

A Practical Guide to Jewish Burial and Mourning Customs

by

**Temple Beth Or
Bereavement Committee**



Foreword

The death of a loved one urges us to confront many stressful and confusing issues—it can be overwhelming. This booklet offers guidance on ritual observances and practical concerns as an aid to Temple members and their families. It explains many of the common Jewish practices associated with death, burial, and mourning. These are not requirements; they are intended to serve as guidelines. We hope that with the material presented here, mourners will be able to make informed decisions more comfortably.

This booklet is organized in chronological sequence starting with the initial considerations relating to death, followed by funeral and burial practices, mourning customs, memorial traditions, and special situations. Also included is a checklist to guide individuals through the steps of funeral planning. Several appendices are provided at the end, including a glossary of terms, a map to the GAR Cemetery, available Bereavement Committee services, and a recommended reading list. Words in the text that are italicized (other than titles) may be found in the glossary.

This is the second edition of this manual. In preparing the original, the Temple Beth Or Bereavement Committee relied heavily on the work done by others before us. In particular we found the bereavement manuals of Congregation Beth Am of Los Altos Hills, California, and Temple Beth Ami of Rockville, Maryland, to be extremely helpful. We thank them for all of their hard work which made our job easier. Another particularly helpful resource was Mark Washofsky's book *Jewish Living: A Guide to Contemporary Reform Practice*, cited in our reference list (Appendix F).

The first edition of this booklet was developed with assistance from Rabbi Harley Karz-Wagman, who spent many hours sharing his wisdom and knowledge with us. This updated version has benefited from the additional insights provided by Rabbi Jessica Kessler Marshall who has shared her energy and perspective. We thank both of them for their guidance. We are also grateful to the many others, too numerous to name, whose assistance was invaluable.

It should be understood that we present this information for the benefit of the living. Funerals are opportunities to honor the deceased, but they are held primarily for the living as catalysts for both grieving and healing.

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Introduction

The Jewish approach to death and mourning is guided by four core principles:

1. Respect for the deceased
2. Recognition of the finality of death
3. Equality in death
4. Grieving to facilitate healing

The customs and practices of Judaism with respect to death and mourning have developed as an outgrowth of these principles. These traditions reflect the wisdom and the spiritual and psychological insights of generations of Jewish scholars and lay people. Observing these rituals can guide the living to fully honor their dead and mourn in a way that helps prepare the survivors to return to life through a meaningful period of grieving.

Checklist

The following is a checklist of steps to take/decisions to make regarding the funeral arrangements in the initial period following the death. They are presented roughly in chronological sequence. Additional information about each step follows in the attached text (in the numerically corresponding section). This checklist is presented as a tool only and is not intended to replace guidance mourners may receive from other sources such as our Rabbi, health care providers, and funeral home and cemetery personnel.

- 1. Recite prayer after the death of a loved one.
- 2. Contact funeral home and Temple.
- 3. Designate a friend or relative to help coordinate logistics.
- 4. Make key funeral (or memorial) service and burial decisions.
 - a. Date and time
 - b. Funeral service site—graveside, funeral home chapel or Temple sanctuary
 - c. Casket and *liner*
 - d. *Pallbearers*
 - e. Burial property
 - f. Obituary, flowers, and contributions
 - g. Children's attendance
 - h. *Cremation*
 - i. *Autopsy*
 - j. *Embalming*
- 5. Notify family members.
- 6. Consider private viewing of the deceased.
- 7. Consider *taharah*/ritual washing of the body.
- 8. Consider *shomrim*/sitting with the body until burial.
- 9. Consider *K'riah*/Rending garment or ribbon.
- 10. Arrange funeral logistics.
 - a. Transportation of mourners
 - b. Maps/Directions
- 11. Plan funeral/memorial service.
 - a. *Eulogy*
 - b. Music
- 12. Returning home from the service.
 - a. Memorial candle
 - b. *Seudat havra'ah/Meal of consolation*
- 13. Mourning
 - a. *Shivah*
 - b. *Sh'loshim*
 - c. *Aveilut*

1. Prayer After the Death of a Loved One

When one has been present at or is informed of a death, the following prayer is customary, along with what your heart may prompt:

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu, Melech HaOlam, Dayan HaEmet.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, דֵּינן הָאֱמֶת.

Blessed are you, Eternal, Our God, Sovereign of the Universe,
Judge of the Truth.

2. Contact Funeral Home and Temple

Arrangements may vary depending on where the death occurs.

- If the death occurs at home, it is necessary to call 911 to report the death.
- If the death occurs in a hospital or hospice facility, the death certificate will be prepared by the attending physician and the body will be held until arrangements can be made with the funeral home.
- If the death or funeral occurs out of town, the funeral provider should be chosen based on the site of the funeral rather than where the death occurred. Contact a local funeral provider to help coordinate with the funeral provider at the location where the funeral is to take place and to assist with the necessary shipping arrangements. The body must be prepared in accordance with shipping requirements. These preparations might include *embalming*. See Section 4j for further information on *embalming*.
- If the deceased had indicated that he/she would like to be an organ, tissue, or cornea donor, contact Life Center Northwest toll free at 877-275-5269 as quickly as possible.

