

# Adath Jeshurun's Guide to the Jewish Funeral

## ◆ INTRODUCTION ◆

When a member of a community dies, it is the community's responsibility to lovingly assist the deceased's family in this final act of respect. In this spirit, Congregation Adath Jeshurun has prepared this basic guide to provide essential information concerning Jewish death, funeral and mourning practices.

The Jewish way of dealing with death is one part of a larger philosophy of life in which all people 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 usable, still retains its holiness. In Jewish tradition therefore, the greatest consideration and respect is accorded the dead.

Jewish law and tradition have endowed funeral and mourning practices with profound religious significance. To this end, Jewish funerals avoid ostentation; family and visitors reflect the solemnity of the occasion in dress and decorum; flowers and instrumental music are inappropriate; embalming and public viewing are avoided; and interment takes place as soon as possible after death.

The *chevra kadisha*, a holy society comprised of volunteers, oversee the preparation of the body. It is an act known as *chesed shel emet*, a true act of kindness performed without ulterior motive, for the dead cannot repay this service.

## ◆ PRE-PLANNING ◆

### Gravesite Purchase Procedure

Graves can be purchased by calling Robin Silverman, Synagogue Administrator, at 458-5359. Unused gravesites may **not** be sold to other individuals, but may be sold back to the synagogue at any time for the price for which they were purchased.

### Purchase Price of Gravesites\*

Prices are \$2,500 per grave, which includes perpetual care. The price of opening and closing a grave is \$1,125 per grave for members and \$2,250 for non-members, and this fee is charged at the time of burial. A deed and Perpetual Care Agreement is mailed to the purchaser upon receipt of the payment in full. (**\*Prices effective from 7/1/10 through 6/30/11.**)

### Perpetual Care

Included in the cost of a gravesite is perpetual care. Perpetual care is a mandatory part of purchasing a gravesite in the Adath Jeshurun Cemetery. Perpetual care covers the maintenance of any permanent plantings which are planted on a gravesite. Perpetual care also includes filling and leveling the grave if sunken, and maintaining all common areas of the cemetery. Perpetual care does not cover the cost of purchasing or replacing plantings.

**Congregation Adath Jeshurun**  
**2401 Woodbourne Avenue**  
**Louisville, KY 40205**  
**Phone (502) 458-5359 Fax (502) 451-5634**

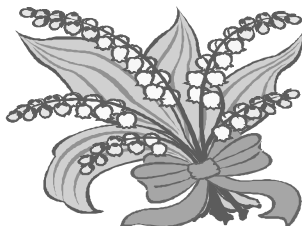
*Revised July 1, 2010*

## ◆ FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS ◆

Jewish law requires that burial take place as quickly as possible. Burial may be delayed for the following reasons: to transport the deceased; if close relatives must travel long distances to be present at the funeral/burial; or to avoid burial on the sabbath or a holy day. In any case, the burial should not be delayed longer than necessary. Such special cases as death by accident or suicide, or death of children under 30 days of age should be referred to Rabbi Slosberg for guidance. Families should consult with the rabbi when a death occurs.

## ◆ BURIAL OF NON-JEWISH SPOUSES OR LIFE-PARTNERS ◆

Burial in the Adath Jeshurun Cemetery had been limited to members of the Jewish faith. As of January 1, 2010, this policy has been expanded to include non-Jewish spouses or life-partners of Adath Jeshurun members. **This policy only extends to non-Jewish spouses or partners of members of Congregation Adath Jeshurun.** Burial clergy shall be Jewish, although a non-Jewish person may do a reading, as approved by the rabbi. No religious ornamentation, other than Jewish, shall be used anywhere in the Adath Jeshurun Cemetery. The burial must be approved by the Rabbi or, if he is not available, by the Cantor. Non-Jewish relatives of non-Jewish spouses/life-partners are **not eligible** for burial in the Adath Jeshurun Cemetery. Should the Jewish member of AJ discontinue membership at Adath Jeshurun, the burial rights for the non-Jewish spouse/life partner will not be honored, and any monies paid in toward the purchase price of burial rights will be refunded. Should the Non-Jewish spouse/life-partner predecease the Jewish AJ Member, burial rights will be granted to the non-Jewish partner, provided that a double gravesite has been purchased for the eventual burial of the Jewish AJ member. Burial fees for non-members of Adath Jeshurun, including non-Jewish spouses and life-time partners of AJ Members will be charged according to the non-member burial fee policy in force at the time of death.



## Tahara – Ritual Cleansing

Jewish law requires that the deceased be cleansed according to a prescribed ritual as an expression of respect. This ritual is performed by specially trained persons called a *chevra kadisha* (holy society).

## Tachrichim – Shroud and Burial Attire

Jewish law prescribes burial in plain white shrouds (*tachrichim*) so as to demonstrate the equality of all.

