Chevra Kadisha provides group training to give volunteers the opportunity to practice procedures, ask questions, and learn about special topics related to the work of the burial society. Such programs are open to anyone wanting to learn more about the Chevra Kadisha, as well as to current and prospective members. When no group training is scheduled, prospective members of taharah teams are trained one-on-one by experienced volunteers. To facilitate training and to guide the work of taharah teams, the Chevra Kadisha has prepared a detailed booklet, *Chevra Kadisha of Champaign-Urbana: A Manual of Ritual and Practice*. This document is free to all volunteers serving on taharah teams.

Community Education

Besides training current and prospective volunteers, the Chevra Kadisha offers education about Jewish death and mourning traditions to the Jewish community as a whole and to the general public. Such efforts take many forms:

Individuals

Chevra Kadisha volunteers are available to advise individual members of the Jewish community about their options as they make plans months or even years in advance of death. They are likewise available to answer questions and provide support to mourners in the hours and days after death occurs. Such consultations may be in person, by phone, or by email, and may include accompanying mourners to meetings with funeral home and/or cemetery staff, if desired.

Groups

The Chevra Kadisha participates in a variety of panels, lectures, workshops, and interviews, some intended for the Jewish community alone and others for the community at large. In recent years, the Chevra Kadisha has offered several programs at Sinai Temple and the Hillel Foundation and has provided speakers for the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Funeral Consumers Alliance of Champaign County, local churches, and WILL-AM radio.

Publications

The Chevra Kadisha has prepared several publications, the most recent being the document that you are now reading, *A Jewish Guide to Death and Mourning in Champaign-Urbana*. This booklet was published in 2016 as a collaboration between the Chevra Kadisha of Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation and the Cemetery Committee of Sinai Temple. It is available in print to all members of Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation and Sinai Temple and online.

Part III: Engaging the Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial Society)

Checklist: Email Announcement/Obituary

Death notices may be sent by email to the local Jewish community at no cost through Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation, Sinai Temple, and/or Chabad by contacting the office(s) of your choice. Note that distribution lists for these organizations overlap, but are by no means identical.

Below is a list of information typically included in these announcements. You may send a preliminary announcement before all details are settled, followed by a complete announcement as further information becomes available.

- ___ Full name of the deceased*
- ___ Hebrew name of the deceased
- ___ Full name of spouse or partner of the deceased (if applicable)*
- ___ Name of parents, including mother's maiden name
- ___ Place and date of death*
- ___ Place and date of birth
- ___ Names of survivors, usually limited to immediate family members, i.e., sons, daughters, mother and father, sisters, brothers, and spouse. Place names of spouses or partners of family members, if included, in parentheses.
- ___ Names of close relatives who died earlier, usually limited to immediate family members
- ___ A brief biography of the deceased, including information about his/her role in the Jewish community, if desired, and recognition of military service, when applicable
- ___ Date, time and location of funeral service (with full address)*
- ___ Name of officiant at funeral service*
- ___ Location of meal of condolence (full address)*
- ___ Location and times of shiva services (full address, dates and times)*
- ___ Appropriate places for memorial donations (full addresses with zip codes)*
- ___ Location where written condolences may be sent (full address with zip code and/or email)*

*Although the family and community generally appreciate a full announcement, not all items are required: those marked by asterisks are particularly important.

Part III: Engaging the Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial Society)

*Sample: Email Announcement/Obituary**

With great sadness we announce the passing of Sally Schwartz Solomon, who died in Champaign, Illinois, on Sunday, February 15, 2009 at the age of 86. Sally was born in Brooklyn, New York, on April 15, 1922, the third daughter of Myron and Molly (Berman) Schwartz. After graduating from Prospect Heights High School, Sally studied Business Administration at Columbia University, graduating in 1940. She married the love of her life, Dr. Bernard Solomon, in 1942 and moved with him to Champaign in 1946 when he established his ophthalmology practice here. He predeceased her in 1985. Survivors include their children Scott (Norma Nadolski) of Norman, Oklahoma, Sheila of Carmel, California, and Susan (Philip K. Wong) of Morton Grove, Illinois, and grandchildren Molly Schwartz, Jacob Schwartz, Adele Abromowitz, Benjamin Wong, and Ariana Wong, as well as her sisters Sylvia Schwartz Smith of White Plains, New York, and Simone (Matthew Marks) of New York City. Also surviving are eight nieces, two nephews, and three grand-nephews.