One of the first calls should be to the funeral home. They insure that the death certificate is obtained and provided to you. The provider will also arrange for removal of the body. If you need financial assistance, contact Jewish Family Service at 206-461-3240, or contact our Rabbi.

Temple Beth Or has an established relationship with the funeral homes listed below. Other funeral homes may also be used.

Seattle Jewish Chapel
206-725-3067
5145 S. Morgan St., Seattle 98118
Provides traditional Jewish preparation.
Graveside or synagogue service
Deceased must be Jewish.

Purdy & Walters with Cassidy Funeral Home
425-252-2191 www.purdy-walters-cassidy.com
1702 Pacific Avenue, Everett 98201
Chapel, graveside, or synagogue service

Rosebud Funeral Services
206-525-7800 www.rosebudfunerals.com
8217 30th Ave NE, Seattle 98115
Graveside or synagogue service

Another early call should be to the Temple (425-259-7125, option 2). If you would like Temple clergy to officiate at the funeral, it is important to coordinate with our Rabbi before any arrangements are finalized. Even if our Rabbi will not be involved in the funeral service, the congregation can provide support to the bereaved family through the Bereavement Committee (see Appendix C).

3. Designation of a Friend or Relative to Help Coordinate Logistics

A person to help coordinate logistics for you can be useful. This individual can be a friend, neighbor, or relative. They can help with any of the items on the checklist, in particular notifying family, funeral planning, helping with the *meal of consolation*, and making *shivah* arrangements.

4. Key Funeral (or Memorial) Service and Burial Decisions

This section can be used as a resource for planning, or can provide guidance to help mourners make necessary decisions.

Funeral decisions are deeply personal and some can be emotionally charged. Whenever possible, these decisions should be made while still in good health, discussed in detail with loved ones, and documented. Mourners then have the peace of mind of knowing they carried out the exact wishes of the deceased.

a. Date and Time

Jewish tradition provides that we bury as soon as possible after death, being mindful of travel arrangements of the mourners. This generally means the second or third day after death occurs. Funerals are not held on *Shabbat* or on major Jewish festivals and holidays, such as: Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur, Shavuot, Pesach (Passover), Sukkot, Sh'mini Atzeret, and Simchat Torah.

b. Funeral Service Site

The funeral service can be held graveside, at the funeral home chapel, or in the Temple Beth Or Sanctuary. You can discuss these options with our Rabbi or a member of the Bereavement Committee.

c. Casket and Liner

Jewish tradition strongly suggests a simple plain wood casket to reaffirm that we are all equal in death. A *kosher casket* is made of wood, using wooden dowels rather than nails, and vegetable (non-animal) glue. Most cemeteries require *liners* to assist them in grounds management and to prevent graves from collapsing. In lieu of a *liner*, some cemeteries charge an additional one-time maintenance fee to cover the cost of refilling the grave. Some funeral providers may encourage the use of a *vault*, which is similar to a *liner*, but it is sealed and is more expensive—this option is not recommended.

d. Pallbearers

The family of the deceased chooses the *pallbearers*, usually members of the family or close friends. Any person, male or female, can be a *pallbearer*, including children (within safety guidelines); it is considered an honor to escort the deceased to his or her final resting place. At least six *pallbearers* are suggested to carry (or accompany) the casket from the chapel to the hearse, and later from the hearse to the gravesite. The *pallbearers* may remain seated with their families during the funeral service and are summoned to escort the casket at the close of the service. If the service is conducted graveside, *pallbearers* are optional.

e. Burial Property Purchase

Burial in the ground has been the normative Jewish practice for centuries, although interments in *mausoleums* or caves were also common ancient Jewish practices.

Selection of the gravesite should be discussed with other family members.

- If a cemetery plot has been purchased before death, the funeral home will coordinate with the cemetery to schedule the funeral.
- If a cemetery plot has not been purchased before death, contact Temple Beth Or (425-259-7125) to arrange for a plot at the GAR Cemetery in Snohomish, or the funeral director can assist you with the purchase at another cemetery.

Traditionally, Jews are buried in a Jewish cemetery to continue the connection with the community for them and their family. However, Jews can be buried in a non-Jewish cemetery, if the family chooses. Temple Beth Or can provide support and assistance, regardless of burial location.