## Cremation

Since cremation is strictly forbidden in Jewish tradition (all the more so since the holocaust), the Rabbi and Cantor will not participate at a burial service for a cremated body.

## Officiants

Rabbi Slosberg and Cantor Lipp both officiate at funerals for Adath Jeshurun members in the AJ cemetery. Guest rabbis may officiate with the permission of Rabbi Slosberg.

## ◆ THE FUNERAL ◆

### Funeral Services

Funeral services may be held in a funeral home, or at the gravesite. The service usually includes the chanting of psalms, poems and *Eil Malei Rachamim* (the traditional memorial prayer), and a *hesped* (eulogy) honoring the deceased. Instrumental music is not permitted.

### Condolence Calls

During the period from death until burial, the mourner (called an *onen* during this period) is exempt from performing all religious duties. Condolence calls should be made **after** the funeral during the *shiva* week, except on the sabbath.

## Viewing the Remains

Public viewing of the body is contrary to Jewish tradition.

## Flowers

Flowers are associated with joyous occasions in Jewish tradition, and are not appropriate at a funeral. Friends and associates of the deceased who wish to show some concrete expression of sympathy are encouraged to contribute to a charity which was of importance to the deceased.

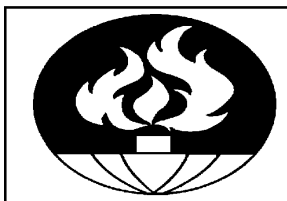
## Leaving the Cemetery

After burial, it is traditional to either wash one's hands after leaving the cemetery, or before entering the house of mourning. This washing is an affirmation of life after involvement with death.

### ◆ PERIODS OF MOURNING ◆

#### Shiva – The First Seven Days

*Shiva* is the seven-day period of intensive mourning observed by the immediate family of the deceased beginning on the day of burial. The mourners include anyone whose parent, spouse, child, or sibling has died. During the entire *shiva* period, mourners are encouraged to abstain from work, to remain at home, and to contemplate the meaning of life and the manner in which adjustment will be made due to the death of the beloved. Public mourning observances are suspended on the sabbath and Jewish holy days in view of the belief that the sanctity and serenity of these days supersedes personal grief. Mourners are permitted, indeed encouraged, to attend sabbath services; but they are not given an *aliyah* or *honor*. It is customary at A.J. for the name of the deceased to be read at a sabbath service after the funeral.



It is customary for family and friends to arrange for a condolence meal (which traditionally includes round foods such as eggs) to be served to the mourners at the house of mourning when they return from the cemetery. The mourners should not serve as hosts or otherwise entertain their visitors.

It is customary as symbols of mourning for a seven-day memorial candle to be kindled, and for the mourners to refrain from wearing leather shoes and from shaving.

It is also customary for the mourners to participate in evening services in the *shiva* home during the seven days, except on the sabbath when mourners attend synagogue services. Visiting at the time of *shiva* is a most important mitzvah.

#### Shloshim – The First Thirty Days

During the thirty days following burial (except *shiva*) mourners return to work and normal activities, but refrain from public entertainment or social activities. In place of home services, mourners attend synagogue services daily to recite *kaddish*.

#### Shana – The First Year

Mourners for deceased parents continue to attend services daily to recite *kaddish* for eleven months, and continue to refrain from celebratory activities for a full year.

#### Yahrzeit – Anniversary of Death

The *kaddish* is recited each year on the anniversary of death (not burial).

#### Yizkor – Memorial Prayers

*Yizkor* prayers are recited on *Yom Kippur*, *Sh'mini Atzeret*, *Pesach* and *Shavuot*, and should be recited beginning with the first Yom tov day after the death.

## ◆ ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ◆

### Visiting the Grave

The Adath Jeshurun Cemetery is located at 2926 Preston Highway, at the corner of Locust Lane. The cemetery is open from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and is closed on Shabbat and all other Jewish holy days.

### Monuments

The maximum size for monuments in the Adath Jeshurun Cemetery is 48 inches high (including a 12 inch base) and 36 inches wide per grave. Arrangements for monuments can be made directly with any of the local monument companies.

### Plantings

In order to preserve the beauty and uniformity of our cemetery, only the cemetery caretaker is authorized to place plantings in the cemetery. Plantings may only extend a maximum of 24” from the front of the headstone. Plantings may be ordered by calling Julie Strull in the synagogue office at 458-5359.

### Memorial Plaques

Cost is \$600 and plaques may be ordered by calling Robin Silverman in the synagogue office at 458-5359.

### Cemetery Contacts

|                   |                                   |          |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Murray Toborowsky | Cemetery Warden                   | 426-2165 |
| Stephen J. Evans  | Assistant Cemetery Warden         | 451-6499 |
| Jody Bowling      | Cemetery Caretaker                | 634-9696 |
| Julie Strull      | Cemetery Administrative Assistant | 458-5359 |
| Robin Silverman   | Synagogue Administrator           | 458-5359 |