Sally Solomon was active in Sinai Temple, the Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation, Hadassah, and Champaign County Audubon Society. She was especially active as a Boy Scout and Girl Scout leader and volunteered in the Champaign schools as a reading tutor for many years after her children were grown. As first a secretary in the new Department of Oceanography at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and then grants administrator, she became the go-to person for new faculty and employees, providing institutional memory as the department expanded and went through many changes. Faculty, colleagues and friends across many departments in the University attended a retirement event in her honor in 1992. After that time, she continued with volunteering as a reading tutor and with the Audubon Society, organizing many winter count events and field trips to add to her birder's life list. At Sinai Temple, her organizing skills were highly valued over the years as she assisted staff in coordinating Religious School events. In her later years, she applied her organizing skills, sharp wit, and warmth in making many friends at the Valley Heights Retirement Center in Champaign, where she resided until her passing.

Funeral services will be held at 10:00 AM on Wednesday, February, 18, at Manchester Funeral Home, 3150 S. Baker Road, Champaign, followed by interment at Mount Hope Cemetery, 611 E. Pennsylvania Ave., Champaign. Rabbi Manny M. Mortimer of Sinai Temple, Champaign will officiate, along with Rabbi Katherine C. Knable of Morton Grove, Illinois. Following the funeral and interment, a meal of condolence will be held at the home of Estelle and Edward Cohen, 4325 S. Baker Road, Champaign. Shiva services will be held at the Cohen residence at 6:30 PM on both Wednesday evening and Thursday evening. Those wishing to contribute to the meals should get in touch with Linda Lipinski at lippi2020@omnimap.com or by calling 666-5656. Condolences may be sent to www.manchesterfunerals-condolences/SallySolomon.com.

Memorial donations may be made to Sinai Temple, 3104 W. Windsor Rd., Champaign, IL 61822 or the Solomon Family Fund of the Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation, 503 E. John Street, Champaign IL 61820, or to Champaign County Audubon Society, P.O. Box 882, Urbana, IL 61803.

*This sample is an illustration only. No such person existed.

PART IV:

Planning Ahead

Introduction

Most of us are loath to closely consider the reality of our own inevitable death. As a result, few of us make basic decisions about our funeral and burial in advance and even fewer communicate this information to relatives. When death finally comes, the inability of the survivors to know our wishes and to find critical legal and financial information greatly increases their already heavy burden. The best way for you to have your wishes carried out and to lighten the load of those who mourn for you is to state your wishes *in writing*, list important contacts, and indicate the locations of important legal and financial documents. Give this information to those close to you who will be responsible for making arrangements after you die. A safe deposit box is *not* a good location to store this information, as it is unlikely to be located and accessed before burial occurs.

This section offers a short list of the most important information that you can provide those designated to carry out your instructions. More complete lists can be obtained in books at the Sinai Temple Library (see, for example, *A Time to Prepare*, revised edition, edited by Richard F. Address and The Department of Jewish Family Concerns, UAHC Press), from the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Champaign County, at funeral homes, or on the internet. Bear in mind that lists intended for general audiences are not tailored to the Jewish community and its traditions, but they are often useful, especially for non-religious considerations, such as legal and financial matters.

Do not be dissuaded from filling out the form below if you cannot complete all items: partial information is vastly superior to none. Reading this booklet should stimulate your thinking and answer many of your questions. Talking the matter over with your spouse or partner and children or other relatives may clarify unresolved issues. Consult your rabbi, Cemetery Committee and Chevra Kadisha volunteers, and funeral home and cemetery staff, as needed.

