

# Temple Beth Emeth Bereavement Guide



נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי

Nachamu, Nachamu Ami

Comfort, Comfort My People

Isaiah 40:1

Cover Artwork: "Rivers Cannot Drown It"

Artist: Ayala Ben-David

Ayala Ben-David was known for her paintings, original *ketubot*, murals and commissioned Judaica. Born in Los Angeles, she was active in the Zionist movement. She made *aliya* to Kibbutz Gvulot in the Negev desert, worked in agriculture and studied art at Bezalel in Jerusalem. A great friend and loving mother, Ayala succumbed to cancer in 2004 at age 46 in Pacific Palisades, California. She is survived by her daughter, Shanee Ben David. May her memory be for blessing.

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**Isaiah 40:1**

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Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104



## From Rabbi Levy

Both Annie and I are grateful for the work of *Nachamu* נחמו, the bereavement group of the Caring Community that prepared this guide to bereavement for our congregation. Death can be an uncomfortable subject.

Yet, a congregation's highest duty is to stand by its members at the time of loss. Even before a Jewish community builds a school to educate its children, it is traditional to establish a cemetery. Our Torah passes over much of the lives of our ancestors on the assumption that the reader "knows" what is missing. Yet, time and again, mourning rites are described. Doing well for our dead is a Jewish priority.

*Nachamu* has in this volume brought together traditional practice, modernity and the essence of our own congregation. I hope that you grow from reading it now so that at its time of greatest usefulness, you will be better prepared - though I pray that that time be far into the future.

B'shalom,

Rabbi Robert Levy



**From *Nachamu* נַחֲמוּ**  
**The Bereavement Group of TBE's Caring Community**

After the death of a loved one, we mourn for many reasons. We contemplate the words still unspoken, the hopes left unrealized and the bonds now broken. We also confront our own mortality, the briefness of our time here and the ultimate impossibility of our own dreams. We are frightened by the profound changes in our world.

At the same time, we are reminded of the precious opportunities of the life that we are given and we praise God for those opportunities. Thus we accept the responsibility to mourn and to comfort the bereaved.

In a process that reflects the experiences of the generations, Judaism addresses the real human needs that result from the death of a loved one.

In this Bereavement Guide, *Nachamu* presents the mourning process as it is reflected at Temple Beth Emeth. We also seek to provide information about the practices that members may experience in other Jewish mourning contexts. Our goal is to enlighten and comfort.

A word about *Nachamu*: When TBE's Caring Community was launched, the initial effort of the *shiva* group was to lead *shiva* services in houses of mourning and the members of the *shiva* group have since been called to that service many times. More recently, we have expanded our efforts in this attempt to provide the members of TBE with a greater understanding and appreciation of the Jewish mourning practices. It thus became clear that our name – *shiva* group – was no longer adequate to describe our purposes. We are now *Nachamu* נַחֲמוּ, which means "bring comfort." Since comforting the mourner is the responsibility of not only the clergy but also the community at large, we are honored to represent the TBE family in this effort. As with all Caring Community activities, *Nachamu* is open to any TBE member who is interested.

With love and with the hope that those in need will find comfort here, *Nachamu* now presents this Bereavement Guide to Temple Beth Emeth.

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## PREPARATION

### What are some important documents to have prepared when death is imminent?

The teachings of Judaism emphasize the importance of putting one's house in order, preferably before the time when death is imminent. Creating a *will*, designating *financial durable power of attorney* and *durable power of attorney for medical treatment decisions*, signing legally required authorizations to release health records and information to personal representatives [HIPAA forms], and specifying any advance directives and funeral instructions are several important tasks that are best completed before illness strikes.

An *ethical will* is an opportunity to express your values and concerns and can provide moral guidance to your family. Preparing such a will is as simple as writing a letter to those you love expressing your feelings, advice and hopes for the future. On this and other things discussed in this guide, the rabbi can advise you, and can share examples of ethical wills. (See Appendix B.)

### What is the *Viddui* וְדוּי (final confession)?

When an illness becomes critical, a long-standing practice of Judaism, though one that has largely fallen into disuse, is a confessional prayer called the *Viddui* וְדוּי. This is recited by one who is critically ill and concludes with the *Shema* שְׁמַע. The purpose of this prayer is to enable someone who is dying to reconcile with God by acknowledging and asking forgiveness for past failings. (See Appendix C for a suggested *Viddui* prayer.)

### Which prayers are customarily recited when death is imminent?

Prayers may be offered on behalf of the individual who is critically ill. While there are no particular prayers that are called for, the *Shema* שְׁמַע or Psalm 23 may be comforting. (See Appendix D.) The words of one's own heart directed toward God are often the most beautiful and appropriate of all.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד

*Sh'ma Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Ehchad.*

Hear, O Israel, the Eternal One is our God, the Eternal God Alone.

**Who can lend support in an emergency situation or when death is imminent?**

Jewish tradition teaches that it is important to allow others to help us when we are sick. Judaism regards *bikkur cholim* **בְּקוּר חוֹלִים**, the mitzvah of visiting the sick, as both an act of loving-kindness and one of the supreme acts of holiness.

When there is a serious illness, please inform the Temple office, (734) 665-4744. The clergy are always available, and their emergency phone numbers are on the Temple's answering machine when the office is closed. Clergy, hospice and various committees of Temple Beth Emeth's Caring Community can offer concrete and emotional support to those who are ill, as well as to their loved ones and caregivers during this difficult time.

**Who should be notified when death occurs?**

Even when a loved one has been stricken with a terminal illness, the moment of death still surprises and confuses. Knowing whom to contact may eliminate some stress during this difficult time.

First, notify Rabbi Robert Levy or Cantor Annie Rose at (734) 665-4744. The clergy are always available, and their emergency phone numbers are on the Temple's answering machine when the office is closed. When death occurs – before any procedures are performed by the hospital or facility staff – guidance should be sought from the clergy and funeral director regarding Jewish practices.

The following is a list of Jewish funeral homes in the area. (You may also use a non-Jewish funeral home if desired.)

- Dorfman Funeral Home (248) 406-6000
- Hebrew Memorial Chapel (248) 543-1622
- Ira Kaufman Chapel (248) 569-0020

When you speak to the funeral director, be sure to mention that you are a member of Temple Beth Emeth. The funeral director will arrange for the proper treatment of the body and will assist you in obtaining the death certificate.

It is important to notify all members of the family when a death has occurred. Oftentimes friends of the mourners will assist in making these calls.

**Is there a prayer customarily recited at the time of death?**

When one has been present at or is informed of a death, the following prayer is traditionally said, along with other such prayers as the heart may prompt:

**בְּרִיךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בֵּין הָאֱמֶת**

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-olam, Dayan Ha-emet.*

Blessed are You, Adonai, Our God, Sovereign of the Universe, the True Judge.

This blessing acknowledges God's goodness even in a moment of profound loss.

**What is Reform Judaism's view of organ donation and autopsy?**

Reform Judaism views organ donation as a mitzvah when done with appropriate respect for the body. Any autopsies required by civil authorities or conducted to further medical knowledge are acceptable.

## AT THE TIME OF DEATH

### What does Judaism teach about care of the body?

The body should be disturbed as little as possible when awaiting the arrival of representatives from the funeral home. Altering the deceased person's appearance is not necessary. According to Jewish tradition, as a gesture of respect, the body should not be left alone prior to burial. A guardian, known as the *shomer* שומר, (pl. *shomrim* שומרים) watches over the body day and night, and recites *tehillim* תהלים (psalms). Jewish funeral homes generally have *shomrim* on staff.

