

Jewish Funeral and Mourning Practices

Compiled and edited by Rabbi Harry Rosenfeld

Introduction

Judaism has always considered death a part of life. Beginning with the Bible and amplified voluminously in the Talmud and other post-Biblical literature, Jewish customs and practices surrounding death and mourning have served to help the living deal with the loss of our loved ones. At the same time, our customs and practices place a primary priority on reverence, honor and respect for the deceased. Throughout many of our practices and traditions, we are pointed in the direction of God as our hope and strength, for healing and comfort, in entering and shaping our future.

Congregation Albert was founded to provide its members with a spiritual home where people are involved in the traditions and customs of Judaism and connected to and supportive of our fellow congregants. This spirit extends to our friends and neighbors in times of joy and times of mourning.

Some members of Congregation Albert have historic family ties to Albuquerque and New Mexico but many do not. So, for some of our members, there is the additional difficulty of being separated from loved ones and family when a death occurs. In order to continue to meet our goal of being a family of friends, our congregation wants to do all we can to be supportive and helpful at the time a death occurs.

Celebrating and observing the legacy of our inheritance as Jews is meant to guide us through life, in bad times as well as good. When someone dies, we want to do “the right thing”. However, in this day and age, there is limited knowledge of the mourning customs of Judaism, but it is never too late to expand our Jewish knowledge and to live our lives more Jewishly.

With this in mind, we have prepared this guide. The goal of this booklet is to provide information and to suggest ways of looking at life, as well as death, and to offer practical advice as to what to do, even now, before death occurs.

Naturally, when death occurs, there are so many important questions and matters to be resolved. This book also contains checklists of what to do when death occurs. Again and again you will see the recommendation to consult with the Rabbi and Cantor, who bring the wisdom of Jewish tradition combined with the wealth of practical experience.

Putting Your House In Order (Preparing Important Information Prior to Death)

A death in the family is a sorrowful experience. While having information regarding the deceased’s funeral and burial wishes readily accessible will not lessen the pain of the mourners, it can eliminate much of their anxiety. We suggest that our members and their loved ones discuss these matters on an ongoing basis, when it is possible for all to engage in meaningful reflection and careful analysis. Please be sure to take into account the needs of the survivors as well as the desires of the deceased.

The first items to prepare are a health care proxy, an organ donor card and perhaps a limited power of attorney. Consult with your health care provider, your legal and financial advisors about the best way to proceed with these matters. Also, if you know what kind of funeral arrangements you prefer, you should discuss these matters with your family and commit them to writing.

Jewish Funeral and Mourning Practices

Compiled and edited by Rabbi Harry Rosenfeld

You may also choose to prearrange your funeral through your funeral home. If you wish to be buried in the Congregation Albert cemetery, please call our office (505) 883-1818. This helps ensure your family knows your wishes and makes the arrangements following your death easier for them.

If you would like, we can keep copies of these documents in your confidential membership file where only the Rabbi and Cantor will have access to them.

Will

It is always to your advantage to have a will, in which you decide how your possessions will be distributed. The time of bereavement is not the best time to make many of the decisions the survivors must face. Having made a will in advance will reduce the number of difficult choices. However, since a will may be read some time after the funeral, we are including the following list of other potential problem areas that may generate discussions within the family in advance at a time more conducive to reflection and careful analysis. Without a will, one's estate is distributed according to state law.

There are many ideas of a personal nature which one might consider. There may be bequests to family, to friends or to a charity or institution including Congregation Albert. In this connection, it should be pointed out that if a person dies without a will, State and probate rules will determine what happens to your resources and possessions.

Please take the time to sit with your family and make sure they know where these important documents are kept as well as the name of your attorney and who the executor(s) of your estate will be.

Ethical Will

There is a long standing Jewish tradition of writing an ethical will. Too often, we are preoccupied with the material possessions we wish to pass on to our children and family. If we stop to think about it, there are many more important things that we can leave as a legacy - our values, ethics, dreams - the things of which life's substance is really constructed. It is never too soon to write an ethical will. In fact, it is a good idea to rewrite it each year during the High Holy Days. It is a nice family custom to sit down and read that will, to grow as a family, guided by this significant Jewish custom.