To provide for the needs of the Jewish community in the northern Puget Sound region of Washington State, Temple Beth Or has purchased a section in the GAR Cemetery in Snohomish. Members may purchase plots either pre-need or at time of need directly from Temple Beth Or. Non-members may also be eligible to purchase plots in the Temple Beth Or section of the GAR Cemetery. Contact a member of the Bereavement Committee for more information.

f. Obituary, Floral, and Contribution Decisions

The funeral home will help you prepare an obituary. Jewish custom suggests designating an organization or cause to send donations for *tzedakah* (include address if appropriate) in lieu of flowers. In the event that floral displays are used, after the funeral they may be donated to hospitals, retirement homes, or other appropriate organizations.

g. Children’s Attendance

Children are more aware of death than we may realize, although their understanding of death evolves as they get older. Between the ages of five and nine children generally become able to understand the meaning of physical death and by the time they are nine or ten they often have a realistic concept of the finality of death. The ability of children to understand death varies with age, maturity, and intelligence, but regardless of the variables, children cannot be shielded from death or protected from its reality.

Attendance at the funeral can aid children in understanding the finality of death and in dispelling the greater fears and fantasies that can arise when they are kept away. If they are old enough to attend a synagogue service and comprehend a good part of what is taking place, they should be allowed to attend a religious ceremony to say goodbye to a significant person in their lives. Of course, children should not be forced to attend. If apprehensive children choose to remain at home, they should be allowed to do so without being made to feel guilty or neglectful. Parents may visit the cemetery with them at another time. It is very helpful to children to explain to them in advance what is going to take place and the fact that people may be very emotional. For more advice on this subject, contact our Rabbi.

h. Cremation

Cremation was not historically part of the Jewish tradition. Reform Judaism generally takes a flexible approach regarding *cremation*. As Rabbi Daniel Syme states in *The Jewish Home: A Guide for Jewish Living* (page 105): “While (*cremation*) is certainly not encouraged, most Reform rabbis are sensitive to the wishes of those who have chosen this course.” Rabbi Mark Washofsky in *Jewish Living* (page 190) elaborates: “Some Reform Jews have adopted the practice of *cremation*. While this method of handling the dead is certainly contrary to Jewish tradition, there is no clear-cut prohibition of *cremation* in the *halachic*

literature.” For further information about Reform Judaism and *cremation*, please contact our Rabbi.

Temple Beth Or has a flexible and sensitive attitude toward *cremation*. Our Rabbi will perform a memorial service at the Temple, graveside, or other appropriate location for an individual who has been cremated. Further, our policies provide for burial of ashes (*cremains*) in the Temple Beth Or section of the GAR Cemetery, either in an individual plot or in conjunction with another burial. Our Rabbi recommends that some or all of the ashes be interred in a cemetery or *mausoleum*. This provides the survivors a place to visit, which is often an important part of healing after a loss. Others may choose to scatter ashes (*cremains*) in a special location. In either case, Temple Beth Or can provide support and assistance to your family.

i. Autopsy

Jewish tradition discourages *autopsy*, unless it provides some medical benefit to the surviving family or the immediate community (for example the diagnosis of a genetic or infectious condition), or is required by law. If an *autopsy* is needed, the funeral provider will coordinate with the doctors or medical examiner. If you feel uncomfortable with a decision regarding *autopsy*, please contact our Rabbi.

j. Embalming

Jewish tradition frowns upon *embalming* as an unnecessary delay in the body’s decomposition. The traditional beliefs concerning immortality relate to the soul, spirit, or mind; no purpose is served in preserving the physical human body through chemical means. When a funeral must be delayed or when the body must be shipped elsewhere for burial, legal requirements may make *embalming* a necessity.

5. Notification of Family Members

Jews traditionally notify all members of the family when a death has occurred, even those who are estranged. The precious opportunity to heal wounds may occur by bringing family members together.

When notifying family members, provide as many details as possible regarding the funeral arrangements. Airlines usually offer a discounted “bereavement fare,” if they are aware of the situation. Be sure to ask. They may require a copy of the death certificate or a copy of the obituary from the newspaper.

6. Private Viewing of the Deceased

Jewish tradition opposes the practice of public viewing of the deceased in an open coffin. The family may, if they wish, view the body privately, but it is suggested that the coffin be closed before the funeral service begins.

7. Taharah/Ritual Washing of the Body

Some Jews follow the tradition of a ritual washing of the body before it is laid in the earth. This cleansing is called *taharah* (purification). This is normally done only by Jewish funeral homes and the *Chevra Kadisha* (Holy Society). Some non-Jewish funeral homes can provide these services, upon request.

Following *taharah*, the body is dressed in a plain white shroud (*tachrichim*), emphasizing the principle of equality in death. Some Reform Jews follow the contemporary practice of dressing the dead in their own clothing. Burial with a *kippah/yarmulke* and a *tallit* (with the *tzitzit* cut off as a symbolic recognition of death) is also traditional. The funeral home can provide these if needed.

8. Shomrim/Sitting with the Body

Some Jews follow the custom of not leaving the deceased unattended. The family or funeral home may arrange for a person who will sit with the body until the funeral service. The *shomrim* traditionally read *t’hillim* (psalms) or study sacred texts during their shifts. Occasionally, a family member might choose to be among the *shomrim*. This service is usually only available from a Jewish funeral home and the *Chevra Kadisha* (Holy Society).