### What is the *Chevra Kadisha* חברה קדישא, and what are its responsibilities?

*Chevra Kadisha* חברה קדישא, which means holy society, is the name of a Jewish Burial Society. Members of the *Chevra Kadisha* perform the mitzvah of the Jewish ritual preparation of the body for burial. If requested, the Jewish funeral home will make arrangements for a *Chevra Kadisha* to provide these services.

The *Chevra Kadisha* prepares the body for burial. This includes the following steps:

1. *Sh'mira* שמירה - This is the act of remaining with the body. Members of the *Chevra Kadisha* may be requested to act as *shomrim* שומרים, guardians over the body until the time of burial.
2. *Tahara* טהרה - This is the Jewish ritual of washing the body of the deceased in preparation for burial. Ecclesiastes 5:14 commands, "He should depart, just as he came." This is interpreted to mean that just as a baby is bathed at birth, so should the body of the deceased be ritually cleansed upon death.
3. *Tachrichim* תכריכים - This refers to the Jewish custom of dressing the body for burial. Traditionally, the body is dressed in a simple white shroud, generally made of linen or cotton. These garments are the same for each person and symbolize that everyone is equal upon death. It is also customary that the deceased may wear a *kippah* (head covering) or be wrapped in his or her *tallit* (prayer shawl) with one of the *tzitzit* (ritual fringes) cut. The Jewish custom of equality in death suggests that any excessive expense or ostentation be avoided in the funeral and burial.



**What are the responsibilities of the funeral home?**

Representatives of the funeral home will arrange for the transportation of the body and will assist with the preparations for the funeral and burial. This includes obtaining the death certificate, helping to prepare and communicate obituary notices, and assisting in selecting a casket or other available services, possibly including prayer books for services, a *shiva* candle and acknowledgment cards.

**In Judaism, is it customary to embalm the body or use any enhancements for viewing the body?**

Judaism discourages embalming or the use of cosmetics on the deceased unless there are special circumstances, such as family situations or state or federal laws, that would justify these procedures. You may seek the advice of the rabbi in such situations.

**What do Jewish customs suggest regarding the selection of a casket?**

For many reasons, it has become Jewish custom that all caskets should be completely made of wood. On January 8, 2003, the TBE Board adopted a resolution stating, *“Consistent with Jewish tradition (‘For you are dust, and to dust you will return.’ - Genesis 3:19), Temple Beth Emeth encourages the use of plain, wood caskets for burial.”*

The use of wood allows the casket and the body to decompose naturally and return to the “dust” from which human beings were formed.

**How is cremation viewed according to Jewish tradition?**

Cremation is not a part of Jewish tradition because it does not allow the deceased to return naturally to the dust as prescribed in biblical writings. Other Jewish interpretations view cremation from a historical perspective as a form of violent destruction of the body and are opposed to its use. Cremation was also seen in the tradition as preventing the ultimate resurrection of the dead. If considering this option, you may wish to seek rabbinic counsel.

**What are the considerations when purchasing a cemetery plot or mausoleum for burial?**

When possible, families should consider making these arrangements before the time of bereavement. Temple Beth Emeth owns a portion of Arborcrest Memorial Park Cemetery at 2521 Glazier Way in Ann Arbor. Information about purchasing a burial plot is available through the Temple office. Upon inquiry, a member of the cemetery committee will contact you. The rabbi, cantor or funeral home can also provide information regarding cemeteries and burial customs.

Jewish biblical tradition favors burial in the ground. Therefore, mausoleums, which keep the body above ground, are not typically used except in some areas of the country where civil law or water tables may dictate different burial practices.

## **BETWEEN DEATH AND BURIAL**

### **What is *aninut* אַנינוּת (period of time between death and burial)?**

*Aninut* אַנינוּת is the first phase of mourning. It begins at the time of the death of an immediate relative and ends when the burial takes place. During this period, the mourner - *onen* אֹנֵן - typically abstains from business in order to make the appropriate funeral arrangements; the mourner is also exempt from social and religious obligations. Only family and close friends should visit with mourners at this time.

### **Who is an *avel* אָבֵל (mourner)?**

Reform practice recognizes that one may grieve for any dear person, but it is a religious duty to observe the practices of mourning (e.g., sitting *shiva* and saying Mourner's *Kaddish* קַדִּישׁ) for a parent, spouse, sibling, or child. Those under the age of 13 are not obligated to observe mourning customs.

Jewish tradition does not call for mourning observances for an infant less than 30 days old or after a miscarriage or stillbirth. However, Reform Judaism acknowledges the devastating character of such losses by providing meaningful mourning rituals in such cases.

### **When should the funeral and burial occur?**

According to Jewish tradition, burial should occur as soon as possible, usually within 24 hours after death. However, a funeral and burial may be delayed to permit close relatives to travel to be present, to avoid burial on Shabbat or another holy day, to transport the deceased or for legal reasons.

### **Where does the funeral service take place?**

Funeral services are generally held at a synagogue, funeral home or gravesite. It is customary at TBE to conduct a funeral service whether the body is cremated or buried.

**Who conducts the funeral service?**

Customarily, TBE clergy conduct congregational funerals. When the funeral occurs at TBE, clergy other than Rabbi Levy or Cantor Rose may officiate with Rabbi Levy's approval. A non-Jewish person is not permitted to conduct a funeral service in the TBE sanctuary or chapel.

**How do we involve children in the funeral service?**

Children are more aware of death than we may realize, though their understanding of death evolves as they get older. A child also needs a chance to say goodbye. Between the ages of 5 and 9, children generally become able to understand the meaning of physical death, and by the time they are 9 or 10, 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. It may be helpful to have the rabbi or cantor talk with the children prior to the funeral, to explain what will take place at the funeral and also to respond to any of the children's questions.

Grieving adults sometimes overlook the needs of children and may need the help of family or friends at this emotionally difficult time. When parents discuss death openly with their children, they enable them to develop a concept of death in a healthy manner.

Attendance at the funeral can aid children in understanding the finality of death and in dispelling 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. However, children should not be forced to attend. With a strong sense of caring and understanding, parents should permit apprehensive children to stay home. Parents may choose to visit the cemetery with them at another time.

Explain to children in advance what will take place and that people may be crying. Encourage them to ask questions and to discuss, but don't provide answers to questions that are not asked. Be supportive and understanding, but avoid myths that will later have to be rejected, such as that Grandpa is sleeping or that Grandma went away on a long trip. Speak from your heart and from the foundations of your own belief. For more extensive advice on this subject, you may discuss this matter with the rabbi.

**What does the rabbi or cantor need to know before the service?**

To prepare for the funeral service and the *hesped* **הַסְפִּיד** (eulogy), the rabbi or cantor will need some information about the deceased, especially if the clergy and the deceased were not well acquainted. The clergy will ask you for the Hebrew name of the deceased and will ask you to recount stories about the deceased's life, including both successes and struggles.

The sharing of memories of the deceased and events in the deceased's life can be difficult at times, but is an important part of the grieving process.

Family members may wish to share their thoughts during the funeral itself, if they are emotionally able to do so. This should be discussed with the clergy.

**Does the casket remain closed?**

Jewish tradition and TBE funeral practices require that the casket remain closed throughout the service as an expression of *k'vod hamet* **כְּבוֹד הַמֵּת** (respect for the dead). If you or other relatives wish to view the body a last time, this should be arranged to occur prior to the funeral service.