The items in your material will and ethical will are certainly good topics for family discussions, and we recommend strongly that you discuss with your family your desires for what is to be done after your death.

See below for some sample ethical wills.

Jewish Funeral and Mourning Practices

Compiled and edited by Rabbi Harry Rosenfeld

Illness

The attitude of the Jewish religion toward illness is one of hope and knowledge. Prayer can often help people in pain and suffering. It can bring comfort and hope and some solace. The family can grow much closer during the illness of a loved one.

Our congregation can provide prayers for both the patient and the family, which the clergy and our Caring Community Committee can bring to homes and hospitals. We also include a prayer for healing in our worship services. If you would like your loved one added to the healing list please call the Congregation Albert office (505-883-1818)

Judaism also believes strongly that while prayer is to be encouraged, all forms of medical help should be employed. The skills and knowledge of doctors and nurses represent a significant gift from God, and we are to use all of those gifts that God has given to us. The attitude toward a person who is sick is positive and realistic.

On the other hand, we recognize that death may come as a welcome end to suffering, and passive euthanasia, that is, not engaging in extraordinary measures to keep a person alive, is permissible. These difficult ethical questions should be discussed within the family, with the guidance of the Rabbi or Cantor and your doctor. Once these decisions are made, each person should have a health care proxy, and if one chooses a “DNR or do not resuscitate order filled out and on file with one’s doctor, lawyer and a member of the family.

As Death Approaches

The attitude toward a person who is dying is one of compassion and understanding. Close family are encouraged to visit and spend as much time with their loved one as possible.

The “Viddui” - Confession

The *Shema*, “Hear O Israel, Adonai is our God, Adonai is One”, is one of our most well-known prayers and is the traditional prayer said by the dying person and his/her loved ones. The Viddui may be said by the dying person or on his/her behalf by the family or the clergy. (See below)

When Death Occurs

After calling your family, a telephone call to a funeral home (see page __) and to our office (505-883-1818) will alert us to your needs when there is a death within your family. The Rabbi, Cantor and funeral home will offer assistance in making the arrangements. The Rabbi, in consultation with the family, will arrange for officiation at the funeral.

We suggest that a member of your family or a close friend be immediately notified to stay and aid you at this time to help you get answers to your questions and make some of the arrangements. If you need additional assistance, a member of congregation can be contacted by the clergy.

What Services Does the Funeral Home Provide

Jewish Funeral and Mourning Practices

Compiled and edited by Rabbi Harry Rosenfeld

The funeral home can make all necessary arrangements in connection with the burial. The funeral home will have the body brought to its facility where it will be cleansed and prepared for burial. It is up to the family to express preference in regard to carrying out particular Jewish traditions. This preparation is called [*Taharat HaMet*](#), the purification of the body of the deceased. We are blessed to have a [*Chevrah Kadishah*](#) in Albuquerque to do the Taharah. The funeral home, the Rabbi or the Cantor can put you in touch with them.

The funeral home will assist you in the selection of a casket. A wood casket, inexpensive, with no metal nails, or one as plain and unadorned as possible is in keeping with tradition. This is to emphasize the common fate of all life. We recommend that primary mourners be accompanied by a relative or a friend when selecting a casket and making funeral arrangements.

Should you desire, the funeral home will assist in placing the obituary notice in the newspaper.

Embalming and open casket viewing are generally considered to be contrary to tradition. The human being is thought to be created in the divine image, so any unnatural alteration of the body is viewed as disrespectful. As Reform Jews, each of us may decide how to use tradition as a guide. The Rabbi and Cantor are available as resource guides for any questions regarding the preparation of the dead for burial.

Historically, the custom of *shomrim*, people watching the body until burial, accomplished several important goals. First of all, it gave great respect to the body. While we human beings are a combination of body and soul, our bodies are the houses in which our souls dwell, and they should be treated with dignity, even after our death. It is considered a great mitzvah for a Jew to help prepare the body for the funeral. In addition, in ancient times the body was thus protected from animals. Today, the funeral director performs this practice.