Although making decisions about your funeral and burial and providing such information to important individuals in advance of death are highly recommended, unless death is imminent, it is not usually a good idea to purchase a pre-paid funeral plan. Funeral homes change owners, records get lost, and your own wishes may change. Unlike a list of preferences and information, which can be altered repeatedly, at your convenience and without cost, changing the terms of a pre-paid funeral plan can be expensive.

Purchasing a burial plot long in advance has its own advantages and disadvantages. You may wish to discuss this with a member of the Cemetery Committee before reaching a decision.

Part IV: Planning Ahead

Form: Information Useful to Survivors in the Event of My Death

Name (full name) _____ Today's Date _____

Hebrew name (including mother's and father's Hebrew names) _____

Date and place of birth _____

Funeral home, preferred _____

Pre-paid burial plan (if any, but not recommended) _____

Location of burial, preferred (city, cemetery) _____

Plot location, if already owned _____

Type of casket _____

Burial garments _____

Disposition of body, preferred (if not burial) _____

Type of funeral service _____

Location of service _____

Rabbi, contact information _____

Synagogue, preferred _____

Pallbearers (usually 6) _____

Memorial contributions sent to _____

Part IV: Planning Ahead

Type of gravestone _____

Wording on gravestone _____

Spouse or partner and contact information _____

Other important family contact information and relationships _____

Healthcare power of attorney and contact information _____

Financial power of attorney and contact information _____

Lawyer's name and contact information _____

Accountant's name and contact information _____

Location of will, power of attorney _____

Location of list of passwords for phone, computer, accounts, etc. _____

Location of copy of biography or resume, if any _____

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This document is truly the work of a community. Although Parts I-IV were all written, edited, or compiled by two people (Lee Melhado and Alice Berkson), a much larger group participated in the creation of this work over more than two decades. The contributions of these individuals and institutions are gratefully acknowledged, as follows:

Part I: Arranging a Jewish Funeral and Burial in Champaign-Urbana first appeared in 2002 as *Survivor Guidelines*, written by Fran Baker and Helene Silverman, printed and distributed by Sinai Temple Cemetery and Memorial Committee. The current version, although restructured and newly written, was inspired and heavily informed by Fran's and Helene's efforts.

Part II: Observing Jewish Death and Mourning Traditions originated in 1993 as *A Guide to Death and Mourning Traditions*, written by Lynn Wachtel and Alice Berkson and printed and distributed by the Chevra Kadisha of Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation. A lightly edited update was prepared by Lee Melhado in 2000. The current version has been more thoroughly edited to conform to changes in local practice and attitudes during the intervening quarter-century, but remains largely the work of the original authors. Rabbi Alan Cook kindly provided gender-neutral versions of psalms appearing in this edition.

Part III: Engaging the Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial Society) is mostly original but derives in part from the manual used by the Chevra Kadisha of Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation, *Chevra Kadisha of Champaign-Urbana: A Manual of Ritual and Practice*, written by Lee Melhado in 2006 and printed and distributed by the Chevra Kadisha of Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation. The 2006 manual was itself a reorganization and major expansion of an earlier work, *The Ritual and Practice for the Chevra Kaddisha* of Champaign-Urbana*, prepared in 1993 by Rosalind Faiman Weinberg.

Part IV: Planning Ahead was inspired by materials distributed by the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Champaign County and Chicago Jewish Funeral Homes and by the book *A Time to Prepare* by Richard Address (see Suggested Readings).

