



Chevra Kadisha

Throughout the ages, Jewish communities have established burial societies whose main function was the care of the deceased from the time of death until interment. Their primary concern is the ritual washing and dressing in shrouds known as Tahara, which is the time-honored ritual of preparing the deceased in accordance with Jewish tradition.

The Chevra Kadisha of Congregation Beth Israel is a voluntary organization of men and women who perform this service with reverence and dignity, maintaining the highest standards of Jewish customs and laws.

If you have questions about this ritual, please contact Rabbi Samuels.

Beth Israel Cemetery

Beth Israel owns a fenced section of Bayview Cemetery, with areas for burial of both Jewish and non-Jewish partners or immediate family. Synagogue members receive discounts on burial plots. For information, call the synagogue office.

After the funeral ...

Jewish custom has several milestones that mark your journey through mourning:

Shiva

Seven days of intense mourning that begins on the day of burial. Mourners are encouraged to stay home. The Rabbi will arrange shiva minyanim if desired.

Shloshim

First 30 days following burial, when mourners return to work and normal activity, but refrain from entertainment.

Yarzheit

Anniversary of the death commemorated each year. Name is mentioned at Shabbat service preceding.

Headstone

A grave marker to your specifications. Call Bayview Cemetery, (360) 778-7150, or the funeral home.

Unveiling

Ritual at the placement of the grave marker, usually at the first yarzheit.

Resources

ReformJudaism.org has a section under Practice, Death & Mourning, that explains preparing for a funeral, talking to children, and includes a glossary of terms related to death, grief, and mourning.

Congregation Beth Israel End of Life Planning



*"I will dwell in the house of the
Lord forever" — Psalm 23*

*Pamphlet dedicated to the memory of
congregant and friend, Gea Goldfeder*

360.733.8890
www.bethisraelbellingham.org

"Life and death are twins: grief and hope walk hand in hand. Although we cannot know what lies beyond the body's death, we put our trust in the undying Spirit that calls us into life and abides to all eternity."

— Chaim Stern



RABBI SAMUELS

Just as there is a way to live as a Jew, there is also a "way to die and be buried as a Jew," writes Blu Greenberg in her book, *How to Run a Traditional Jewish Household* (Fireside, 1983).

The Jewish way of dealing with death is one part of a larger philosophy of life in which all persons are

viewed with dignity and respect. Our people believe that, even after death, the body, which once held a holy human life, retains its sanctity. Our sages have compared the sacredness of the deceased to that of an impaired Torah scroll which, although no longer useable, retains its holiness. In Jewish tradition, therefore, the greatest consideration and respect are accorded the dead.

Everyone who will be involved in this life cycle event for your family, from the Rabbi to the Chevra Kadisha to the funeral home staff, understands the sanctity of this life cycle event. We are all here to help guide you and your loved ones as well as offer comfort during this dark time.



Contact Rabbi Joshua Samuels through the Beth Israel office: (360) 733-8890
If it's an emergency and you reach voice mail, listen to the message — a direct number is provided

Advance Planning

ADVANCE CARE PLANNING: Making your health-care choices known in advance is a gift to those you love. A combined advance directive document names someone to speak for you if you're not able to do so (Healthcare Power of Attorney) and states your values, goals and preferences for medical care (Living Will). It is important that all those close to you understand your wishes and values. That way, you, your loved ones and your medical team will know what treatments you do and don't want. Please provide a copy to Beth Israel to keep in your file.

ORGAN DONATION: Jewish law does permit organ donation. Learn more at www.reformjudaism.org. If you choose to, sign your donor card and let your family know.

DYING AT HOME: Hospice and community support are available. Whatcom Hospice: (360) 733-5877, 2800 Douglas Ave., Bellingham

FUNERAL DETAILS: Decisions you can make ahead of time include choosing a cemetery and plot, choice of casket, flowers or donations, and all financial arrangements. You can also let your loved ones know what you want for the service itself.

BURIAL: Choices include traditional or "green" burial. Discuss these with the Rabbi.

When a Loved One Dies

If you are present at the time of death. It is traditional to close the eyes and mouth of the deceased and to draw a sheet over the body, including the face. If you are able and it is safe, you may place a candle or light by the head of the deceased. This represents the eternal nature of the soul even as we recognize the finite nature of life.

Immediately contact the Rabbi. Call the Beth Israel office to let the Rabbi know and to discuss the funeral, even if it's after hours.

Call the Funeral Home of your choice. They all understand and accommodate Jewish burial practices, including having the congregation's Chevra Kadisha (Sacred Burial Society) prepare the deceased for burial, providing a simple pine coffin and shiva candle.

Meet with the Rabbi. The meeting will include: funeral plans; discussion of wishes regarding traditional Jewish burial rituals; a decision on the number, time, and location of shiva minyanim, etc. Beth Israel will communicate to the congregation via email. The Rabbi can also discuss traditional Jewish burial rituals, as well as autopsy or cremation.

The funeral home will transport the body, provide death certificates, and the shroud for taharah.

