



End of Life Customs and Traditions



*Chabad of Olney
section at
Judean Memorial Garden*

Policies and Procedures



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Dear Friends:

As the Chabad community continues to grow, so does the need to accommodate all aspects of traditional Jewish life. A recent addition to Chabad was the acquisition of the Chabad section at Judean Memorial Gardens, a Jewish Cemetery in Olney, for the benefit of our growing community. This cemetery is to be used for Jews of our community, affiliated and non-affiliated alike.

The following booklet includes a short summary of the Jewish customs and traditions regarding the end of life, as well as policies and procedures for the Chabad section at Judean Memorial Gardens.

Please review the booklet carefully. Should you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to call the office or myself.

Rabbi Bentzy Stolik



*Chabad of Olney
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HANDBOOK

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Because we love, when a loved one dies, we feel sorrow and grief. These reactions are both normal and healthy. When death takes a loved one, life seems empty and the future dark. As Jews we have guidance at sad times in our lives and specific outlined ways to deal with death and its grief. The Jewish rituals and practices help us to express our grief rather than repress it, to talk about our loss with friends, and to move step by step from inactivity to normal living. This booklet was written to provide a basic understanding of customs as observed in traditional Judaism, it does not include the entire Jewish law on this issue. This booklet also includes the policies and rules pertaining to the Chabad of Olney section at Judean Memorial Gardens. It is offered to guide our members and explain our traditions.

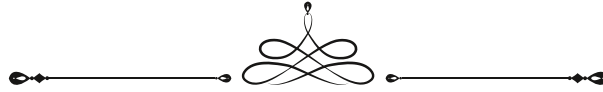
WHAT TO DO WHEN A DEATH OCCURS

Call a local funeral home (Torchinsky Hebrew Funeral Home, Sagel Bloomfield Danzansky Goldberg, or Hines Rinaldi all work with the greater Washington Chevra Kadisha) to arrange for proper care of the deceased. Contact Rabbi Bentzy Stolik, to assist you and to help arrange the funeral. If funeral prearrangements have not been made, you can ease the strain of planning the funeral by having someone, perhaps a close friend or family member, help you make decisions.

BEFORE THE FUNERAL

Set a time and place for the funeral with the officiating Rabbi and the funeral home. Our tradition prefers having the funeral as soon as possible after death occurs; however, there are times when a delay is proper. The service can be held at the synagogue, at the funeral home, the Chapel at Judean Memorial Gardens or at the graveside. Contact immediate family, close friends and employer or business colleagues. Once the funeral time has been set, prepare the obituary. Items to consider including in the obituary are: age, place of birth, cause of death, occupation, college degrees, memberships in organizations, military service or noteworthy achievements. List survivors in the immediate family. Give the time and place of the funeral. Suggest where memorial contributions may be made.





Choose the pallbearers. Pallbearers are six people who can carry the casket. You cannot choose a pallbearer who is a Kohen. It is customary not to choose immediate family members. You may choose as many others as you wish to serve as honorary pallbearers. You may want to meet with the Rabbi ahead of the funeral to discuss the funeral service, eulogy etc. Be open and give as much personal insight as possible. Avoid false or exaggerated praise. Tell the good things enthusiastically.

THE MOURNER

The period of time between death and burial is called Anninut and the bereaved is called an Onen. The prime responsibility of the Onen is to arrange the funeral. During this time, an Onen is exempt from positive Mitzvot. As such, Tefillin and prayer are not obligatory at this time. However, an Onen who finds it helpful to express feelings through prayers may do so. Only relatives or very close friends should visit during this time, primarily to help make arrangements for the funeral and Shivah. After the funeral, a mourner is known as an Avel. One is a mourner by obligation for parents, children, siblings or spouse.

PREPARATION FOR BURIAL

Our tradition has long stood for simplicity in funerals and mourning. A simple wooden casket is preferred. Cremation is not in keeping with Jewish tradition and Jewish law. Before the Met (the deceased) is dressed for burial, we observe the ritual of Tahara, of ritual washing, done by the Chevra Kadisha, the Holy Society. The Chevra Kadisha dresses the body only in traditional burial shrouds called Tachrichim, which are simple white garments.