9. K’riah/Rending Garment or Ribbon

When hearing about the death of a relative, some mourners rend, or tear, their garments. The tearing, called *k’riah*, is traditionally done to the upper right side of the front of the outermost garment, a tear in length of one handbreadth. A parent losing a child tears the left side, over the heart. Many Jews attach a torn black ribbon to their garment immediately before the funeral service instead of tearing an actual garment. *K’riah* is usually observed by the immediate relatives (parents, children, spouses, and siblings). The *k’riah* ribbon or torn garment is worn throughout the entire period of *shivah*. When mourning the death of a parent, *k’riah* may be extended to 30 days. Temple Beth Or provides *k’riah* ribbons for the family and our Rabbi will assist with attaching them prior to the service.

10. Funeral Logistics

In making funeral arrangements, transportation of the mourners should be considered. They can drive themselves to the service, burial, and *meal of consolation* or ask others to assist them.

A map and directions to the funeral service, cemetery, and *meal of consolation* should be available. A map to Temple Beth Or and the GAR Cemetery is provided in Appendix B.

For those who choose to wear them, *kippot/yarmulkes* will be available regardless of the location chosen for the service.

Jewish custom dictates that religious objects, including *tallit* and prayer books be buried after they have reached a state of disrepair. Occasionally, these objects need to be placed with a casket in a grave. When this need arises, a bereaved family will be consulted to see if they would accept this honor.

11. Funeral/Memorial Service

Traditionally, this is a simple service to honor the deceased and give comfort to the bereaved family. The *eulogy* may be delivered by our Rabbi, family members, and/or other lay people. The service may include some psalms, readings, and *El Malei Rachamim*, a prayer asking God to have compassion upon the soul of the deceased. It is appropriate to include music as a part of the service, if desired. Temple Beth Or may be able to provide a cantorial soloist, if requested. Fees for such music should be discussed with our Rabbi.

The service may be held at the funeral home (if it has a chapel), in the Temple Beth Or sanctuary, or graveside. This decision should be discussed with our Rabbi, so that necessary arrangements can be made with Temple staff. Our Rabbi performs this service at no charge for Temple Beth Or members. Fees for non-Temple Beth Or members need to be discussed with our Rabbi.

Regardless of where the initial service is held, mourners gather at the cemetery for additional prayers including the Mourner's *Kaddish* and lowering the casket. Family members and friends are then invited to place a shovelful or handful of earth in the grave. Some follow the custom of placing three shovelfuls of dirt, with the first scoop placed using the backside of the shovel. This tradition represents the reluctance of mourners in having to part with the deceased. The shovel is then returned to the pile of dirt rather than handed to the next person. Those who are not comfortable participating in this portion of the ritual need not do so, and it may be omitted entirely at the request of the family. The sound of earth falling on the casket can be jarring, but it helps mourners accept the reality of death and thus facilitates the process of healing.

Tradition considers participation in the burial to be one of the highest and most selfless *mitzvot* because it is an act of kindness of which the recipient is unaware and cannot repay.

12. Returning Home from the Service

Upon returning home from the memorial service or interment, a seven-day memorial candle is lit at the home of the bereaved. It should be lit by a mourner as a symbol of the light the deceased brought to friends and loved ones during life. It recalls the biblical teaching, "the human spirit is the light of the Eternal."

When lighting the memorial candle, the family may choose to have our Rabbi, a family member, or friend read one of the following:

The light of life is a finite flame. Like the Sabbath candles, life is kindled. It burns, it glows, it radiates warmth and beauty, but then it fades and is no more.

Yet we must not despair. We are more than a memory vanishing in the darkness. With our lives we give life. Something of us can never die; we move in the eternal cycle of darkness and death, of light and life.

The memorial light we now kindle is a sign of this truth. As it burns pure and bright, so may the memory of our dear _____ brighten and purify our lives.

נְשִׁמַת אָדָם נֵר יְיָ

Ni'shmat adam ner Adonai.

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

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל: יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ,

Sh'ma Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu,

Hear, O Israel, Adonai is our God,

יְיָ אֶחָד!

Adonai echad.

Adonai is One.

(continued on the next page)

After the funeral or memorial service, the emphasis shifts from taking care of the deceased to caring for the grieving family. Following the interment, the mourners normally return to the home of the deceased or another family member for a *seudat havra'ah/meal of consolation*. Usually others who attended the funeral or burial service are invited to join them. Before the meal begins, the *motzi*/blessing should be recited over bread. Customarily, food and beverages are set out by friends of the bereaved so that the mourners may take nourishment after a physically and emotionally exhausting experience. Round foods such as hardboiled eggs and bagels are traditional because they symbolize the cyclical nature of life.