On January 8, 2003, the TBE Board adopted a resolution stating, ". . . Caskets will remain closed throughout funerals conducted at Temple Beth Emeth."

**What does tradition say about flowers?**

Flowers soon fade and wither, but an act of loving-kindness can have a profound and lasting effect. Therefore, flowers are discouraged by Jewish tradition, which favors *tzedakah* **צְדָקָה**, a charitable contribution to assist the living. However, if flowers have been sent, they should be displayed. Announcements in newspapers should indicate the wish of the family to have donations made to a charity - which may be specified as desired - in lieu of flowers or gifts.

**What is *k'riah* **קְרִיעָה** (tearing of the garment)?**

The ancient custom of *k'riah* **קְרִיעָה** is an external sign of inner grief and mourning. This tradition is based on the actions of Jacob, David, and Job who reacted to reports of

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death by rending their garments. *K'riah* was originally a tear made in the mourner's clothing, but today is usually a tear on a black ribbon attached to the clothing. *K'riah* is usually made immediately preceding the start of the funeral service while the mourner is standing, to signify the need to confront sorrow directly. Ribbons are available from the funeral home.

For a deceased parent, *k'riah* is worn on the left side, close to the heart. For all others, *k'riah* is worn on the right side. Just before *k'riah*, the mourner recites the following benediction:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בֵּן הָאֵמֶת

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-olam, Dayan Ha-emet.*

Blessed are You, Adonai, Our God, Sovereign of the Universe, the True Judge.

Like the Mourner's *Kaddish* קַדִּישׁ, this benediction is a reaffirmation of faith and of the value of life made at a time of intense sorrow and pain. *K'riah* should be visible throughout the period of *shiva*, but not on Shabbat, and may be worn throughout the thirty day mourning period (*sheloshim* שְׁלוֹשִׁים) except on Shabbat.

When learning of a death within the first thirty days, *k'riah* may be worn within that thirty day period. By tradition, *k'riah* is always required upon learning of a parent's death, regardless of the length of time that has elapsed since the death.

### What does the *levayah* לְוָיָה (funeral service) involve?

The literal translation of *levayah* לְוָיָה, "accompanying," teaches us that the nature of a Jewish funeral implies involvement. Tradition tells us that it is an act of respect not only to attend the funeral service, but also to accompany the dead, walking behind the *aron* אָרוֹן (coffin) for at least a few feet immediately after the funeral or at the cemetery. Despite Jewish folklore, pregnant women are allowed to attend a funeral.

The funeral service consists of suitable prayers of consolation, as well as a *hesped* הֶסְפֵּד (eulogy) delivered by the clergy, memorializing the deceased. In consultation with the clergy, family members and friends may participate in the service and eulogy. The cantor chants appropriate selections from the *Book of Tehillim* תְּהִלִּים (*Psalms*) and

the traditional memorial prayer, *Eil Malei Rachamim* אֵל מְלֵא רַחֲמִים (God of Compassion), a prayer for the peace of the departed soul (See Appendix E). Instrumental music is not played at Jewish funeral services.

Both the funeral and burial services are brief. At the conclusion of the service, it is customary for those in attendance to remain in their places until members of the family have departed the room.

The clergy will discuss the specifics of the funeral service with you.

### **Does TBE use pallbearers?**

It is considered an honor to escort the deceased to his or her final resting place. Six to eight individuals who are not the immediate mourners, but who were close to the deceased, are chosen by the family to carry the *aron* אָרוֹן (coffin) from the funeral service to the hearse and from the hearse to the gravesite. The pallbearers remain seated with their families during the funeral service and are summoned to escort the casket at the close of the service.

### **What does the burial service entail?**

The dead are buried in the earth: "For dust you are and to dust you shall return." (Genesis 3:19.) At the cemetery, the pallbearers bring the casket to the gravesite. TBE practice is to lower the casket into the grave and proceed with reciting some brief prayers. The *Eil Malei Rachamim* אֵל מְלֵא רַחֲמִים is repeated at the grave. The Mourner's *Kaddish* קַדִּישׁ closes the service. (See Appendix F.) This is the first time that the Mourner's *Kaddish* is said.

Mourners, relatives and friends place shovels of dirt back into the grave in order to cover the casket. Customarily the shovel is not passed directly from person to person, but rather is placed back in the earth. Mourners may use the back of the shovel for their first shovelful to indicate that the shovel is being used for a non-ordinary purpose or to symbolize our resigned acceptance of helping to return the person to the earth. As difficult as this may seem, covering the casket with dirt is the last physical act we can perform for our loved one and helps start the mourner on the way to acceptance and reconciliation.

After the burial, the focus now changes from honoring the deceased to *nichum avel* נִיחֻם אֵבֵל (comforting the mourner), as the immediate family and all in attendance depart for the house of mourning.

## IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE FUNERAL

### **What are the customs when returning from the cemetery?**

It is an ancient custom to cleanse when leaving the presence of death and to rid oneself of impurities associated with it. A pitcher of water, a bowl and towels are placed outside the door of the house of mourning for hand-washing for those returning from the cemetery. This custom also serves the practical purpose of allowing those whose hands are soiled from participating in the interment to wash their hands before entering the home.

### **What is the *seudat havraah* סעודת הבראה (meal of consolation)?**

According to custom, the community provides a meal to be served to the mourners upon their return from the cemetery. Providing this meal also allows members of the community to express in a practical way their comfort and support. This recognizes the need to take nourishment after this physically and emotionally exhausting experience. Mourners are obliged only to eat and have no obligation to serve as hosts. Rather, those who visit the house of mourning serve as hosts and assume responsibility for tasks such as answering the door, preparing the food and cleaning up the meal.

Traditionally, the inclusion of hard-boiled eggs reflects the egg's association with the renewal of life. Lentils and other round objects (for example, bagels and rolls) symbolize the cycle of life. It is traditional to serve dairy because milk is associated with life.



## SHIVA שְׁבִיעָה

### What is *shiva* שְׁבִיעָה?

In Hebrew, the word *shiva* שְׁבִיעָה refers to the number “seven.” It connotes a seven-day period of intense mourning that commences on the day of the funeral. *Shiva* is the public expression of grief observed by the family of the deceased.

The custom of *nichum avelim* נִיחוּם אַבְלִים (comforting the mourners) is derived from a variety of sources in our tradition. In ancient times, the Torah states (Genesis 50:10) that Joseph mourned for seven days after the death of his father, Jacob. In Job 2:13, when Job is joined by his friends as he mourns the loss of his children: “So they sat down with him upon the ground for seven days and seven nights.”

The practical effect of *shiva*, when mourners are surrounded by a community, is to give them support and comfort as they face the reality of death. It is a community obligation to comfort the bereaved.

### What customs are observed in the house of mourning during *shiva* שְׁבִיעָה?

Immediately after the funeral, the bereaved family gathers together to “sit *shiva* שְׁבִיעָה.” A house of mourning reflects its special character in various ways, depending on the preferences and practices of the mourner. It is a time used by many to tell stories, share pictures, meditate, read, recite private prayers or simply talk.

A *shiva* candle – a candle which lasts for seven days – is traditionally kindled upon entering the *shiva* house after the funeral service. One candle (provided by the funeral home) is sufficient for a household; if *shiva* is observed by different family members in different locations, a candle is lit in each home where *shiva* is observed. The *shiva* candle represents the light that the deceased brought to friends and loved ones during life, recalling Proverbs 20:27: “The human spirit is the light of the Eternal.” Suggested readings for the lighting of the *shiva* candle are found in Appendix G.