The current authors are deeply indebted to the authors of the previous works cited above and to many others who assisted them, including Allen and Elaine Avner, Fran and Frank Baker, Martin Birnbaum, Julie Brophy, Bill Fabian, Jim Hudson, Howard Jacobson, Lisa Libman, Evan Melhado, Michelle Paisley, Djavaid Novrouzov, Susie Rahn, Ruth Reingold, Alex Scheeline, Elizabeth Klein Shapiro, Tauby Shimkin, Helene Silverman, Dan Smith, Rae Spooner, Janis Topolosky, Lynn and Ira Wachtel, Rosalind Faiman Weinberg, and Rabbis Brad Bloom, Jeffrey Falick, Norman Klein, Raif Melhado, Isaac Neuman, and Dovid Tiechtel, and perhaps others of whom we are unaware.

We are equally indebted to readers of this current document (some of whom also assisted with earlier publications), including Allen Avner, Fran Baker, Frances Harris, Evan Melhado, Rob Silverman, Lynn Wachtel, Rosalind Faiman Weinberg, and Rabbis Alan Cook, Jody Cook, and Dovid Tiechtel. Their thoughtful suggestions and corrections have made this a more readable, accurate, and, we hope, more useful work. Any remaining errors and deficiencies are, of course, solely the responsibility of the authors.

*Chevra Kaddisha is an alternate spelling of the more common transliteration, Chevra Kadisha.

Acknowledgments

Finally, we thank Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation and Sinai Temple for co-sponsoring this work, for printing and mailing it, and for placing this document on the Federation website, www.cujf.org.

Grappling with such a weighty subject during the past year and a half has been a sobering experience. Nevertheless, we have enjoyed working together on such an important, if challenging, topic and are honored to have had the opportunity to serve our beloved Jewish community in this way.

Lee Melhado
Chevra Kadisha Committee, Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation

Alice Berkson
Cemetery Committee, Sinai Temple

Urbana, Illinois
June 2016, Tamuz 5776

GLOSSARY

- Adonai* - One of the Hebrew names of God. Literally, my Lord.
- Ahavat Achim* - Brotherly love. Also, name of the first Jewish burial society in Champaign County.
- Ashkenazi* - A Jew of eastern or central European descent or adjective relating to same.
- Avet* - A mourner, after interment. Before interment, a mourner is called an onen.
- Chesed Shel Emet* - Act of true loving-kindness.
- Chevra Kadisha* - The Jewish burial society. Literally, holy society, a group of people who guard the body and prepare it for burial.
- El Malei Rachamim* - A memorial prayer. Literally, God, full of compassion.
- Elul* - The sixth month of the Hebrew calendar, the month preceding the High Holy Days.
- Gemara* - Rabbinical commentary on the Mishnah, found in the Talmud.
- Hesped* - Eulogy.
- High Holy Days* - The ten days beginning with Rosh Hashanah and concluding with Yom Kippur.
- Kaddish* - A prayer in Aramaic praising God (see also Mourner's Kaddish, Kaddish Hagadol, and Kaddish Le'itchadeta).
- Kaddish Hagadol* - Kaddish prayer recited only at the burial, referring to a world that will be renewed. Also called Kaddish Le'itchadeta.
- Kaddish Le'itchadeta* - Kaddish prayer recited only at the burial, referring to a world that will be renewed. Also called Kaddisah Hagadol.
- Keriah* - The tearing of a garment as a sign of grief.
- Kevod Hamet* - Respect for the dead.
- Kevod Hechai* - Respect for the living.
- Kippah* - A head-covering, skullcap, or yarmulke.
- Kippot* - Plural of kippah.
- Kitel* - A white robe worn on ceremonial occasions and for burial.
- Kohen* - A descendant of the ancient priestly class.
- Kohanim* - Plural of kohen.
- Matzevah* - Monument, grave marker.
- Meal of Condolence* - Meal eaten by the mourners, family, friends, and community members immediately following the funeral.
- Minyan* - Traditionally, a quorum of at least ten Jewish men required for public worship, thus a congregation. For liberal Jews, a quorum of at least ten Jewish men and women. Also refers to a customary prayer group.
- Minyanim* - Plural of minyan.
- Mishnah* - The primary collection of laws and opinions compiled in 200 C.E. by Rabbi Judah the Prince which forms the basis of the *Talmud*.
- Mitzvah* - Commandment. Sometimes used to refer to a good deed.
- Mitzvot* - Plural of mitzvah.
- Mizrahi* - A Jew of ancient Middle Eastern descent, especially modern-day Iraq, Iran, and Yemen or adjective relating to same.
- Mourner's Kaddish* - Kaddish prayer recited to honor the dead.
- Onen* - A mourner, between the time of death and interment.
- Pesach* - Passover, a major Jewish festival celebrated in the spring, commemorating the Exodus of the Jewish people from Egypt.
- Reader's Kaddish* - Kaddish prayer recited by the prayer leader during services.