Some choose to follow the custom of having a container of water and a towel outside the door of the house of mourning. Washing one's hands upon returning from the cemetery symbolizes leaving the cemetery behind and returning to life.

13. Mourning

Jewish tradition identifies stages of mourning, beginning with a seven-day intense period (*shivah*) observed in the home(s) of the immediate family, followed by a period of reduced mourning (*sh'loshim*) as one adjusts and returns to worldly routines. Mourning the death of a parent involves an extended period (*aveilut*).

a. *Shivah*

Shivah is a public expression of grief observed by the immediate family of the deceased (parents, children, spouse, and siblings). The word *shivah* is a variation of the Hebrew word for "seven." The traditional seven-day mourning period begins immediately after the funeral and burial, not the death. (The period of time between death and burial is called *aninut*.) The day of the interment is counted as the first day of *shivah*. The first three days are considered more intense than the last four days. If observance of the full *shivah* may cause financial or physical hardship, the mourner may go out, do what is necessary, and then resume *shivah*. While some Jews "sit" *shivah* for fewer than seven days, our Rabbi encourages sitting *shivah* for the full seven days whenever possible. Observance of *shivah* may be performed at more than one mourner's home or at a single site with mourners returning to their homes to sleep.

Because mourners are excused from public worship in the synagogue during *shivah*, prayer services may be conducted in the home. Our Rabbi may be present at the home for one or more nights of *shivah* to conduct the evening service, if requested. Some family members may be capable of conducting the service themselves, and are encouraged to do so. It is also possible for fellow congregants to conduct the service. Traditionally a minimum of 10 people are required to say *Kaddish*. In the event that 10 people are not present, some Jews

would say *Kaddish* without a *minyan*. The Temple will provide prayer books and *kippot/yarmulkes* for the service.

b. *Shivah* Customs

A number of *shivah* practices have become customary. Each family can choose whether or not to follow these or other traditions.

- Friends and family are encouraged to visit and comfort mourners during the *shivah* period. When paying a *shivah* call, your presence alone can be comforting.
- When visiting, consider bringing refreshments. Mourners should prepare food only for their immediate family. The family should not have the added burden of sustaining visitors.
- Covering the mirrors is a custom rooted in ancient folklore. Some felt that by looking in the mirror, one might see the angel of death. Moreover, since mourners should not be burdened with their physical appearance, mirrors may be covered so as not to draw attention to the mourners' appearance.
- Sitting on low seats dates back to biblical times. It is an indication of the lowered position of the mourners and their reduced esteem because of their loss.
- Wearing dark colors is customary, although black is not obligatory in Jewish tradition. Since leather was considered an item of luxury, wearing slippers or sneakers instead of leather footwear symbolizes the relinquishing of luxury items during mourning.
- If one is invited to a *simchah* (happy occasion), during the *shivah* period, one might choose to attend the event itself, but not the celebration following. Jewish law stipulates that life must continue. However, different customs apply to different members of the family. Please speak with our Rabbi concerning specific situations.

c. Conclusion of *Shivah*

Some observe the custom of walking around the block once *shivah* has concluded. This symbolizes completing the week of intense mourning and returning to society. This walk can also symbolize accompanying the soul on its path.

At the conclusion of *shivah*, the following may be read by the mourner(s):

Our period of immediate mourning is ended. Now we return to our customary pursuits, though we still grieve. We pray for strength and patience to adjust our lives to living with our loss. Though our grief is not spent, we pray that it may begin to abate, and that little by little, hope and consolation will enter our

hearts. We will continue to seek help from our family, friends, community, and God in our process of healing.

We now rise as a sign that our time of *shivah* is over.

יְיָ עֲזֹר לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן.

Adonai oz l'amo yitain.

May God give strength to our people.

יְיָ יְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם.

Adonai y'varech et amo v'shalom.

May God bless our people with peace.

(Psalm 29:11)

d. *Sh'loshim*

Sh'loshim refers to the 30-day period of mourning following interment. Once the *shivah* (seven day) period is completed, it becomes a reduced time of mourning when one returns to work and daily life. The name of the deceased is read in the Temple at *Shabbat* services each week during this period. Some mourners recite the *Kaddish* every day in the synagogue or at home during *sh'loshim*. Some mourners refrain from public entertainment and parties with music. Many mourners would plan for and attend such events as a family wedding or bar or bat mitzvah ceremony during this period, but refrain from dancing and exuberant celebration.

e. *Aveilut*

Aveilut refers to the 11-month mourning period observed for the death of a parent. *Aveilut* begins immediately after the burial and extends through the period of *shivah* and *sh'loshim*. *Aveilut* calls for daily recitation of the *Kaddish* prayer in memory of the deceased at a public worship service attended by a *minyan*. In our congregation, it is customary for mourners to attend weekly *Shabbat* services as often as possible to recite *Kaddish* with the congregation. Some find it comforting to recite *Kaddish* privately when they are unable to attend services at the synagogue.