It is a long-standing custom to cover the mirrors in a house of mourning. This tradition has been linked both to medieval superstition and to the modern belief that mirrors, as a symbol of human vanity, are inappropriate in a house of mourning and are a distraction from the responsibilities of mourning and *nichum avel* נִיחוּם אַבְל (comforting the mourner). The tradition of mourners sitting on low stools dates back to Talmudic times, and reflects the mourner’s physical reflection of his or her

## Temple Beth Emeth

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emotional state by sitting close to the earth in which the loved one is interred. Most Reform Jews no longer observe these practices.

During the *shiva*, the mourner abstains from normal routines, as well as from activities that involve personal pleasure or expressions of vanity. Abstentions consistent with Reform Jewish practice include refraining from business or professional activities, attending social gatherings or joyous events and engaging in sexual relations.

### What is a *shiva* שְׁבֻעָה מִיָּנִין service (*shiva minyan* מִיָּנִין)?

During *shiva* שְׁבֻעָה, worship services are traditionally held at the house of mourning. This provides the opportunity to bring the community together in support of the mourners, as well as to afford those in mourning the opportunity to recite the Mourner's *Kaddish* קְדִישׁ. *Shiva* services are not held on Shabbat.

This service is the traditional daily *maariv* מַעְרִיב (evening) service. In addition, it may include a *D'var Torah* (Word of Torah) or other appropriate readings. Members of TBE may choose to have *shiva* services either in the house of mourning or in the Temple. The services are usually conducted by either members of *Nachamu* נַחְמוּ or the TBE clergy.

### What role does *Nachamu* נַחְמוּ play during *shiva* שְׁבֻעָה?

The consolation of the bereaved is a community responsibility. *Nachamu* נַחְמוּ is composed of volunteers within Temple Beth Emeth's Caring Community who are trained by the clergy to conduct *shiva* services. Members of *Nachamu* may also attend *shiva* services as representatives of the TBE family. As with all Caring Community activities, *Nachamu* is open to any TBE member who is interested.

### When does *shiva* שְׁבֻעָה start and end?

The day of burial is counted as the first day of *shiva* שְׁבֻעָה and *shiva* ends on the morning of the seventh day. Jewish tradition and the experience of generations teach the importance of a full opportunity for mourning. Grief impacts the mourner in psychological, emotional and physical ways. This *shiva* period allows the mourner to move gradually from intense grief back into more normal routines of life. Some families choose to observe a period of mourning shorter than seven days.

**How do Jewish holidays affect the observance of *shiva* שְׁבִיעָה?**

The holidays of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Passover and Shavuot all affect the length of observance of the *shiva* שְׁבִיעָה period. Clergy should be consulted for guidance.

**What happens on Shabbat during *shiva* שְׁבִיעָה?**

Shabbat is included in the counting even though no public forms of mourning are practiced on Shabbat. On Friday (unless it is seventh day of *shiva*), *shiva* is suspended well before sunset to allow the mourner time to prepare for Shabbat. On Shabbat, mourners attend synagogue to say Mourner's *Kaddish* קְדִישׁ. *Shiva* is resumed Saturday night, unless Saturday is the concluding day. In lieu of a *shiva* service at the house of mourning, mourners attend synagogue services to say the Mourner's *Kaddish*.

**What are the customs for those visiting a house of mourning?**

Jewish tradition regards the comforting of mourners as an obligation. Visiting a house of mourning and participating in an evening *shiva* שְׁבִיעָה service are acts of consolation; sitting with the mourner is an act of respect and comfort. All are welcome to participate in the service.

Upon arrival at a house of mourning, it is appropriate to enter quietly without ringing the doorbell or knocking on the door. This protects the mourner from having to act as a host or hostess.

Grief is, by nature, intense and private, yet companionship is valuable to the bereaved. Recognizing this, some visitors may be uncertain as to what to say in a house of mourning. The Talmud counsels, "The merit of attending a house of mourning lies in the silence observed." Because traditions vary, it is best for visitors to take cues from the bereaved as to when to speak and what to say. The most appropriate topics of conversation are the life of the person who died and the well-being of the mourners. The visitor's words should reflect and respect the mourner's own tears and laughter, memories and beliefs.

**What should you bring to a house of mourning?**

The tradition of providing a meal of consolation following the funeral is continued through the *shiva* שְׁבִיעָה period. At Temple Beth Emeth, friends of the family typically provide meals and gifts of food. In some circumstances, Caring Community reaches out to congregants to provide this service.

As previously noted, flowers are traditionally considered to be inappropriate at Jewish funerals and houses of mourning, although they are sometimes seen in Sephardic households. In expressing concern for the living, Jewish tradition encourages *tzedakah* צְדָקָה, a charitable contribution, in lieu of flowers. This is a way of extending the loved one's influence for good even after death. This information should be included in newspaper announcements.

**How is the end of the *shiva* שְׁבִיעָה period observed?**

On the last morning of *shiva* שְׁבִיעָה, after one hour of observance, there is an opportunity for a brief ritual symbolizing a "rising from *shiva*" – the return to society from which the mourner had withdrawn. The mourner may observe the custom of taking a short walk outside the house. In Appendix H, there are meditations and prayers appropriate for this moment.

**How do members of TBE observe *shiva* שְׁבִיעָה when the funeral is out of town?**

Frequently, members of Temple Beth Emeth must go out of town for funerals and *shiva* שְׁבִיעָה. In consultation with the clergy, family members may also choose to observe part of the *shiva* in their own communities. This gives the local community an opportunity to express its support and condolence.

## SHELOSHIM שְׁלוֹשִׁים

### What is *sheloshim* שְׁלוֹשִׁים?

The word “*sheloshim*” שְׁלוֹשִׁים means thirty, and refers to the 30-day mourning period following the burial. The period from the end of *shiva* to the end of *sheloshim* is one of transition from deep bereavement to resuming life’s normal routines. During *sheloshim*, it is customary to return to work and to resume intimate relations, but to continue to refrain from general festivities and public entertainment. Mourners refrain from attending parties and other social occasions. Attendance at religious ceremonies and associated celebrations, such as a bar or bat mitzvah, a wedding or a *brit mila*, is permitted. If the mourner chooses to attend the party after a religious life cycle event, he or she might refrain from dancing and exuberant celebration.

To honor the memory of the deceased, it is customary for the mourner to recite the Mourner’s *Kaddish* קַדִּישׁ every day during *sheloshim*, either at home or in the synagogue. Mourners attend Shabbat services during *sheloshim*, where the name of the deceased is read prior to reciting Mourner’s *Kaddish*.

## THE MOURNER'S *KADDISH* קְדִישׁ

### What are the practices surrounding the Mourner's *Kaddish* קְדִישׁ?

The Mourner's *Kaddish* קְדִישׁ (an Aramaic word meaning sanctification), while generally thought of as a prayer for the dead, does not mention death. It is essentially an affirmation of life and faith, confronting death with life and looking to the future with faith in God and hope in the presence of grief and despair. The Mourner's *Kaddish* is a link between the generations, between an individual and God and between people. If someone dies without an *avel* אָבֵל (parent, spouse, sibling, or child) to recite the Mourner's *Kaddish*, then another relative or friend may recite the prayer in his or her memory.

The mourner recites the Mourner's *Kaddish* at the burial. A person in mourning for a parent recites *Kaddish* for eleven months. A spouse, sibling, or parent traditionally recites the Mourner's *Kaddish* for only thirty days, but may choose to recite it for the full eleven months. Others may choose to say the Mourner's *Kaddish* as well, such as grandchildren for their grandparents and pupils for their teachers.