Burial Attire

In traditional practice, attire for deceased men and women consisted of only a simple shroud. The principle that all are equal in death was thus reinforced by preventing families from ostentatiously and competitively dressing their deceased in fine clothing. This served to preserve the dignity of the poor and reminded all that a funeral was an inappropriate time for showing off one's wealth. Today most people can afford a simple suit or dress. Therefore, it is appropriate to be dressed in more than a shroud, but the same principles embodied in traditional Jewish practice should be preserved. If you would like your loved one buried in a traditional shroud, you can make those arrangements through the funeral home or Chevrah Kadishah. Valuables should not be buried with the body.

Aninut - Tenderness

Tradition describes from the moment of death to the time of burial as the time of *Aninut*, "Tenderness". Judaism recognizes *Aninut* as a period of deep distress. One who is in this stage of mourning is an *Onen*, one who is emotionally sensitive. Although today we recognize that many members of the deceased family will feel the pain of the death,

Jewish Funeral and Mourning Practices

Compiled and edited by Rabbi Harry Rosenfeld

according to tradition, only the direct blood relatives (parent, child, sibling) or spouse may be considered an *Onen*. The *Onen* is apt to be disoriented and overwhelmed by the immediacy of the death, yet must make detailed arrangements with the funeral home, rabbi and family members. Recognizing this fundamental conflict between practical and psychological needs, the aim of our traditions is to facilitate making appropriate arrangements as well as making the psychological transition to actual mourning which begins with the funeral.

_____ During *Aninut*, there is no formal visiting of the family. Close friends may offer their comfort, support, and help. Some time prior to departure for the funeral service, friends and neighbors should make arrangement for a *S'udat Havarah*, a meal of healing, for the mourners upon their return from the funeral. This meal symbolizes support and the concept that life must go on even though grief may temporarily remove one's appetite for living. It is traditional to serve a dairy meal that includes hard-boiled eggs, a symbol of life.

The Rabbi and Cantor

The Rabbi or Cantor are on call to any Congregation Albert household which is stricken with the death of a loved one. If notified, our clergy will try to be with the family during the last hours prior to death (in the case of an ongoing illness) offering support and assistance. During *Aninut*, the Rabbi and Cantor are there to provide guidance to the family about the traditions of Judaism and to help you make the appropriate decisions, officiate at the funeral and, whenever possible, be there in the evening for services at the *Shiva* home following the burial. The Rabbi or Cantor will acquaint the family with the nature of the funeral and answer any questions pertaining to Jewish law and custom surrounding death and mourning. Some months later, they can work with the family on the unveiling ceremony of a tombstone or memorial tablet.

The Rabbi and Cantor are experienced pastoral counselors who will be there to help during *Aninut*, and at your request, afterward as well.

The Funeral

A Jewish funeral is a simple ceremony consisting of some appropriate Psalms and readings as well as a eulogy. You may begin the service with *K'riah*, the tearing and wearing of a black ribbon representing the tear you feel in your lives when you experience the loss of a dear one. It also serves as a signal to others that you are in mourning and that an adjustment of greeting is in order. The *K'riah* ribbon is worn for up to one month after the funeral except on Shabbat.

The service may take place at a graveside, in the synagogue or in the funeral home. If the funeral is held at the funeral home or at the synagogue it is followed by a short ceremony at the cemetery before burial. Many if not most funerals in Albuquerque are held only at the graveside.

Jewish custom urges that the burial occur as soon after death as possible. However, if close relatives must travel a great distance, the ceremony may be delayed. Funeral services are not held on Shabbat or Jewish holy days.

The goal of the eulogy is to evoke honest memories and feelings about the

Jewish Funeral and Mourning Practices

Compiled and edited by Rabbi Harry Rosenfeld

deceased and to bring comfort to the mourners. The Rabbi and Cantor are well trained to work with the family in order to create a eulogy that honors the deceased and begins to help the family cope with their loss.