AUTOPSY

Jewish tradition does not allow autopsies. However, there are times when an autopsy might be required by law. Each case must be reviewed independently, and you should speak to the rabbi for further information.

EMBALMING

Jewish tradition frowns on embalming and it is against Jewish law.





FLOWERS

Flowers are not part of Jewish mourning practice. In the spirit of honoring the memory of the dead by helping the living, suggest in the obituary that in lieu of flowers, donations be directed to an appropriate charity. If flowers are sent, share them with the living by giving them to a local hospital or other institutions where they could give some joy to others.

KRIAH

A few minutes before the funeral begins, the first formal act of mourning, Kriah, the tearing of one's garment takes place. Kriah is a biblical instruction for mourners, and it should be done with a shirt, jacket etc or a shawl (the ribbon/pin does not fulfill the Mitzvah) It is a symbol of inner grief and mourning. Mourners stand as they perform it. Before the cut is made, mourners recite a Bracha which is a reaffirmation of faith.

THE FUNERAL SERVICE

A funeral can be held at the synagogue, funeral home, cemetery chapel or the graveside. A service held only at graveside includes the same elements as those begun at another location. It is shorter because certain elements are repeated when a service is held in two locations.

A graveside funeral is no less dignified nor less giving of honor to the deceased than any other service. The funeral service is brief. Selections are read from Psalms and a eulogy, depicting the life of the deceased as a guide for the living, is presented. Kel Maleh Rachamim, which expresses our faith in the immortality of the soul, is recited on most days. Once at graveside, the service consists of recitation of Tziduk Ha-din, a prayer which expresses our acceptance of G-d's decisions, followed by the recitation of Kaddish. After the burial, (except on special days) those attending the funeral form two lines to let the mourners pass between them. As they do, the following traditional words of comfort are said; "Ha-makom Yinachem Et-chem Betoach She-ar Aveilei Tziyon Veyerushalayim, May G-d comfort you among all the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem."





SHOVELING EARTH

After the casket is fully in the grave, the Mitzvah of burial begins by shoveling some earth into the grave. This Mitzvah, is known as Chesed Shel Emet, true loving kindness. This Mitzvah demonstrates our continued concern for the deceased as we make sure the final journey of the deceased is completed. Participating in this Mitzvah has been shown to be of great psychological benefit for mourners since it serves as an important action of finality and closure.

CHILDREN AT A FUNERAL

Should children attend a funeral? There is no hard and fast rule that applies. If a child is old enough to understand the purpose of the funeral and to know that people will be upset, then generally that child should attend the funeral. The child should sit with an adult he or she knows during the service. Remember that children need the opportunity to say "good-bye" to a loved one as do adults. It may not be good to deprive a child who is old enough to understand, of an opportunity to say farewell and to begin to grieve.

AFTER THE FUNERAL

SHIVAH

Shivah lasts seven days. The day of the funeral is the first day and one hour of the seventh day counts as a full day. Shivah is suspended on Friday afternoon and is resumed after Shabbat is over. If a major holiday, such as Pesach, Shavuot, Sukkot, Rosh Hashana or Yom Kippur falls during the Shivah period, Shivah is concluded on the afternoon of the eve of the festival. Speak to the Rabbi for further details. The Shivah period begins after the interment with a simple meal called Seudat Havra'ah, the meal of consolation. There is a custom to rinse one's hands with water from a cup or vessel three times on each hand alternately before entering the house for the meal. This meal traditionally is not prepared by the mourners themselves, but rather provided by family and friends for the mourners. The menu traditionally includes hardboiled eggs, which are symbols of life, and round food, such as lentils, which symbolize the turning of the wheel of life, with its ups and downs. Neither meat nor wine, which are two symbols of joy, should be served at this meal.