The Mourner's *Kaddish* is found in Appendix F.

## VISITING THE GRAVE

### **When is it appropriate to visit the grave?**

It is customary to visit the grave on the concluding days of *shiva* שבועה and *sheloshim* שלושים, and on *yahrzeit* יארצייט. It is also appropriate to visit at the time of the High Holy Days.

Temple Beth Emeth and Beth Israel Congregation jointly conduct a service during the High Holy Day period at Arborcrest Cemetery. This service, *kever avot* קבר אבות, is open to all to remember deceased relatives, whether or not interred at that cemetery. Jewish tradition discourages excessive grave visitation as a barrier to returning to normal routines of life and the community.

### **What are the customs of visiting the grave?**

When visiting the gravesite, psalms and memorial prayers may be read. (See Appendix I.) It is customary in some cemeteries to place stones on the gravestone or marker as a sign of visitation.

## AFTER SHELOSHIM שְׁלוֹשִׁים

**What are the traditions surrounding the placement and unveiling of the *matzevah* מַצְבָּה (grave marker)?**

The custom of erecting a monument over the grave dates back to biblical times. In Genesis 35:20, Jacob set a pillar upon Rachel's grave in order to keep his wife's memory alive and to identify her grave. It has become customary to place the monument during the period between the end of *sheloshim* שְׁלוֹשִׁים and the first *yahrzeit* יָאָרְצִיט.

The unveiling is a brief ceremony, conducted by family, friends or clergy dedicating the grave monument. It provides an opportunity for family and friends to gather in remembrance of the deceased. Frequently the tombstone is covered by a cloth, which is removed by the family during the service. Some suggested prayers for the unveiling service may be found in Appendix J.

**What should be inscribed on the marker?**

Minimally, the marker should be inscribed with the name of the deceased and the date of death in Hebrew or English.

**What is the *aveilut* אַבְלוּת (extended period of mourning for parents)?**

The mourning period for parents is 11 months from the burial. During this time, the mourner continues to recite the Mourner's *Kaddish* קַדִּישׁ and to refrain from public celebrations. Originally, the Mourner's *Kaddish* was recited for 12 months, because our sages felt that the memory of the dead remains fresh for that length of time. However, beginning with the 16<sup>th</sup> Century C.E., the practice was limited to 11 months, and subsequently was shortened by one more day to allow at least 30 days between the period of reciting the Mourner's *Kaddish* and the first *yahrzeit* יָאָרְצִיט.



**What is *yahrzeit* יָאָרְצֵיט (observance of the anniversary of a death)?**

*Yahrzeit* יָאָרְצֵיט (Yiddish for “year-time”) consecrates an annual day of remembrance of the anniversary of the death which may be observed for any relative or friend. Observers light a 24-hour candle in the home at sunset on the eve of the *yahrzeit*. There is no special prayer or benediction to be recited, but it is appropriate to meditate briefly or to recite a psalm, poem or reading which has meaning. (See Appendix K.)

Traditionally, the name of the deceased is read and the Mourner’s *Kaddish* קַדִּישׁ is recited in the synagogue on the *yahrzeit*. At Temple Beth Emeth, the name is read on the Shabbat following the *yahrzeit*.

If you notify the Temple office of the date of a death, the Temple will contact you annually to remind you of the date of the *yahrzeit* according to your choice of the Jewish or secular calendar. The reminder will indicate the dates of the Shabbat services at which the name of the deceased will be read from the *bimah*.

It is traditional to honor the memory of the deceased at the time of the *yahrzeit* through *tzedakah* צְדָקָה, a charitable contribution.

**What is *yizkor* יִזְכוֹר??**

*Yizkor* יִזְכוֹר services are traditionally held several times during the liturgical year. At TBE, *yizkor* services are held on Yom Kippur and on the seventh day of Passover. It is a time in which we, in partnership with God, remember the deceased. Participating in this service allows us to remember loved ones and the values they cherished and transmitted to us. *Yizkor* may be recited by the mourner beginning with the first holiday after the death of a loved one.

*Yizkor* may be said for anyone whom a mourner seeks to remember. Jewish tradition does permit a person with living parents to attend *yizkor* services.

As with *yahrzeit* יָאָרְצֵיט, it is customary to light a 24-hour candle on the evening preceding *yizkor*. One candle may serve to recall all loved ones.

## GLOSSARY

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*Ahlay B'shalom* אֶלַי בְּשָׁלוֹם - May he rest in peace.

*Aleha B'shalom* אֶלֶיהָ בְּשָׁלוֹם - May she rest in peace.

*Aninut* אֲנִינּוּת - Period of time between death and burial

*Aron* אָרוֹן - Coffin

*Avel* (pl. *avelim*) אָבֵל - A mourner (parent, spouse, sibling or child)

*Aveilut* אַבְלוּת - Extended eleven month mourning period for death of parent

*Chevrā Kadisha* חֶבְרָה קַדִּישָׁא - Literally "holy society," a group that takes responsibility for preparing the deceased for burial

*Eil Malei Rachamim* אֵל מְלֵא רַחֲמִים - Prayer requesting God's compassion for the deceased; recited at conclusion of funeral service, unveiling and *Yizkor*

*Hesped* הֶסְפֵּד - Eulogy

*Kaddish* (Mourner's *Kaddish*) קַדִּישׁ - Prayer extolling God

*K'riah* קְרִיעָה - Tearing of garments as sign of mourning (most often replaced by displaying a torn black ribbon)

*Kever avot* קְבֹר אַבוֹת - The service held at the cemetery during the High Holy Day period

*K'vod hamet* כְּבוֹד הַמֵּת - Literally, "respect for the dead"; the totality of Jewish mourning customs

*Levayah* לְנִיחָה - Literally "accompanying"; funeral

*Maariv* מַעְרִיב - Evening religious service

*Matzevah* מַצֵּבָה - Tombstone, memorial, grave marker

*Minyan* מִנְיָן - Quorum of ten Jews traditionally required for a service

*Nachamu* נַחֲמוּ - Translates as "bring comfort"

*Nichum Avelim* נִיחּוּם אַבְלִים - Consoling the mourners

## GLOSSARY

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*Onen* אונן - Close relative of deceased; mourner-to-be (during *aninut* אַנינוּת, period of time between death and burial)

*Seudat Havraah* סְעֻדַת הַבְּרָאָה - First meal for mourners returning from cemetery

*Sheloshim* שְׁלוֹשִׁים - The first thirty days of the mourning period

*Shiva* שִׁבְעָה - Initial seven-day mourning period

*Sh'mira* שְׁמִירָה - The act of remaining with the body

*Shomer* (pl. *Shomrim*) שׁוֹמֵר [שׁוֹמְרִים] - Individual who stays with body prior to the funeral

Sitting *Shiva* שִׁבְעָה - The act of receiving visitors during the *shiva* period

*Tachrichim* תַּכְרִיכִים - White linen garments (shroud) placed over the body

*Tahara* טְהוּרָה - Ritual washing of the body in preparation for burial

*Tehillim* תְּהִלִּים - Psalms (e.g., recited during *Shomrim* or in funeral)

*Tzedakah* צְדָקָה - Literally “righteousness”; an act of charity

*Vidui* וְדוּי - Confessional prayer recited when death is imminent by one who is critically ill

*Yahrzeit* יָאָרְצַיִט - Observance of the anniversary of a death; literally “year-time” in Yiddish

*Yizkor* יִזְכוֹר - Literally “May God remember”; prayer for the dead recited in Temple on four special occasions each year

*Zichrono/Zichrona Livracha* זִכְרוֹנוֹ [זִכְרוֹנָה] לְבִרְכָה - “May his/her memory be for a blessing.”