Many people feel the need to share their memories of a deceased loved one or friend. The appropriate time for these personal eulogies is during *shiva* (see below).

At the funeral various prayers emphasizing the merciful and just qualities of the Divine Will are recited. Psalms, *El Maleh Rachamim*, and other prayers may be recited or chanted. The *Kaddish* is recited at the conclusion of the service at the cemetery.

Upon arrival at the cemetery, the family may escort the casket to the grave or wait while the casket is taken to the lot and then proceed to the graveside. In either case, you may request that the casket be placed on top of the grave or lowered into it prior to the beginning of the cemetery service.

Family and friends may choose to fulfill the greatest *mitzvah* at this time which is to fill the grave either by placing a symbolic handful of soil on the casket before it is lowered or placing a shovel or two l of earth into grave itself.

Usually, the mourners file out between lines made by the other attendees. This allows the mourners to feel the support of the community.

It is customary to not have flowers at a Jewish funeral. Rather than flowers, friends should be encouraged to make a contribution to the synagogue or a favorite charity in memory of the deceased.

***Shiva* - The First Seven Days of Mourning**

According to Jewish tradition, mourners wear torn clothing, sit on low stools or the floor instead of chairs, and refrain from greeting visitors. They are not permitted to leave the house - even to pray at synagogue except on Shabbat. This means a *minyan* - ten Jewish adults needed for public prayer - is usually brought to the mourners' house. Traditionally, bathing is prohibited during *shiva*. So is shaving. Many people cover the mirrors with sheets taped to the wall. And of course, the official mourning period is intense for seven days, followed by 23 lesser days, followed by ten more months of reciting the mourner's *Kaddish* in a minyan. Shabbat and holidays interrupt *Shiva* and the family attends services at the synagogue.

Today, instead of tearing clothes we substitute a black ribbon which is cut at the funeral. Some choose to sit for a full seven days, other families just three. Few members of our congregation cover mirrors, avoid personal grooming or sit on low stools. During *Shiva* friends will visit the house bring food for the family, and stay for the service.

During your visit to a *Shiva* house, you should focus on the mourners, sharing memories of the deceased with them or even just sitting with them in silence. During the service at the home, you should participate in the service or stand quietly in another room so as not to detract from the healing of the prayers.

***Sheloshim* - The Next 23 Days**

Sheloshim (thirty) is the thirty day period following burial. Following *Shiva*, some of the normal routine elements of life are reentered. During the rest of *Sheloshim* it is customary to refrain from attending social gatherings and events. One does not visit

Jewish Funeral and Mourning Practices

Compiled and edited by Rabbi Harry Rosenfeld

the cemetery during this period.

It is our custom that one attend *Shabbat* services during the period of *Sheloshim*. The mentioning of the name of the deceased during the recitation of *Kaddish* at services maintains our tradition of honoring the deceased. Shabbat services at Congregation Albert also offer the bereaved a chance to seek solace in the greater warmth of our entire congregation.

***Shanah* - The Year Following Burial**

The total mourning period is observed for eleven months, during which *Kaddish* may be recited daily, and at our Shabbat and holy day services.

Yahrtzeit

Yahrtzeit is a Yiddish/German word meaning the anniversary of death. It is not a day of intense mourning but for remembrance. It may be calculated by either Hebrew or civil calendars. *Yahrtzeit* begins on the evening preceding the date of death and consists of lighting a 24 hour memorial candle and reciting of prayers (see below for a suggested service). One usually refrains from social activities throughout this day. It is customary to recite *Kaddish* (the mourners' prayer) at evening and morning services on the day of death or at Shabbat services during the week in which *Yahrtzeit* occurs. Please call the Congregation Albert office (505-883-1818) if you would like your loved one's name read at services. It is also customary to contribute to *Tzedakah* (charity) in memory of your loved on the occasion of his/her *Yahrtzeit*.

How Can A Family Member Be Memorialized At Congregation Albert

There are various opportunities for the memorializing of a family member within the synagogue. Our Executive Director can familiarize you with ways in which you may create a lasting and fitting remembrance for your loved ones.