Glossary

Rosh Hashanah - The Jewish New Year.

Sephardi - A Jew of Spanish, Portuguese, Middle Eastern, or North African descent or adjective relating to same.

Shabbat - The Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. A day of rest.

Shavuot - A major Jewish festival celebrated seven weeks after Passover, commemorating the receiving of the Torah, and the first fruits of the season.

Sheloshim - The 30-day period following interment.

Shema - Jewish prayer proclaiming that God is One. From Deuteronomy 6:4. Recited at the moment of death.

Shemini Atzeret - Eighth day of Sukkot.

Shemirah - Guarding. Traditionally, sitting with the deceased from death until burial.

Shiva - The seven-day period following interment.

Shiva Candle - The candle kept burning throughout shiva.

Shomrim - Guards. Traditionally, those who sit with the deceased from death until burial.

Shomer - Singular of shomrim.

Sukkot - A major Jewish festival celebrated five days after Yom Kippur, commemorating the Jewish wandering in the desert after the Exodus and the harvest.

Taharah - The ritual cleansing of the deceased.

Tallit - Prayer shawl, also called a tallis.

Tallitot - Plural of tallit.

Talmud - The collection of Jewish law and tradition consisting of the Mishnah and the Gemara, compiled and edited by Rav Ashi in the fourth century C.E. (see Mishnah and Gemara).

Torah - The law of God as revealed to Moses and recorded in the first five books of the Hebrew scriptures. A scroll containing this.

Tzedakah - Charity.

Tzidduk HaDin - Prayer recited immediately before or after the interment. Literally, Justification of the (Divine) Judgment.

Tzitzit - Fringes on the four corners of the tallit.

Yahrzeit - Anniversary of the date of death.

Yizkor - Memorial service recited on Yom Kippur, Passover, Sukkot, and Shavuot.

Yom Kippur - The Day of Atonement.

SUGGESTED READINGS

For Youth:

Fiction

Andrews, Jesse. *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*. New York: Amulet Books, 2012. Also a movie. (cancer, teens)

Asher, Jay. *Thirteen Reasons Why*. New York: Penguin Random House, 2009. (friend suicide, teens)

Burleigh, Robert. *Good-bye, Sheepie*. Illustrations by Peter Catalonotto. Tarryton, New York: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2010. (pet, preschool and early elementary)

Cobb, Rebecca. *Missing Mommy*. Illustrations by author. New York.: Henry Holt and Company, 2013. (parent, preschool)

Cohn, Janice. *Molly's Rosebush*. Illustrations by Gail Owens. Morton Grove, Illinois: Albert Whitman and Co., 1994. (miscarriage, preschool and elementary)

Forman, Gayle. *If I Stay*. New York: Penguin Group, 2009. Also a movie. (family, auto accident, teens)

Green, John. *The Fault in Our Stars*. New York: Dutton Books, 2012. Also a movie. (cancer, teens)

Hays, Tommy, *What I Came to Tell You*. New York: Egmont USA, 2013. (parent, 10 through middle school)

Howe, James. *Kaddish for Grandpa in Jesus's Name Amen*. Illustrations by Catherine Stock. New York: Atheneum Books, 2004. (interfaith, grandparent, preschool through early elementary)

Miles, Miska. *Annie and the Old One*. Illustrations by Peter Parnall. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1985. (grandparent, preschool through elementary)

Paterson, Katherine. *Bridge to Terabithia*. Illustrations by Donna Diamond. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1977. (friend, 10 through middle school)

Sinykin, Sheri. *Zayde Comes to Live*. Illustrations by Kristina Swarner. Atlanta Georgia: Peachtree Publishers, 2012. (grandparent, elementary)

Schick, Eleanor. *Mama*. Illustrations by author. New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2000. (parent, elementary)

Whitney, Daisy, *When You Were Here*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2013. (cancer, teens).