SITTING SHIVAH

Mourners should try to stay together at the place where Shivah is observed. If they cannot, they may sleep in their own homes and return to the Shivah house in the morning. Mourners should not go to work during this time. In its wisdom, our tradition recognizes that when a major change in life has taken place, the survivor needs to step out of everyday activity for a while. If it is imperative for a person to go back to work, one may return after three full days. However, this does not end Shivah. After the workday is over, one should return home and resume Shivah observance. There are several practices associated with observing Shivah. A seven-day candle is lit upon returning from the cemetery. Mourners refrain from marital relations and avoid forms of entertainment during the week. There is also a custom to cover mirrors in the home, to show that we reduce the importance normally placed on personal vanity. Mourners are encouraged to observe the customs of not wearing leather shoes and sitting on low stools during Shivah, which show that we change the way we live during this time.

VISITING MOURNERS

People pay “Shivah calls” to fulfill the Mitzvah of Nichum Aveilim, comforting the mourners. These visits demonstrate community concern at the time of loss. The visits help the mourners release the feelings of isolation or desertion, both of which are natural feelings after the death of a loved one. Conversations should center on the life and memories of the departed. Talking about the deceased is helpful to the mourner. Such conversations help the mourner to begin the process of getting over their grief. If you have been through a time of personal grief and the mourner asks you how you felt or how you managed, share your own experience. Mourners often take comfort in knowing that others have experienced similar feelings. Mourners are not obligated to have food or drink available for those who come to visit.

SHIVAH SERVICES

It is traditional to hold services at a house of Shivah. Chabad provides Siddurim and Yarmulkas for use in homes. Family members or friends can lead the service. Service times are set with the Rabbi. If a family does not have morning and evening services in the home during the week of Shivah, it is proper to attend services at the synagogue and then





return home. During Shivah, mourners attend Shabbat services at the synagogue: Friday evening and Saturday morning.

AFTER SHIVAH

The length of the mourning period varies with the mourner's relation to the deceased. For all but parents, Avelut, the mourning period, ends with Shloshim, thirty days after the funeral. For parents, the mourning period lasts a full Hebrew year. Shloshim, a thirty-day period, is the second stage of mourning. Mourners may return to their regular activities in business and home. However, it is appropriate for mourners to refrain from festive activities such as going to movies, theater or parties.

SAYING KADDISH

A Kaddish is only said in the presence of ten Jewish men. Children are obligated to say Kaddish, as are parents who lose a child. Saying Kaddish is especially helpful to the surviving individual, since it offers both regularity in life and social contact with others at a disconcerting time. When the mourning period is a year, Kaddish is recited for eleven months and a day. One can fulfill the obligation to recite Kaddish at Chabad and by paying a "Kaddish sayer" to fulfill this obligation throughout the week, contact the rabbi for further details or visit jewisholney.com/kaddish

UNVEILING / DEDICATION OF A GRAVE MARKER

The dedication of a grave marker is mandatory. It may be led by the rabbi. The usual dedication ceremony consists of reading selections from Psalms, a prayer, and the Kel Maleh. If there is a minyan the Kaddish is recited as well. The custom is not to wait more than a year after the passing occurred before erecting the headstone. Though it can be done sooner. For more information about an unveiling service, contact the Rabbi.

YAHRTZEIT

Yahrtzeit is observed each year on the date of death according to the Hebrew calendar. Therefore, the timing of Yartzeit on the secular calendar will vary from year to year.





Chabad notifies members of the secular date if the Yartzeit records are on file. The Yartzeit observance lasts a full day and it is customary to attend services on the day of the Yartzeit. Those who come to observe Yartzeit recite the mourners Kaddish as part of the daily service and may lead portions of the service. It is Jewish tradition to make contributions to charity on Yartzeit. Perhaps the best-known custom for observing Yartzeit is lighting of a candle made to burn for at least 24 hours. The candle is lit the evening that the Yartzeit begins. If Yartzeit falls on Shabbat or Yom Tov, the candle is lit before the Shabbat or holiday candles. There is no formal blessing when lighting the candle, however a meditation such as the one which follows may be said. It is appropriate, of course, to use your own words and thoughts in addition or in place of this meditation:

Dear G-d, I light this candle on this Yartzeit of my dear _____. May I be inspired to deeds of charity and kindness to honor his/her memory. May the light of this candle be a reminder to me of the light my dear _____ brought to my life. May his/her soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life. Amen.