One way you may memorialize the name of a loved one is to have his or her name inscribed on the Memorial Plaque which is exhibited on the boards throughout the synagogue. This ensures that the family is informed every year of the date of the *Yahrtzeit* and that the name of their loved one will be read at services in perpetuity. For more information, please contact our Executive Director.

The Funeral Home

While we make no recommendation concerning one funeral home over another, we do work very closely with French Funerals and they handle most of the funerals we do.

Jewish Funeral and Mourning Practices

Compiled and edited by Rabbi Harry Rosenfeld

The Cemetery

Congregation Albert owns its own cemetery. It is located behind Fairview Cemetery on Yale Blvd just north of Avienda Cesar Chavez. To access our cemetery you have to drive through Fairview. Our office will connect you with our cemetery committee who will help you arrange the burial in conjunction with the funeral home. Any officiant other than Congregation Albert's Rabbi or Cantor must be approved by the Rabbi or if he is out of town, the Cantor. In addition, the Rabbi and Cantor will officiate at other cemeteries with permission from the proper officials of that cemetery. The Rabbi and Cantor can also provide appropriate funeral, memorial and burial services for the non-Jewish partners of our interfaith families.

Choosing a Marker and Planning The Unveiling

The setting of a stone over the grave may be done at any time between the end of *Sheloshim* and the first anniversary of the death. A service of dedication may be held at the discretion of the family. This is not a second funeral, but a time for expressing one's love, affection and respect for the deceased. While the Rabbi and Cantor would be honored to help plan and officiate at the service, many families choose to conduct the service themselves.

Care should be taken in selecting the firm that will make the stone or marker. It is important to check the wording and the spelling of the inscription. The Rabbi, Cantor or Executive director must approve all markers in our cemetery. We can assist in checking the Hebrew spelling upon request.

Yizkor

Yizkor, meaning "remembrance", is recited four times during the Jewish year: [Yom Kippur, Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah, Pesach and Shavuot](#). At these times, special prayers are added to the liturgy which are dedicated to the memory of family members who have died. It is also customary to light a *yahrtzeit* candle at home on these occasions. A mourner begins to observe *Yizkor* at the first of these holidays to occur after death.

When May We Visit The Cemetery

Cemetery visits may begin after *Sheloshim*. It is customary to visit the graves of loved ones on *Yahrtzeits*, anniversaries, birthdays and around the High Holy Days, but not on Shabbat, Festivals or Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Of course one may visit the cemetery anytime during the year.

Jewish Funeral and Mourning Practices

Compiled and edited by Rabbi Harry Rosenfeld

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS AND ISSUES

1) Children

Death is a crisis which affects all members of the family. Children also need to share the grief. Your openness in talking about death, in an age-appropriate way, will enable them to accept this ultimate reality. Your silence can heighten their sense of isolation.

It is important that your children be informed about a death immediately and, if possible, by someone close to them in familiar surroundings. There is no “right” way. Approach your child gently and with love. The tone of your voice will communicate feelings more completely than any specific words. Listen to what your children say. They too need to verbalize their own reactions.

Attendance at the funeral aids children in understanding the finality of death. Being present during the burial at the cemetery is usually not traumatic for children. However, no matter how therapeutic the funeral may be, children should not be forced to attend. Allow them to make their own decision by explaining what will occur and asking them about their wishes and needs. Children deserve to have the privilege to express their love and to say good-bye to a significant person in their lives.

2) Non-Jewish Family Members

We are very sensitive to the needs of our interfaith families. Rabbi and Cantor will officiate at services for non-Jewish spouses and children if requested. We will work with the family to create a ceremony which is appropriate for the deceased and the family. If the deceased is Jewish, we will work with the non-Jewish family members to help them with their grief and to understand Jewish funeral and mourning practices. Please call the Rabbi or Cantor if you have any questions concerning these issues.