14. Grave Marker/Unveiling

Jewish tradition permits the dedication of a headstone or grave marker any time after the end of *sh'loshim*. However, the most common custom is to wait at least six months and often up to a year after the death for the “unveiling” ritual. It often takes about a year to adjust to a loss and to turn to the future with optimism and energy. This ceremony is called “unveiling” because the cover is removed from the marker at that time. The unveiling is brief and may take place on any day except *Shabbat* or major Jewish festivals and holidays. This service may be conducted by a rabbi, cantor, or knowledgeable lay person. On the day

of the unveiling, family and close friends gather at the grave and some may also return to the home afterward.

The cemetery can refer you to a reputable monument company that can prepare the headstone or marker to your specifications. Typically the headstone inscription includes the name and date. Some people also choose to include a quote or decoration. Should you need assistance, our Rabbi can help you choose the wording for the grave marker, which should be ordered at least three months before the date of the unveiling ceremony. The cemetery should be notified of the date and time of the unveiling to ensure that the gates are open, that the tombstone or marker is in place, and that another funeral or unveiling is not scheduled in the immediate vicinity of the grave at that time. Some people follow the custom of placing a small rock or pebble on the marker as a sign of one's visit to the grave and to show respect for the dead.

15. Remembrance—*Yahrzeit/Yizkor*

It is customary to observe the *yahrzeit*, or anniversary of the death, of a loved one by attending services at the synagogue and reciting *Kaddish*. It is also traditional to light a small *yahrzeit* candle at home at or near sundown on the eve of the anniversary of the day of death. These candles are available through the Temple Beth Or shopping website, or at many grocery stores. Some people choose to recite a prayer or reading upon lighting the *yahrzeit* candle. Appropriate readings are available from our Rabbi upon request.

Temple Beth Or's custom is to read the name of members' deceased loved ones at the *Shabbat* service preceding the *yahrzeit* on the secular calendar. Upon notification of the date of the death, the Temple Beth Or office will notify you each year of the *Shabbat* on which the name will be read. Alternatively, Temple Beth Or can notify you according to the Jewish calendar, if you so request. If you cannot be present on that *Shabbat*, please let the office know and we will read the name on a nearby date when you can attend.

It is traditional to make a donation to a charity or a Temple to honor the memory of a loved one at the time of the *yahrzeit*.

On Yom Kippur afternoon, a memorial or *Yizkor* service is held at the Temple. The service includes traditional prayers in memory of loved ones. Traditionally, a *Yizkor* service is also held on the last day of Sukkot, Pesach (Passover), and Shavuot. As in the case of the anniversary of death, it is traditional to light a *yahrzeit* candle at home prior to sundown on the eve of each of the four holidays.

The following poem by Harold M. Schulwis (*Jewish Insights on Death and Mourning*, edited by Jack Riemer, page 198) may be read upon lighting a *yahrzeit* candle.

**I Am Older Now:
A Yahrzeit Candle Lit at Home**

The *yahrzeit* candle is different,
announcing neither Sabbath nor festival.
No benediction recited
No song sung
No psalm mandated.
Before this unlit candle
without a quorum, I stand
unstruck match in my hand.

It is less distant now,
the remembrance ritual of parents deceased.
I am older now,
closer to their age than before.
I am older now,
their aches in my body
their white hairs beneath my shaved skin
their wrinkles creased into my face.

It is less distant now
this ritual
once made me think of them
Now makes me think of me.

Once it recalled relationships to them
Now it ponders on my children's relationship to me.
Once I wondered what to remember of them
Now I ask what my children remember of me
what smile, what grimace
What stories they will tell their children of me.

It is less distant now.
How would I be remembered
How would I be mourned
Will they come to the synagogue
light a candle
recite the *Kaddish*?
It is less distant now.
Once *yahrzeit* was about parents deceased,
Now it is of children alive.
Once it was about a distant past,
Now it is about tomorrow.

16. Death of a Newborn, Miscarriage, Abortion

Tragic situations, such as the death of a newborn, miscarriage, or abortion are significant losses that require grieving. Please contact our Rabbi about appropriate customs regarding grieving in these cases.

17. Other Issues

a. Jews by Choice

Jews by Choice are entitled to all of the rites of a Jewish burial.

b. Non-Jewish Family Members

Our Rabbi will assist interfaith families in a manner sensitive to other religious traditions. A Jewish service may be appropriate when the deceased was not Jewish but identified with Jewish tradition and the surviving family members are Jewish. Our Rabbi is willing to conduct appropriate non-sectarian funeral services in support of a bereaved Temple Beth Or family, and will participate with non-Jewish clergy. The Temple Beth Or section of the GAR Cemetery accepts the burial of non-Jewish spouses.

c. Suicide

Please do not hesitate to contact our Rabbi in the event of a suicide. Jewish tradition encourages approaching the tragedy of suicide with compassion and understanding.

