

Telling Stories – To continue the memory of a loved one is to tell their stories and share their memories with family and friends and succeeding generations.

Shiva Etiquette

The *Talmud* says, “Do not try to comfort your friend while the body of his deceased lies before him.”
Pirke Avot 4:18.

Covering mirrors – To prevent the bereaved from worrying about their looks or becoming self conscious in their time of mourning.

Seudat Havra’ah – The first meal after returning from the the burial. We eat to show that life does continue and to remind ourselves that we must care for ourselves and for each other.

Visiting a shiva house – The visitor to a mourner’s house is customarily supposed to wait for the mourner to greet them. It is appropriate to participate in the minyan. It is appropriate for children to visit the shiva house if they know the family and children. It is appropriate to share with the mourner stories or memories of the deceased if they are interested in doing so. Most of all, keep in mind that a visitor is there to offer comfort to the mourner. Allow the mourner(s) to set the tone for visiting.

Yahrzeit Observance

We observe the anniversary of someone’s death in the following ways:

- The observance begins in the evening before the Yahrzeit and lasts to the next sundown.
- It is customary to recite the Mourners’ Kaddish with a *minyan*.
- It is customary to light a *Yahrzeit candle* or lamp in observance of the Yahrzeit.
- Some will visit the cemetery on the anniversary and/or before holidays.
- Some people will make a charitable contribution in their loved one’s memory

Bibliography and More Resources About Mourning

Brener, Anne, *Mourning and Mitzvah: A guided Journal for Walking the Mourners’ Path through grief to Healing*.

Diamant, Anita, *Saying Kaddish: How to Comfort the Dying, Bury the Dead & Mourn as a Jew*.

Klein, Isaac, *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice*.

Lamm, Maurice, *The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning*.

Liss-Levinso, Nechama, *When a Grandparent Dies*.

Rabinowicz, Rabbi Tzvi, *A guide to Life: Jewish Laws and Customs of Mourner*.

Reimer, Jack, *Jewish Insights on Death and Mourning*.

Telushkin, Joseph, *Jewish Literacy*.

Wolfson, Ron, *A Time to Mourn, A Time to Mourn*.

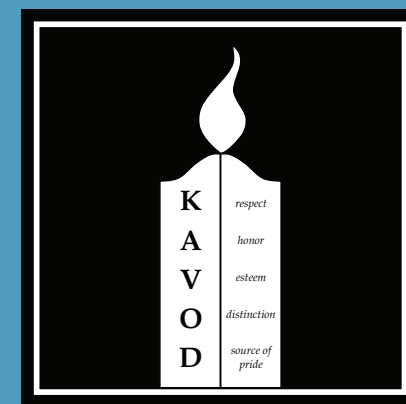
Video: *All of us Together: How Families can include Children in the Mourning Process*.

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A Guide to Jewish Funerals

Provided by

KAVOD



INDEPENDENT JEWISH FUNERAL CHAPELS
MEMBERSHIP BY INVITATION

Terms to Remember

Kavod Ha Met – Hebrew words meaning honoring the dead.

Kavod Hachaim – Hebrew words meaning honoring the living.

Zichron(ah) Livracha – Hebrew words meaning may his (her) memory be for a blessing.

Alev (Alecha) Shalom – Hebrew words meaning may he (she) rest in peace.

Aveil(im) – The Hebrew term used to identify the mourner(s).

Preparing for Death

Vidui – The confessional recited by either the sick individual or by another on his or her behalf.

My G-d and G-d of all who have gone before me,
Author of life and death, I turn to You in trust.

Although I pray for life and health, I know that I am mortal.

If this life must soon end, let me die, I pray, in peace.
If only my hands were clean and my heart pure. I confess that I committed many wrongs and left so much undone, yet I know also the good that I did and tried to do. May those acts give meaning to my life, and may my errors be forgiven. Protector of the bereaved and the helpless, watch over my loved ones, in whose souls my soul is bound. You are my Rock and my Redeemer, the Source of mercy and truth. Into Your hands I commend my spirit.

Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad. Hear O Israel, Adonai is our G-d. Adonai is One.

Based on "Confession by the Gravely Ill." Reform Rabbinical Manual.

At the Moment of Death

It is customary to recite the following blessing:
Baruch Dayan Ha-Emet
We praise You, Righteous Judge.

Aninut – Days between a loved one's death and burial. This describes the status of a mourner. This period lasts from the date of death until the moment of burial.

Jewish Law constructs a protective "fence" around onenim (the individual(s) whose loved one has just died) who are exempt from all regular activity. They conduct no business, eat no meat, drink no wine, attend no social gatherings, and refrain from sexual relations. They are not even counted in a minyan or even required to say the blessing over bread. (Saying Kaddish by Anita Diamant)

Preparations for the Funeral and Burial

Chevra Kadisha (Holy Society) – In Hebrew meaning the group of people who prepare the body for burial. Men prepare men and women prepare women.

Taharah – The ceremony performed by the *Chevra Kadisha* of washing the deceased before burial; serves as a ritual purification of the decedent.

Tachrichim – A hand sewn white linen shroud in which the deceased Jewish person is dressed. The simplicity of the shroud shows the simplicity in which we should face G-d.

Aron – Casket made entirely of wood with dowels and glue. No metal is used in its construction.

Shomer – Man or woman who sits with the decedent until burial, often reciting Psalms.

Funeral Service

Kriah – Hebrew word for rending or tearing; a symbol of grief, a tear in the upper corner of the garment or on a symbolic ribbon. The tear is made on the left for a parent (closest to the heart) and on the right for other relatives.

Mourners Kaddish – The prayer is only recited with a quorum of ten Jewish people in memory of the deceased. The prayer reminds the living of G-d's presence in their lives and in the lives of the community.

Hesped – The eulogy offered by the Clergy, family, or close friends of the deceased.

El Malei Rahamim – The Hebrew words for The Memorial Prayer often recited in Hebrew and begins:

O' compassionate and exalted God.

Kever – The Hebrew word for grave.

Kevurah – The Hebrew word for the actual burial in the ground.

The Period of Aveilut (Mourning)

Shiva – The first seven days of mourning following burial. Shiva may be shortened based upon a holiday. Shabbat is counted as part of the seven days.

Shiva Candle – A special candle that is burned during the seven days of mourning.

Shloshim – The first 30 days after a death.

Shanah – The first year after death. A mourner is finished at the end of 11 months.

Perpetuating Memory

Yahrzeit – The Jewish anniversary of death, literally "year time."

Yizkor – The memorial prayer recited on Passover, Shavout, Sukkot, and Yom Kippur.

Hakamat Matzevah (Unveiling) – This ceremony is customarily performed any time after the first 30 days. Some wait until the conclusion of the first year. This ceremony of closure helps to perpetuate and continue the memory of the loved one by establishing a permanent marker in their memory. This practice dates back to our patriarchs and matriarchs.

Tzedakah in memory of a loved one helps to perpetuate their memory through acts of loving kindness. Some people will make donations and endowments to the loved one's favorite organization or institution.