## APPENDIX A

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### Temple Beth Emeth Caring Community

The values and beliefs that motivate the TBE Caring Community program are:

1. Every person is created in the image of God (*b'tzelem Elohim*) and is thus sacred.
2. We are partners with God in repairing the world (*tikkun olam*).
3. We are committed to responding to those in need (the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*).
4. We are committed to the community of Israel (*k'lal Yisrael*) and the *mitzvah* of love for the Jewish people (*ahavat Yisrael*). We accept that Jews are responsible for one another.
5. As Reform Jews, we accept that Jewish tradition, evolved over centuries of Jewish experience, responds to our needs today in ways that are worthy of our thoughtful and informed consideration.
6. We are committed to making TBE a community whose life is open to all members.
7. The diversity of our personal relationships with God contributes to our strength as a community.
8. Every loving personal endeavor in aid of one in need enriches the souls of all of those involved and contributes to their healing, consolation and hope.

## APPENDIX B

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### Sample Ethical Will I

And When There Are No More Tomorrows

Jane M. Bloch of Cincinnati writes to her son Peter

*Jane Meinrath Bloch was born on February 28, 1926, and died on September 7, 1967. A native of Kansas City, Missouri, she attended Westport High School in that city and graduated from Vassar College in 1945. She moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, with her mother in the early 1940s.*

*The following excerpts are from Jane Bloch's typescript account of her experiences while living in an iron lung. She was placed on this life-support machine in 1949, when she contracted polio, and she remained on it for nearly eighteen years. In simple but poignant prose, she tells her son - and now the world - how she was able to cope with the knowledge that she would never again be able to live outside of the iron lung. In spite of this, Jane Bloch never despaired. During those eighteen years she learned to read Russian, studied Plato and constructed a philosophy of life that is both instructional and ennobling. This remarkable document, written in 1963, is the testimony of a remarkable woman.*

May 4, 1963

My dear Peter:

I have wanted to write you a special letter for a very long time.

I have wanted to tell you about all the things that have happened these past fourteen years - starting from the hot August days in 1949 when the hospital ward was filled - sometimes with death or physical destruction, or sometimes miraculously with returned health. These were the days of the polio epidemic.

I want to take you with me through those dim summer days and then through the many that followed in increasingly shining succession. . . .

We have not spoken together, you and I, much about God. Because I have felt so deeply, I have remained silent, too silent. And if you have felt, because my life has had little formal religion, that I have removed myself from deep belief, you would have been given reason to have concluded this.

## APPENDIX B

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### Sample Ethical Will I (continued)

I can only tell you that I have felt very close to God. In the very early days of my sickness, half-destroyed and understanding little, I began a prayer, and each night the same simple words returned again and again to me: "Grant me the strength, the courage, and the wisdom."

There was no ending to the prayer, just those words, and the feeling that some spirit far greater than mine would hear me and help me. And in my room over the years, this belief has grown stronger.

Although I know that there are disbelievers, I doubt that there are many men among us who in time of darkening trouble do not feel the need to turn to an unknown but omniscient presence.

And in my room, thinking and believing, I have been restored. I share with you deep feeling, and in a larger sense, like that calendar of time which I once feared, I am no longer torn when I acknowledge the force of my feelings. I have learned what I might not have learned had the hand of destiny not guided me into this very different life. Or, was it perhaps, the hand of God?

And so, Peter, dear, the chapters come to an end, but the story continues. There are just a few things left to be said.

When the time comes, as it inevitably must, that you and I will again be separated, I shall meet this with the greatest possible freedom of spirit, because I know, despite our closeness and great affection, you will be equally prepared for any separation. You are young, and independent, and strong, and you will find temporary sadness breached for you by your own freedom of spirit. You will always go ahead, even while welcoming the memories of what I hope is perhaps a uniquely experienced and enriched past.

I know now the hurdles of the years that you have passed, and so I know too the hurdles you will pass in the future, and by this knowledge I am freed.

And so, we will continue to enjoy our tomorrows, you and your father and I, each of us prepared in our own way for the future, and each of us supported by the bonds of our united pasts.

## APPENDIX B

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### Sample Ethical Will I (continued)

I have chosen to end my writing on an especially sun-warmed, summer day. The leaves are moving slowly in the beautiful tree outside my window, and the golden morning light throws shifting patterns into my silent room.

There will be many happy, sun-drenched days ahead, and I will see you tomorrow and each sun-filled tomorrow thereafter. And when there are no more tomorrows we will have shared a splendid bond. And so, as I began, with love, I end for now.

## APPENDIX B

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### Sample Ethical Will II

From: Jacob Rader Marcus  
This I Believe  
"Remembered with Laughter"

Excerpts from the Will and Testament of Sholom Aleichem,  
in a new English translation for *Keeping Posted* by Maurice Samuel

September 19, 1915. New York

. . . Wherever I should happen to die, let me not be laid to rest among the high and mighty or people of wealth, but let it be among simple Jewish workers, the true people, so that the tombstone which they will erect over my grave may adorn the simple graves about me, and the simple graves shall be an ornament for mine. . . .

. . . Let there be no high-flown inscription on the tombstone, only the name Sholom Aleichem on one side and the Jewish inscription on the other.

. . . Let there be no debates and discussions among my colleagues about perpetuating my name, and let there be no talk about putting up a monument for me in New York, and the like. I shall not be able to lie peacefully in my grave if my colleagues will behave foolishly. The best monument for me would be if my works will be read . . . .

. . . At my graveside and thereafter yearly on my *yahrzeit*, let my only surviving son and my sons-in-law, if they should so will it, say *Kaddish* after me. And, if such should not be their desire, or it would be against their religious convictions, they can fulfill their memorial obligations simply by coming together with my daughters and my grandchildren and good friends at large and reading out this testament; and they may also choose one of my little stories from among the gayest and read it out in whatever language they best understand, and let my name be remembered by them with laughter rather than not be remembered at all. . . .



## APPENDIX C

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### When Death Is Imminent: The *Viddui* וְדוּי Prayer

The following is a suggested version of the *Viddui* to use as a guide. By tradition, personal thoughts and feelings may be added.

*I acknowledge before you, Adonai, my God, and God of our ancestors, that both my cure and my death are in Your hands. May it be Your will to send me perfect healing. Yet if this is not your determination, I will accept it. In your presence I atone for all of my sins and transgressions. O God, bestow upon me the abounding happiness that is treasured for righteous people. Make known to me the path of life. In Your Presence is fullness of joy. At Your right hand is eternal bliss. Protect my family with whose soul my own is knit. Into Your hand I offer my spirit. You have redeemed me, O God of truth. Amen.*

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד

*Sh'ma Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Ehchad.*

Hear, O Israel, the Eternal One is our God, the Eternal God Alone.

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The opportunity should then be taken, if at all possible, to turn to family members and friends with words of forgiveness, understanding and reconciliation.