18. Traditional Readings and Prayers

Mourner's *Kaddish*

*Yit'gadal v'yit'kadash sh'mei raba
b'al'ma di v'ra khir'utei, v'yam'likh mal'khutei
b'chayeikhon uv'yomeikhon, uv'chayei d'khol beit yis'ra'eil,
ba'agala uviz'man kariv, v'im'ru: Amein.*

Y'hei sh'mei raba m'varakh l'alam ul'al'mei al'maya.

*Yit'barakh v'yish'tabach, v'yit'pa'ar v'yit'romam v'yit'nasei,
v'yit'hadar v'yit'aleh v'yit'halal sh'mei d'kud'sha,
B'rikh hu, l'eila min kol bir'khata v'shirata,
toosh'b'chatah v'nechematah, da'ameeran b'al'mah,
v'im'ru: Amein.*

*Y'hei sh'lama raba min sh'maya v'chayim
aleinu v'al kol Yis'ra'eil, v'im'ru: Amein.*

*Oseh shalom bim'romav, hu ya'aseh shalom
aleinu v'al kol Yis'ra'eil, v'al kol yoshvei teivel, v'im'ru: Amein.*

Let the glory of God be extolled, let God's great Name be hallowed, in all creation. May the reign of God 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 is 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 God who causes peace to reign in the high heavens, let peace descend on us, on all Israel, and upon all inhabitants on earth, and let us say: Amen.

קדיש

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא
בְּעֻלְמָא דִּי-בְרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ, וְיִמְלִיךָ מַלְכוּתָהּ
בְּחַיֵּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,
בְּעֻגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וְלְעֻלְמֵי עֻלְמֵיָא.

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא,
וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְקוּדְשָׁא,
בְּרִיךְ הוּא, לְעֵלְא מִן-כָּל-בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא,
תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנַחֲמַתָּא דְאִמְרִין בְּעֻלְמָא,
וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן-שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים
עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם
עֲלָנוּ וְעַל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְעַל-כָּל-יְיֹשְׁבֵי תִבְל, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

Psalm 23

God is my shepherd, I shall not want.

God makes me lie down in green pastures,

Leads me beside still waters and restores my soul.

You lead me in right paths for the sake of Your Name.

Even when I walk in the valley of the shadow of death

I shall fear no evil, for You are with me;

Your rod and Your staff—they 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 God forever.

Appendices

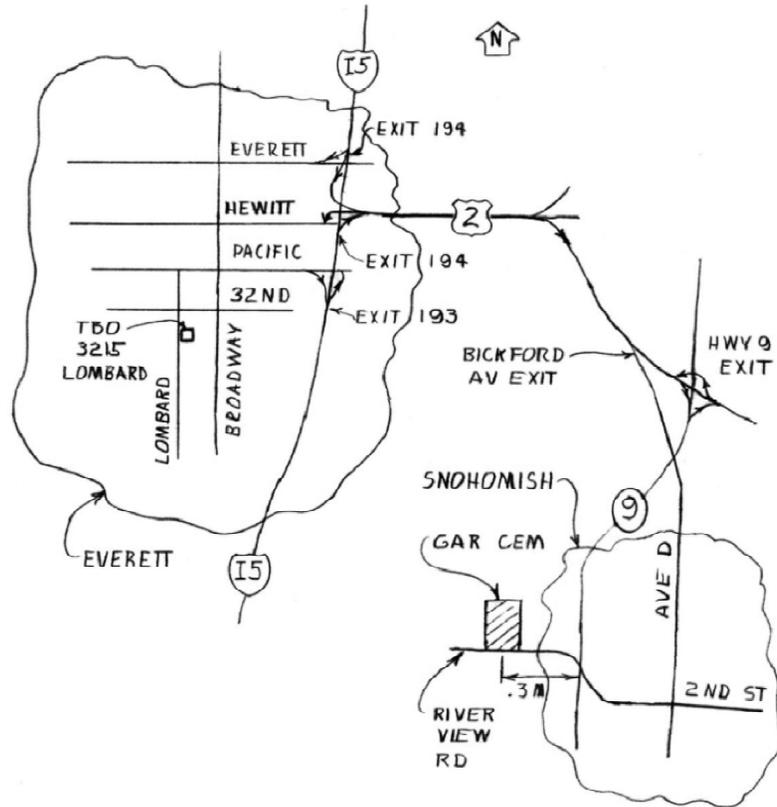
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A. Glossary