Some cemeteries have special rules as to who may be buried in them, what clergy can officiate in the cemetery and what symbols can be on the head and foot stones. This may be an issue for interfaith couples who wish to be buried in adjacent plots. Please consult with the clergy, funeral home and cemetery for more details and advice.

3) What To Do If A Death Occurs And You Cannot Be There

When this happens, there are two main areas to consider. What can you do to assist while being so far away? A call to the Rabbi or Cantor will provide you with the names and phone numbers of synagogues and rabbis in the area where the death occurred. You may want to send something to the family, and these contacts will help make that a little easier to do.

If the death occurs elsewhere, upon your return to Albuquerque, you may want to have a memorial service in your home to provide an opportunity for your local family and friends to comfort you and be with you at this important time.

Jewish Funeral and Mourning Practices

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4) Burial Outside of Albuquerque

Some people have made arrangements to be buried elsewhere. The local funeral homes will help you make arrangements for these burials. There are special Jewish laws and customs which apply in these cases. Please consult with the Rabbi or Cantor for guidance on how to best keep within the guidelines of Jewish practice.

5) Cremation

Cremation historically was contrary to traditional Jewish practice. Today for a variety of reasons more Jews are choosing cremation. The Rabbi and Cantor will perform a memorial service and officiate at the burial of the cremains. It is preferable that the ashes be placed in a Jewish cemetery and not kept at home.

6) Suicide

While strict Jewish law forbids “usual mourning” for suicide, it is believed that this was intended as a deterrent for people considering suicide. Indeed, King Saul, the first king of Israel, committed suicide and received full mourning and grieving.

Jewish tradition believes that life is good, and that any reasonable human being would come to that conclusion. Therefore, when a suicide occurs, traditional Judaism points out that the person was under considerable stress and therefore not responsible for this prohibited act.

The reason for our mourning customs is to help the grief-stricken, it is especially important for the survivors that mourning occur. We need to help them and focus on their ongoing needs.

7) Afterlife

Since at least the second century B.C.E. Jews have believed in an afterlife. Throughout the centuries, Jewish belief has changed, varying from “concrete” to “ethereal” views of what happens after we die. At no time however, did traditional Jewish belief embrace the concepts of heaven and hell as presented in Christian tradition. In the modern period, Reform Judaism has de-emphasized what happens after we die and focused on how we live in this world. Yet, contrary to popular thought, Reform Judaism accepts the existence of, and most Reform Jews do believe in an afterlife.

A wonderful resource is [What Happens When I Die](#), edited by Soncino and Syme.

8) Autopsies

Reform practice departs from tradition in accepting an autopsy. Relatives may choose to permit an autopsy, since it may further the discovery of the cause of death and in the case of illness, may provide information to help find a cure to the disease. Thus, permitting an autopsy may save or prolong the lives of others who may suffer from similar infirmity.

Jewish Funeral and Mourning Practices

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9) Organ Donation

While Judaism believes that the dignity of the body is very important and we should treat that body with respect, our faith also recommends that we do things that will help contribute to the saving of lives. Therefore, it is permissible and even encouraged to donate organs and/or tissue for transplant.

The legal and final decision for organ donation is made by the donor in his/her lifetime or the donor's next of kin. Due to the critical time factor for the meaningful use of organs, directives stated in a will may not be effective. Your wishes should be made known to family members, legal guardian or representative.

The resource center in Albuquerque for organ, tissue and eye transplants is:

New Mexico Donor Services

1609 University Blvd NE

Albuquerque NM 87102

(505) 843-7672

info@donatelifenm.org

<http://donatelifenm.org>

Organ donation should be discussed thoroughly with the family before death occurs.

Jewish Funeral and Mourning Practices

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Ethical Wills

The following ethical wills are drawn from [Ethical Wills: A Modern Treasury](#) edited by Jack Reimer and Nathaniel Stampfer.

Dear Children:

Somewhere among these papers is a will made out by a lawyer. Its purpose is *to dispose of any material* things which I may possess at the time of my departure from this world to the unknown adventure beyond.

I hope its terms will cause no ill will among you. It seemed sensible when I made it. After all, it refers only to material things which we enjoy only temporarily.