## APPENDIX D

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### **Psalm 23** **(Traditional)**

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;  
He leadeth me beside the still waters.  
He restoreth my soul;  
He guideth me in straight paths for His name's sake.  
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil,  
For Thou art with me.  
Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.  
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies;  
Thou hast anointed my head with oil; my cup runneth over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;  
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

### **(Modern)**

*The Lord is my shepherd;  
I lack nothing.*

*He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
He leads me to water in places of repose;  
He renews my life;  
He guides me in right paths  
as befits his name.*

*Though I walk through a valley of deepest darkness,  
I fear no harm, for you are with me;  
Your rod and Your staff - they comfort me.*

*You spread a table for me in full view of my enemies;  
You anoint my head with oil;  
my drink is abundant.*

*Only goodness and steadfast love shall pursue me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
for many long years.*

## APPENDIX E

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### אל מלא רחמים

#### *Eil Malei Rachamim*

[For a Male]

אל מלא רחמים, שוכן במרומים, המצא מנוחה נכונה תחת כנפי השכינה עם  
קדושים וטהורים כזהר הרקיע מזהירים את נשמת \_\_\_\_\_ [יָקִיר] שְׁהֶלַךְ  
לְעוֹלָמוֹ. בְּעַל הַרְחָמִים יִסְתַּיְרֵהוּ בְּסִתְּרָהּ כְּנָפָיו לְעוֹלָמִים. וְיִצְרֹר בְּצִרּוֹר הַחַיִּים  
אֶת נִשְׁמָתוֹ. יי הוא נחלתו וינוח בשלום על משכבו, ונאמר אמן.

*Eil malei rachamim sho-chein bam'romim, hamm-tzei m'nuchah n'chonah tachat  
kanfei ha-sh'chinah, im k'doshim u-t'horim k'zohar ha-rakiya maz-hirim et  
nishmat \_\_\_\_\_ ben \_\_\_\_\_ [yakir] she-halach l'olamo. Ba-al  
ha-rachamim, yassti-rei-hu b'seiter k'nafav l'olamim. V'yitzror bi-tzror  
ha-chayim et nishmato, Adonai hu nachalato, v'yanu-ach b'shalom al mishkavo  
v'nomar amen.*

God of compassion, grant perfect peace in Your sheltering Presence,  
among the holy and the pure who shine in the brightness of the  
firmament, to the soul of our dear \_\_\_\_\_ who has gone to his  
eternal rest. God of compassion, remember all his worthy deeds in the  
land of the living. May his soul be bound up in the bond of everlasting  
life. May God be his inheritance. May he rest in peace. And let us answer:  
Amen.

## APPENDIX E

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### אל מלא רחמים

#### *Eil Malei Rachamim*

[For a Female]

אל מלא רחמים, שוכן במרומים, המצא מנוחה נכונה תחת כנפי השכינה עם  
קדושים וטהורים כזהר הרקיע מזהירים את נשמת \_\_\_\_ [יקירה] שהלכה  
לעולמה. בעל הרחמים יסתיירה בסתר כנפיו לעולמים. ויצרור בצרור החיים  
את נשמתה. יי הוא נחלתה ותנוח בשלום על משכבה, ונאמר אמן.

*Eil malei rachamim sho-chein bam'romim, hamm-tzei m'nuchah n'chonah tachat  
kanfei ha-sh'chinah, im k'doshim u-t'horim k'zohar ha-rakiya maz-hirim et  
nishmat \_\_\_\_\_ bat \_\_\_\_\_ [yakirah] sheh-halchah l'olamah.  
Ba-al ha-rachamim, yassti-reha b'seiter k'nafav l'olamim. V'yitzror bi-tzror  
ha-chayim et nishmatah. Adonai hu nachalatah, v'tanu-ach b'shalom al  
mishkavah, v'nomar amen.*

God of compassion, grant perfect peace in Your sheltering Presence,  
among the holy and the pure who shine in the brightness of the  
firmament, to the soul of our dear \_\_\_\_\_ who has gone to her  
eternal rest. God of compassion, remember all her worthy deeds in the  
land of the living. May her soul be bound up in the bond of everlasting  
life. May God be her inheritance. May she rest in peace. And let us  
answer: Amen.

## APPENDIX F

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### Mourner's Kaddish קדיש

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעָלְמָה דִּי-בְרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ, וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיֵּינוּ  
וּבְיוֹמֵינוּ וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

*Yit-ga-dal ve-yit-ka-dash she-mei ra-ba be-al-ma di-ve-ra chi-ru-tei, ve-yam-lich  
mal-chu-tei be-cha-yei-chon u-ve-yo-mei-chon u-ve-cha-yei de-chol beit Yis-ra-eil,  
ba-a-ga-la u-vi-ze-man ka-riv, ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.*

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וְלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמָא.

*Ye-hei she-mei ra-ba me-va-rach le-a-lam u-l'al-mei al-ma-ya.*

יְתַבְרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמַם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא, וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל  
שְׁמֵהּ דְקַדְשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ הוּא,  
לְעָלְמָא מִן-כָּל-בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא, תִּשְׁבַּחְתָּא וְנִחַמְתָּא דְאָמְרִין בְּעָלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

*Yit-ba-rach ve-yish-ta-bach, ve-yit-pa-ar ve-yit-ro-mam ve-yit-na-sei,  
ve-yit-ha-dar ve-yit-a-leh ve-yit-ha-lal she-mei de-ku-de-sha, be-rich hu, le-ei-la  
min kol bi-re-cha-ta ve-shi-ra-ta, tush-be-cha-ta ve-ne-che-ma-ta, da-a mi-ran  
be-al-ma, ve-i-me-ru; a-mein.*

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

*Ye-hei she-la-ma ra-ba min she-me-ya ve-cha-yim a-lei-nu ve-al kol Yis-ra-eil,  
ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.*

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

*O-seh sha-lom bi-me-ro-mav, hu ya-a-seh sha-lom a-lei-nu ve-al kol Yis-ra-eil,  
vei-me-ru: a-mein.*

## APPENDIX F

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### **Mourner's Kaddish** **שְׂדֵיךְ** (continued)

Let the glory of God be extolled, let God's great name be hallowed, in the world whose creation God willed. May God's sovereignty 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 for ever and ever.

Let the name of 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 all the world, and let us say: Amen.

Adapted From Gates of Prayer  
(Central Conference of American Rabbis)

## APPENDIX G

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### Lighting a *Shiva* שְׁבִיעָה Candle Upon Returning From the Cemetery

The following selections are some suggestions which might direct your thoughts as you light the *shiva* שְׁבִיעָה candle. Feel free to adapt these texts.

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*O God, grant us strength as we mourn the loss of \_\_\_\_\_. We will always have cherished memories of him/her. Bless our family with light and peace. May his/her memory continue to serve as a blessing and an inspiration to all who knew and loved him/her.*

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#### A Prayer of Moses Psalm 90

Adonai, You have been our refuge in all generations.  
Before the mountains were born or the earth was formed  
From everlasting to everlasting You are God.  
You turn a person to dust. You say: "Return, O mortals."  
A thousand years are in Your sight  
As a passing day, an hour of night.  
You carry us away and we sleep  
We flourish in the morning like grass.  
In the morning it grows anew  
In the evening it is cut down and withers.  
We are consumed by Your anger  
We are overcome by Your wrath.  
You set out our sins before You  
Our secrets before Your presence.  
Your anger darkens our days  
Our lives expire like a sigh.  
The days of our years are three-score and ten  
Or even by reason of strength four-score years.  
Laden with trouble and travail,  
Life is quickly gone, and we fly away.

## APPENDIX G

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### Lighting a *Shiva* שְׁבִיעָה Candle Upon Returning From the Cemetery

#### Psalm 90 (continued)

Who can know the power of Your wrath?  
Who can measure the reverence due You?  
Teach us to number our days  
That we may get us a heart of wisdom.  
Relent, Adonai! How long must we suffer?  
Have compassion upon your servants.