Suggested Readings

Viorst, Judith. *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney*. Illustrated by Erik Blegvad. New York: Atheneum, 1971. (pet, elementary school)

Zolotow, Charlotte. *My Grandson Lew*. Pictures by William Pene Du Bois. New York: Harper and Row, 1974. (grandparent, pre-school)

Non-Fiction

Bow, James. *Dealing With Loss*. New York: Crabtree, 2015. (general, 10 through middle school)

Brown, Laurie Krasny. *When Dinosaurs Die: A Guide to Understanding Death*. Illustrations by Marc Brown. Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1996. (general, preschool and elementary)

dePaola, Tomie. *Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs*. Illustrations by author. New York: Puffin Books, 1973. (great-grandparent, preschool and early elementary)

Innes, Shona, and Írisz Agócs. *Life Is Like the Wind*. Illustrations by Írisz Agócs. Hauppauge, New York: Barron's, 2014. (general, preschool)

Kidde, Rita, and Antoine Wilson. *Mourning a Death in the Family*. New York: Rosen, 2016. (relatives, 10 through middle school)

Philips, Tracy A., *Losing Someone You Love: Dealing with Death and Dying*. New York: Enslow Publishers, 2009. (general, teens)

Portnoy, Mindy Avra. *Where Do People Go When They Die?* Illustrations by Shelly O. Haas. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Kar-Ben Publishing, 2004. (general, preschool)

Advice for Parents

Trozzi, Maria. *Talking with Children about Loss*. New York: Penguin Putnam, 1999.

For Adults (All Non-Fiction):

Address, Richard F; and The Department of Jewish Family Concerns, Eds. *A Time to Prepare, Revised Edition*. New York: UAHC Press, 2002.

Angel, Rabbi Marc D. *The Orphaned Adult: Confronting the Death of a Parent*. Lanham, Maryland: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1997.

Brener, Anne. *Mourning and Mitzvah: A Guided Journal for Walking the Mourner's Path Through Grief to Healing*. Woodstock, Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2012.

Chast, Roz. *Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?* New York: Bloomsbury, 2014.

Suggested Readings

- Cutter, William, ed. *The Jewish Mourner's Handbook*. Springfield, New Jersey: Behrman House, 1996.
- Diamant, Anita. *Saying Kaddish: How to Comfort the Dying, Bury the Dead, and Mourn as a Jew*. Schocken Books, 1998.
- Didion, Joan. *The Year of Magical Thinking*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005.
- Gawande, Atul. *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End*. New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt and Company, 2014.
- Goldberg, Rabbi Chaim Binyamin. *Mourning in Halacha*. Brooklyn, New York: Mesorah Publications, 1991.
- Goodman, Rabbi Arnold M. *A Plain Pine Box*. New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1981.
- Halkin, Hillel. *After One-Hundred-and-Twenty: Reflecting on Death, Mourning, and the Afterlife in the Jewish Tradition*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016.
- Isaacs, Rabbi Ron H. and Rabbi Kerry M. Olitzky. *A Jewish Mourner's Handbook*. KTAV Publishing House: Hoboken, New Jersey, 1991.
- Kalanithi, Paul. *When Breath Becomes Air*. New York: Random House, 2016.
- Kelman, Rabbi Stuart. *K'vod Hamet: A Guide for the Bereaved*. Albany, California: EKS Publishing Co., 2002.
- Kolatch, Alfred J. *The Jewish Mourner's Book of Why*. Middle Village, New York: Jonathan David Publishers, 1993.
- Kübler-Ross, Elisabeth. *On Death and Dying*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1969.
- Kushner, Harold S. *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. New York: Schocken Books, 1981.
- Lamm, Maurice. *The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning*. New York: Jonathan David Publishers, 1969.
- Levy, Alexander. *The Orphaned Adult: Understanding and Coping with Grief and Change After the Death of Our Parents*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Perseus Press, 2000.
- Ozarowski, Joseph S. *To Walk in God's Ways: Jewish Pastoral Perspectives on Illness and Bereavement*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1995.
- Rabinowitz, Rabbi Tzvi. *A Guide to Life: Jewish Laws and Customs of Mourning*. Northvale, New Jersey: Aronson, 1989.