I am more concerned with having you inherit something that is vastly more important.

There must be a purpose in the creation of man. Because I believe that (as I hope you will someday, for without it life becomes meaningless), I hope you will live right.

Live together in harmony! Carry no ill will toward each other. Bethink of the family. Help each other in case of need Honor and care for your mother. Make her old age happy, as far as in your power. She deserves these things from you. It was your mother who always reproached me that I was not concerned enough about my children. She always insisted that we give them more. She would never visit a grandchild without a gift. I often felt she was too devoted a mother. Prove she was wise by being worthy of her devotion.

Carry your Jewish heritage with dignity. Though you may discard trivial ritual things, never discard your basic Jewish faith. You cannot live out your years without it...

To be opened and published on the day of my death:

Today a great misfortune has befallen my family: my elder son has died and taken with him into the grave a part of my own life. It remains for me now to redraw my will...which consists of ten points:

1. Wherever I may die, let me be buried not among the rich and famous, but among the plain Jewish people, the workers, the common folk, so that my tombstone may honor the simple graves around me, and the simple graves honor mine, even as the plain people honored their fold writer in his lifetime.
2. No titles or eulogies are to be engraved on my tombstone, except the name Sholom Aleichem on one side and the Yiddish inscription, herein enclosed, on the other.
3. Let there be no arguments or debates among my colleagues who may wish to memorialize me by erecting a monument in New York. I shall not be able to rest peacefully in my grave if my friends engage in such nonsense. The best monument for me will be if my books are read, and if there should be among our affluent people a patron of literature who will publish and distribute my works in Yiddish or in other languages, thus enabling the public to read me and my family to live in dignity. If I haven't earned this in my lifetime, perhaps I may earn it after my death. I depart for the

Jewish Funeral and Mourning Practices

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world with complete confidence that the public will not abandon my orphans...

10. My last wish for my successors and my prayers to my children: Take good care of you mother, beautify her old age, sweeten her bitter life, heal her broken heart; do not weep for me D on the contrary, remember me in joy; and the main thing D live together in peace, bear no hatred for each other, help one another in bad times, think on occasion of other members of the family, pity the poor, and when circumstances permit, pay my debts, if there be any. Children, bear with honor my hard-earned Jewish name and may God in Heaven sustain you forever.

Jewish Funeral and Mourning Practices

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The Viddui - The Confession Before Death To Be Recited By The Dying Or On Their Behalf

Adonai, my God and God of those who came before me, I turn to you with my prayer. My life and my death are in Your hands. I would pray for life and healing in this moment of suffering and pain. But if in Your wisdom the end of my life is now come, I accept Your decree. I would approach You with clean hands and a pure heart. Yet I feel weighed down by my misdeeds against You and against those who inhabit this earth. Therefore I confess my guilt, and I trust in Your mercy and compassion that You will forgive me. Protector of the helpless and the healer of broken hearts, watch over my loved ones. Into Your hand I commit my spirit; may You redeem it, O God of mercy and truth.

As the moment of death approaches:

בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלָכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד!

Baruch Shem K'vod, Mal'chuto, l'olam va'ed!

Blessed is God's rule forever and ever!

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל: יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְיָ אֶחָד!

Shema Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad

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

After Death

יְיָ נָתַן וַיִּקַּח יְיָ לָקַח יְהוָה שֵׁם יְהוָה מְבָרַךְ.

Adonai natan. Vadonai lakach. Y'hi sheim Adonai m'vorach.

Adonai give. Adonai takes away. Blessed be Adonai's name.

בָּרוּךְ דֵּין הָאֱמֶת.

Baruch Dayan Ha'emet

Blessed is the Judge of truth.

A Prayer For Lighting A Memorial Candle For Shiva, Yahrtzeit Or Yizkor

This prayer is said as the Memorial Candle is being lighted:

A human soul is a light of God.