YIZKOR

Yizkor, the memorial service, is recited four times a year: on Yom Kippur, Shmini Atzeret and the last days of Pesach and Shavuot, during the morning service. Our tradition wisely included this service on these days since it recognized that holiday times bring with them reminders of loved ones no longer with us. It is most appropriate to come to the synagogue on those mornings and join with the congregation in reciting Yizkor.

MEMORIAL FUNDS

At Chabad of Olney, families can establish a Named Endowment Fund in memory of the deceased. Once the fund reaches a minimum balance, the principal is held in perpetuity as an ongoing memorial. The family may suggest areas for which the income of the fund may be used. Contact the rabbi for further details.

YARTZEIT PLAQUES

The synagogue has Yartzeit tablets with plaques recording the Hebrew and English name of the deceased and the Hebrew date of death. For further information about Yartzeit plaques, contact the Chabad office or speak to the rabbi.





DEALING WITH GRIEF

Every person has different reactions to situations of stress, grief and loss. It is not unusual for a mourner to feel depressed one day and happy another, or for bouts of depression to come and go for a long period of time after the death of a loved one. These ups and downs are part of the process of returning to normal living. Our tradition understands that life will never be the same again after the death of a loved one; however, it is important to try to regain a sense of normalcy as one goes through the mourning period. In cases of extreme depression or long-lasting grief, mourners are urged to speak with a counselor to help them get through this most difficult time. All the resources of the Chabad Center are ready and available to be of help to those who are in need.

ORGAN DONATION

The issue of organ donation is much larger than the scope of this booklet, however, the following clarifications should be made: 1. Overall, according to majority of Halachic rulers, in the case that an organ donation will save a life (and not for any other reason), it is considered one of the greatest Mitzvot. 2. The concept of organ donation is associated with a multitude of issues. Hence, it can potentially cause the transgression of many prohibitions. Therefore, anyone wishing to donate an organ to save a life, should consult a knowledgeable rabbi in this field. Donors should request that a rabbi be consulted and approve prior to the organ donation.

CONCLUSION

This booklet is intended to provide basic understanding of the Jewish traditions and practices regarding end of life. It is not meant to be an exhaustive description of traditional customs and laws. To better understand the end of life customs and practices, please contact the Rabbi who will be happy to provide further material and spend some time with further explanations. We hope that this booklet was helpful and educational to you. As always, we are here and ready to serve you.





CONTACT INFORMATION

Chabad of Olney

17320 Georgia Ave
Olney, MD 20832
301-660-6770

Rabbi Bentzy Stolik

Cell: (301) 795-8237
rabbi@jewisholney.com

Cemetery:

Judean memorial gardens

16225 Batchellors Forest Rd
Olney, MD 20832
301-384-1000

Local Funeral Homes that support Jewish tradition:

Torchinsky Hebrew Funeral Home

254 Carroll St NW
Washington, DC 20012
301-495-3395

Sagel Bloomfield Funeral Care

1091 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852
301-340-1400

Hines Rinaldi Funeral Home

11800 New Hampshire Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20904
301-622-2290

Bogwardt Funeral Home

4400 Powder Mill Road
Beltsville, MD 20705
301-937-1707

Shomrei Neshama of Greater Washington


1091-B Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852
301-296-6835

Fram Monument

822-D Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852
301 605-8081

When calling, be sure to ask for the "**Jewish Funeral Package.**"





CHABAD'S CEMETERY AT JUDEAN MEMORIAL GARDENS

Chabad of Olney has dedicated a sacred space within Judean Memorial Gardens in Olney, in close proximity to our center. One does not like to think about death, but the loss of a loved one is a tragedy every household will experience at some time. Many of us have made "Pre-Need" arrangements in order to provide our family with peace of mind and relieve them of a financial burden. When a death does occur, families are often poorly prepared to deal with the associated problems and costs. Purchasing in advance a burial plot for interment removes one major stressor associated with the passing of a loved one. If you make your wishes clearly known in advance, your spouse or children will never have to ask: "...did I do the right thing; did I do what they would have wanted?" Chabad strongly urges you to fill out a form entitled "My Burial Wishes", which can be obtained at the office, and to distribute copies of the form to the Rabbi, funeral director, your doctor, lawyer, and family members.