Suggested Readings

- Riemer, Jack. *Jewish Reflections on Death*. New York: Schocken Books, 1987.
- Schiff, Harriett Sarnoff. *Living Through Mourning*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1986.
- Sonsino, Rifat and Daniel B. Syme. *What Happens After I Die?: Jewish Views of Life After Death*. New York: UAHC Press, 1990.
- Spiro, Jack D. *A Time to Mourn: Judaism and the Psychology of Bereavement*. New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1985.
- Spooner, Ray. *Ray's Little Ride*. Urbana, Illinois: <http://rayslittleride.com/category/my-blog/>, 2015-16.
- Syme, Daniel B. *The Jewish Home: A Guide to the Jewish Holidays and Life Cycles*. Rev. ed. New York: URJ Press, 2004.
- Weiss, Rabbi Abner. *Death and Breavement: A Halakhic Guide*. Hoboken, New Jersey: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1991.
- Wieseltier, Leon. *Kaddish*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998.
- Wolfson, Dr. Ron. *A Time to Mourn, A Time to Comfort: A Guide to Jewish Bereavement*. Jewish Lights Publishing: Woodstock, Vermont, 2005.
- Zaslow, Jeffrey; and Randy Pauch. *The Last Lecture*. New York: Hyperion, 2008.

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DIRECTORY

(Located in Champaign, Illinois unless shown otherwise)

Adams Memorials	www.adamsmemorials.com sales@adamsmemorials.com
Cemetery Committee, Sinai Temple	www.sinaitemplecu.org rabbialan@sinaitemple.com
Chabad Jewish Center at UIUC	www.jewishillini.org uofrabbi@gmail.com
Champaign County Clerk, Urbana	www.champaigncountyclerk.com mail@champaigncountyclerk.com
Champaign County Coroner, Urbana	www.co.champaign.il.us/coroner coroner@co.champaign.il.us
Chevra Kadisha, Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation	www.cujf.org cujf@shalomcu.org
Funeral Consumers Alliance of Champaign County	www.funerals.org (then find Illinois) fcaccil@gmail.com
Heath and Vaughn Funeral Home	www.heathandvaughn.com h.vaughn@comcast.net
Hillel at UIUC: Cohen Center for Jewish Life	www.illinihillel.org rabbi@illinihillel.org
Kelley Burial Vaults and Monuments	no web address currently richherr@aol.com
Mittendorf-Calvert Funeral Home	website in preparation stacey@memorialtraditions.net
Morgan Memorial Home, Savoy	www.morganmemorialhome.com dawn@morganmemorialhome.com
Moses Montefiore Congregation, Bloomington	www.mosesmontefioretemple.org mmtrabbi@gmail.com
Mt. Hope Cemetery and Mausoleum	website in preparation stacey@memorialtraditions.net
<i>News-Gazette</i> (submit obituary via funeral home)	www.news-gazette.com/section/services/reader-services/about-obituaries-news-gazette.html
Owens Funeral Home	www.owensfuneralhomes.com owensfuneralhomes@sbcglobal.net
Renner-Wikoff Chapel, Urbana	www.renner-wikoffchapel.com rennerwikoff@gmail.com
Sinai Temple	www.sinaitemplecu.org rabbialan@sinaitemplecu.org
Sunset Funeral Home	www.sunsetfuneralhome.com info@sunsetfuneralhome.com
Temple B'rit Shalom, Springfield	www.templebritshalom.net rabbidatz@gmail.com
Temple Israel, Springfield	www.templeisrael.springfield.org rabbimarks@sbcglobal.net

For updates of this Directory and adjacent Contacts and Resources, visit www.cujf.org.