May this light be a token of the Light of God

Which is my 's soul;

May it be bound up in the bonds of eternal life. Amen

Jewish Funeral and Mourning Practices

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A Suggested Service For Visiting The Grave Of A Loved One

IN MEMORY OF A FATHER

Your memory, dear father, fills my soul at this solemn hour. It revives in me thoughts of the love and friendliness which you didst bestow upon me. The thought of you and inspires me to a life of virtue. When my pilgrimage on earth is ended and I shall arrive at the throne of mercy, may I be worthy of you in the sight of God and my fellow people. May our merciful God reward you for the faithfulness and kindness you always showed me. May God grant you eternal peace. Amen.

IN MEMORY OF A MOTHER

I remember you in this solemn hour, dear mother. I remember the days when you dwelled on earth, and your tender love watched over me like a guardian angel. You have gone from me, but the bond which unites our souls can never be severed. Your image lives within my heart. May the merciful God reward you for the faithfulness and kindness you always showed me. May God's countenance ever be upon you, and grant you eternal peace! Amen.

IN MEMORY OF A HUSBAND/WIFE/PARTNER

I remember you in this solemn hour, you dear companion of my life. I remember your tender affection and self-denial while hand in hand we walked the path of our life, when your love and fidelity were my comfort and your counsel and aid were my support. Though death has summoned you from my side, your image still lives in my heart; and continues to be an inspiration to me. May God keep you and give you bliss eternal! Amen.

IN MEMORY OF A CHILD

I remember you in this solemn hour, my beloved child. I remember the days, when I watched your bodily and mental unfolding, and fostered beautiful hopes for your future. You are gone yet in my heart the fond remembrance of you can never die. You are no longer on this earth. God's parental love is my solace, my staff and support. May God look with compassion upon you and grant you eternal rest. Amen.

IN MEMORY OF A BROTHER, A SISTER, OR A FRIEND

I remember you in this solemn hour, my beloved (brother, sister, friend). I remember the days when we lived together in happy companionship and your loving friendship were my delight and support. Though you have gone from me, your image abides with me. I think of you with gratitude and bless your memory for all the devotion you showed me. May God bless you with everlasting joy, may God keep you and grant you eternal bliss. Amen.

Jewish Funeral and Mourning Practices

Compiled and edited by Rabbi Harry Rosenfeld

MOURNER'S KADDISH

דיש יתוםק

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּה בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי-בְרָה כְרַעוּתָהּ, וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיֵּינוּ
וּבְיוֹמֵינוּ וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.
יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמֵי עֵלְמַיָּא.
יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרַומֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא, וְיִתְהַדַּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלַּל שְׁמֵהּ
דְּקוּדְשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ הוּא, לְעֵלְא מִן-כָּל-בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירָתָא, תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא דְאַמְרֵינוּ
בְּעֵלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.
יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן-שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.
עוֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרְוֵמוֹ, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

*Yitgadal v'yitkadash, sh'mei raba b'alma div'ra chirutei, v'yamlich malchutei
b'chayeichon u'v'yomeichon u'v'chayei d'chol beit Yisrael ba'agala u'vizman kariv,
v'imru: amein.*

Y'hei sh'mei raba m'varach l'alam u'l'almei almaya.

*Yitbarach v'yishtabach, v'yitpa'ar v'yitromam v'yitnasei, v'yithadar v'yitaleh v'yithalal
sh'mei d'kudisha, b'rich hu, l'eila min kol bir'chata v'shirata, tushb'chata v'nechemata
da'amiran b'alma, v'imru: amein.*

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

Oseh shalom bimromav, Hu ya'ase shalom aleinu v'al kol Yisrael, v'imru amein.

Let the glory of God be extolled, let God's great name be hallowed in the world whose creation God willed. May God's rule 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 forever and ever. Let the name of the Holy One, blessed be God, be glorified, exalted and honored, though God is beyond all the praises, songs, and adorations that we can utter, and let us say: Amen.

For us and for all Israel, may the blessing of peace and the promise of life come true, and let us say: Amen.

May the One who causes peace to reign in the high heavens, let peace descend on us, on all Israel, and all the world, and let us say: Amen.