CHABAD SECTION CEMETERY RULES AND POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

The following rules and regulations have been adopted by Chabad of Olney ("Chabad"), a religious, non-profit corporation, hereinafter referred to as Chabad. For the mutual protection of owners of interment rights, all owners of interment rights within the Chabad section, and all interment rights sold therein, shall be subject to these rules and regulations as they now exist and as they may reasonably be amended or altered hereafter by the Board of Directors of Chabad. Chabad's contract to place the deceased remains in a plot at Neshama Gardens is for the interment rights only. Owners of interment rights in the Chabad Section at Judean Memorial Gardens are bound by current and any future Judean Memorial Gardens rules, and current and any future Chabad rules.





Chabad rules govern where they are more restrictive than the Judean Memorial Gardens rules.

DEFINITIONS

- A. "Jewish Law" means adherence to Jewish laws, traditions and customs in accordance with the "Halacha" as recorded in the Code of Jewish Law known as "Shulchan Aruch" as interpreted by the vaad Horabonim of Greater Washington.
- B. "Rabbi" refers to the current serving rabbi at Chabad of Olney.

HALACHIC RULES

The Chabad section is maintained and operated following the Jewish law. Interment rights will be sold only to persons of the Jewish faith according to Jewish law. No cremated remains shall be buried in the cemetery unless death has resulted from accidental burning. All bodies must be prepared in accordance with Jewish law which includes the Tahara ritual performed by an appointed Chevrah Kadisha. All burials and burial ceremonies will be conducted by the Chabad rabbi or another rabbi approved by the Chabad Rabbi. Any religious matters pertaining to interment or disinterment shall be decided only by the Rabbi.

GENERAL RULES

No interment within the Chabad of Olney section at Judean Memorial Gardens shall occur unless and until the interment rights have been paid for. No owner of interment rights may sell or otherwise transfer his or her interment rights except in compliance with this section and the applicable sections of Judean Memorial Gardens Rules.





Before an owner may sell or otherwise transfer his or her interment rights within the Chabad of Olney section at JMG to any other person, the owner must receive approval for the transaction from Chabad of Olney, Should a transfer of plot ownership be approved, the transfer requires a written agreement in form and substance acceptable to Chabad from the transferee to be bound by and comply with the Chabad rules and the Judean Memorial Gardens rules, and any and all transfers of any interment rights must receive the written permission of the Rabbi. The owner and transferee shall provide Chabad with copies of the written agreements providing for the transfer of the interment rights.

For purposes of giving notice under this Paragraph, Chabad may be contacted by mail at: 17320 Georgia Ave, Olney MD 20832. Each gravesite and the entire Chabad section is maintained by Judean Memorial Gardens. No flowers, artificial flowers, or other types of decorations are permitted. Only one casket may be placed in each plot. The locations of each gravesite will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. As such, spouses or family members wishing to be interred in adjacent plots must purchase interment rights simultaneously to ensure the availability of the desired locations.

MONUMENTS AND MARKERS

Each burial site must have a monument in place within one year of burial. Monuments should be traditional upright headstones. All monument inscriptions should be approved in writing by the Rabbi before being installed. No flower vases will be permitted as permanent installations in conjunction with a headstone or other marker. Each monument must include the person's name in Hebrew lettering, and the (birthdate), and day of passing in Hebrew. The inclusion of English names and/or dates is optional.

We request that all stones have the Hebrew letters Pay and Nun (פ"נ) at the top, and Taf, Nun, Tzadi, Beis and Hay (ת.נ.צ.ב.ה) at the bottom.





The maintenance and upkeep of a monument is the responsibility of the heirs of the deceased. Any monument which is damaged, whether by acts of nature, vandalism, or is deemed by the cemetery committee to have become a hazard or unsightly shall be repaired and/or replaced at the heirs' expense.