Champaign-Urbana Jewish Community
CONTACTS AND RESOURCES
(area code 217 unless shown otherwise)

BURIAL SOCIETY

Chevra Kadisha, CU Jewish Federation 367-9872

At the request of the family, the Chevra Kadisha (Burial Society) provides volunteers to sit with the body of the deceased from death until burial and/or to prepare the body for burial according to Jewish tradition. It also provides assistance with advance planning and sends out funeral announcements.

CASKETS & SHROUDS

Caskets are sold by the funeral home. Shrouds are provided by the Chevra Kadisha (Burial Society).

CEMETERY & PLOTS

Cemetery Committee, Sinai Temple 352-8140
Mt. Hope Cemetery & Mausoleum 384-7002

The CU Jewish community owns Jewish sections at Mt. Hope Cemetery. Burial rights, sold and administered by the Sinai Temple Cemetery Committee, are open to all members of the CU Jewish community, affiliated and unaffiliated alike.

CREMATION

Arrangements for this civil option are made by the funeral home. All other aspects of Jewish tradition may still be observed.

FUNERAL HOMES

Heath and Vaughn Funeral Home 239-1212
Mittendorf-Calvert Funeral Home 352-4004
Morgan Memorial Home 356-5858
Owens Funeral Home 352-4231
Renner-Wikoff Chapel 367-1122
Sunset Funeral Home 239-2874

These funeral homes cooperate with the Chevra Kadisha (Burial Society).

GOVERNMENT OFFICES

Champaign County Coroner 384-3888
The coroner issues death certificates and also arranges autopsies, when necessary.

Champaign County Clerk 384-3720
The county clerk provides copies of death certificates.

MEAL OF CONDOLENCE

A community meal immediately following burial and food during shiva are often organized by friends of the family. If you need help with arrangements, contact the officiating rabbi.

MEMORIAL SOCIETY (CIVIL)

Funeral Consumers Alliance of Champaign County

This non-religious organization provides an annual survey of local funeral and cemetery costs and can be helpful explaining local civil options. Call 377-8067 for current phone number.

MONUMENTS

Adams Memorials 352-5322
Kelley Burial Vaults and Monuments 355-5551
Mt. Hope Cemetery (uses Adams) 384-7002

OBITUARIES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chevra Kadisha, CU Jewish Federation 367-9872
Sinai Temple 352-8140
Chabad 355-8672
News-Gazette 351-5252

Email announcements about funeral arrangements and a brief biography of the deceased are sent by the Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial Society), Sinai Temple, and/or Chabad, as you choose. Full obituaries are printed in the *News-Gazette*.

RABBIS & CONGREGATIONS

In Champaign-Urbana:
Sinai Temple (Reform) 352-8140
Chabad (Lubavitch) 355-8672
Hillel (Orthodox, varies) 344-1328

In Bloomington and Springfield:
Temple B'rith Shalom (Reform) 525-1360
Moses Montefiore Cong.(Reform) 309 662-3182
Temple Israel (Conservative) 546-2841

SHIVA

Arrangements for shiva are usually made by the rabbi officiating at services and/or burial.

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**A JEWISH GUIDE
TO DEATH AND MOURNING
IN CHAMPAIGN-URBANA**

- PART I: Arranging a Jewish Funeral and Burial in Champaign-Urbana
- II: Observing Jewish Death and Mourning Traditions
- III: Engaging the Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial Society)
- IV: Planning Ahead