Aninut: Period of time between death and burial
Autopsy: Medical examination of the deceased, usually to determine circumstances of death
Aveilut: Extended 11-month mourning period for death of a parent
Chevra Kadisha: Literally “holy society,” a group of people entrusted with the *mitzvah* of preparing the body for burial
Cremains: Ashes resulting from *cremation* of a body
Cremation: Incineration of a body
Embalming: Use of chemicals to temporarily preserve the body of the deceased
Eulogy: Speech made about the deceased during funeral or memorial service
El Malei Rachamim: Prayer requesting God's compassion for the deceased; recited at conclusion of funeral service and *Yizkor* service
Halachic: Legal Jewish practice or observance
Kaddish: Prayer praising God; there are several *Kaddish* prayers recited during the service, one of which is recited in memory of the departed
Kippah/Yarmulke: Skullcap or head covering (plural—*kippot/yarmulkes*)
Kosher Casket: Casket made of wood using wooden dowels and vegetable glue
K'riah: Tearing of a garment or a ribbon as an expression of grief
Liner: Concrete enclosure surrounding casket in the grave
Mausoleum: Building which houses tombs
Meal of Consolation/Seudat Havra'ah: First meal for mourners returning from cemetery
Minyan: Quorum of ten Jewish people necessary for public prayer
Mitzvot: Literally commandments, generally considered to be good deeds (singular—*mitzvah*)
Motzi: Blessing over bread said before a meal
Pallbearer: Individual who escorts or helps carry the casket to the graveside
Seudat Havra'ah/Meal of Consolation: First meal for mourners returning from cemetery
Shabbat: Sabbath—day of rest beginning sundown Friday and ending sundown Saturday
Shivah: Seven day mourning period beginning with the burial
Shivah Minyan: Service conducted during the period of *shivah*
Sh'loshim: The first 30 days of the mourning period
Shomrim: Individuals who stay with body prior to the funeral; also refers to the practice itself (singular—*shomer*)
Simchah: Joyous occasion such as birth, wedding, bar/bat mitzvah
Tachrichim: White linen cloth (shroud) placed over the body
Taharah: Ritual purification of the body in preparation for burial
Tallit: Prayer shawl
T'hillim: Psalms recited by *shomrim*
Tzedakah: Literally justice or righteousness, the Hebrew word used for charity
Tzitzit: Fringes on the prayer shawl
Vault: Waterproof liner for grave

Yahrzeit: Observance of the annual anniversary of a death
Yarmulke/Kippah: Skullcap or head covering (plural—*yarmulkes/kippot*)
Yizkor: Memorial services held on Yom Kippur and the last day of Pesach (Passover), Shavuot, and Sukkot

B. Map and Directions



Directions to GAR Cemetery

From I-5:

Take exit 194 to merge onto US-2 E (towards Snohomish)
Take the WA-9 exit towards Arlington/Bothell
Turn right onto WA-9 S
Take the exit towards Snohomish
Turn right onto 2nd St.
Continue straight onto Riverview Road
GAR Cemetery will be on the right.

From WA-9, heading North:

Take exit towards Snohomish
Turn left onto 2nd St.
Continue straight onto Riverview Road
GAR Cemetery will be on the right.

From WA-9, heading South:

Take exit towards Snohomish
Turn right onto 2nd St.
Continue straight onto Riverview Road
GAR Cemetery will be on the right.

GAR Cemetery
8601 Riverview Rd.
Snohomish, WA
360-568-4090

C. Bereavement Committee Services Available

1. Organize/coordinate *meal of consolation*.

- Organize volunteers to bring food
- Obtain a key to use for unlocking door and set-up during funeral
- Set up pitcher outside for washing hands
- Set up food
- Make coffee or tea
- Provide clean-up support

Note: We ask the family provide a table with tablecloth, plates, forks, napkins, coffee supplies, and cups. The family also provides a pitcher, bowl, and towel for hand washing.

2. Organize/coordinate refreshments following *shivah minyan*.

- Organize volunteers to bring food
- Make coffee or tea
- Set-up and clean-up

3. Work with family regarding Temple Beth Or telephone and email notification.

4. Place name of deceased in Temple Beth Or weekly service bulletin and *The Oracle*.

5. Prepare or copy maps/directions to funeral, cemetery, and/or *meal of consolation*, if needed. (Appendix B includes maps to GAR Cemetery and Temple Beth Or.)

6. Provide *k'riah* ribbons, *kippot/yarmulkes*, prayer books, and memorial candle as needed at the funeral, cemetery, *meal of consolation*, and *shivah minyans*.

7. Other services may be available on an as-needed basis.

D. Recommended Reading

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*Cardin, Rabbi Nina. *Tears of Sorrow, Seeds of Hope: A Jewish Spiritual Companion for Infertility and Pregnancy Loss*. Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1999.

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* Indicates resources available in the Temple Beth Or Library

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- *Wolfson, Ron. *A Time to Mourn, A Time to Comfort*. Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1998.
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E. Recommended Reading for Children

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- *Liss-Levinson, Nechama. *When a Grandparent Dies: A Kid's Workbook for Dealing with Shiva and the Year Beyond*. Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1995.
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* Indicates resources available in the Temple Beth Or Library



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