Match days of sadness with days of joy  
Equal to the years we have suffered.  
Let your work appear to Your servants  
And Your glory upon Your children.  
May Adonai our God show us graciousness  
And may Adonai prosper the work of our hands.  
Match days of sadness with days of joy  
Equal to the years we have suffered.  
Let your work appear to Your servants  
And Your glory upon Your children.  
May Adonai our God show us graciousness  
And may Adonai prosper the work of our hands.



## APPENDIX H

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### CONCLUDING SHIVA שְׁבִיעָה

At the conclusion of shiva, one customarily takes a short walk around the block. These meditations may help shape your thoughts before taking your walk.

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*O God, Healer of shattered hearts, let neither death nor sorrow have dominion over us. May we always remember and cherish all of those good and kind deeds in the life of \_\_\_\_\_. May his/her memory inspire us to deeds of loving-kindness.*

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*O God who heals the broken-hearted, we thank You for Your gift of comfort that You have brought us during these past days of sorrow. We are also thankful for family and friends who have shared our grief and brought us comfort.*

*As we again go forward to resume our life's tasks, we pray that You will help us face our grief without bitterness. Teach us to honor our dear \_\_\_\_\_ by continuing to serve our people through deeds of charity and loving-kindness. And may You, O God, always be our support when our strength fails us.*

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*We rise up now to face life's tasks once more. There will always be moments of loneliness, for a loved one has passed from our midst. Teach us always to be thankful for the life of our dear companion and for the opportunity of sharing so many joyous moments with him/her. May we always honor \_\_\_\_\_ by rising above despair and finding consolation in serving our people. Amen.*

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*God of spirit and flesh, we have turned to You for comfort in these days of grief. When the cup of sorrow passed into our hands, Your presence consoled us. Now we rise up to face the tasks of life once more. There will be moments of woe and hours of loneliness, for a loved one has passed from our sight. In our times of weakness may her (his) memory strengthen our spirit. Teach us to give thanks for*

## APPENDIX H

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### CONCLUDING SHIVA שְׁבִיעָה (continued)

*all that was deathless in the life of our dear companion and friend, and which now is revealed to us in all its beauty. Be our support when our own strength fails us.*

*For the love that death cannot sever; for the friendship we shared along life's path; for those gifts of heart and mind which have now become a precious heritage; for all these and more, we are grateful. Now help us, God, not to dwell on sorrow and pain, but to honor our beloved by the quality of our lives. Amen.*

Adapted from Gates of the House  
(Central Conference of American Rabbis)

## APPENDIX I

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### Visiting the Cemetery

The following may be recited when you visit the cemetery, or refer to Appendix D for Psalm 23. You are not required to recite anything. Feel free to speak from your heart or meditate in silence. The *Eil Malei Rachamim* אֵל מְלֵא רַחֲמִים Memorial Prayer (Appendix E) is customarily recited before leaving the gravesite.

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#### In Memory of a Loved One

*I lovingly recall \_\_\_\_\_; may he/she rest in peace. I thank God for the gift of his/her life, for the pleasant memories which are left behind. May the goodness and love with which he/she touched my life continue to influence my life as I share these qualities of kindness with others. May his/her soul be bound up in the bond of life and endure as a source of blessing to all who knew and loved him/her. Amen.*

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*To this sacred place I come, drawn by the eternal ties that bind my soul to the soul of my beloved. Death has separated us. You are no longer at my side to share the beauty of the passing moment. I cannot look to you to lighten my burdens, to lend me your strength, your wisdom, your faith. And yet what you mean to me does not wither or fade. For a time we touched hands and hearts; still your voice abides with me, still your tender glance remains a joy to me. For you are part of me for ever; something of you has become a deathless song upon my lips. And so beyond the ache that tells how much I miss you, a deeper thought compels: we were together. I hold you still in mind, and give thanks for life and love. The happiness that was, the memories that do not fade, are a gift that cannot be lost. You continue to bless my days and years. I will always give thanks for you.*

Gates of Prayer  
(Central Conference of American Rabbis)

## APPENDIX J

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### Readings for Consecrating (Unveiling) a Monument

*On behalf of the family of \_\_\_\_\_ and in the presence of his (her) relatives and friends, we consecrate this memorial as a sign of love undying.*

*May his (her) soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life.*

Rabbi's Manual  
(Central Conference of American Rabbis)

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#### For an Adult

*God of infinite love, in whose hands are the souls of all the living and the spirits of all flesh, standing at the grave of \_\_\_\_\_ we gratefully recall the goodness in her (him) and we give thanks for the consolation of memory.*

*Strengthen us who mourn, that, walking through the valley of the shadow of death, we may be guided by Your light. May our actions and aspiration honor our loved one as surely as does this monument, which will stand as a symbol of our abiding devotion. So will she (he) live on for blessing among us.*

Gates of Prayer  
(Central Conference of American Rabbis)

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## APPENDIX J

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### Readings for Consecrating (Unveiling) a Monument (continued)

#### For a Child

*To You, O Source of peace, we turn in our time of need. Give us strength and patience to bear our burden of sorrow. And help us to overcome our grief, that we may return to life and its tasks. Deepen our love for one another; teach us to open our hearts to all who need us; move us to reach out to them with our hands; and guide us on our path, until we find the abiding love that survives all loss and sustains us through every trial.*

*Grant consolation, Adonai, to sorrowing parents and to all who mourn. Heal our hurt, renew our hope and our faith. May the memory of this beloved child make all children more precious to us, and inspire us to labor for a world in which every life shall find its fulfillment.*

*As we dedicate this memorial to \_\_\_\_\_ we hallow and bless Your name.*

Adapted from Rabbi's Manual  
(Central Conference of American Rabbis)

## APPENDIX K

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### Lighting the *Yahrzeit* יארצייט Candle

The *yahrzeit* candle is traditionally burned from sunset to sunset on the anniversary of the day of death, according to the Hebrew or English calendar, starting on the evening preceding the day. There is no special prayer to be recited. Choose a quotation, a psalm, or a poem, one of the selections below or any other passage which you are moved to read.

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*I now remember my dear \_\_\_\_\_, who has gone to his/her eternal resting place. May his/her soul be given life everlasting, and may his/her memory be a source of blessing to those who knew and loved him/her. Amen.*

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*I light this *yahrzeit* candle in loving memory of \_\_\_\_\_, recalling the words from the Book of Proverbs: "The soul of a person is the light of Adonai."*

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*O God, I remember tonight the life of my dear \_\_\_\_\_. As I light this candle to his/her memory, I put my trust in You and pray that his/her memory will serve as a blessing and source of inspiration to all people who knew and loved him/her.*

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*May God remember the soul of my dear \_\_\_\_\_, who has passed to eternal rest. I pledge: charity and deeds of loving-kindness in his/her behalf and pray that his/her soul will be kept among the immortal souls of our righteous ancestors.*

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*O God, I pray that you will keep the soul of my dear \_\_\_\_\_, united with us in the bond of life. In his/her memory, guide me so that I will live righteously, fulfilling Your will and serving our people. May his/her soul rest in peace and be remembered as a blessing.*

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## APPENDIX K

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### Lighting the Yahrzeit יארצייט Candle (continued)

O God, as I observe \_\_\_\_\_'s yahrzeit, I pray that I may emulate all that was good and righteous in his/her life. May his/her soul be given eternal life and his /her memories always remain a comfort and source of inspiration.

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At this moment, which bears the memory of our beloved \_\_\_\_\_, let us join hands in love and remembrance. A link has been broken in the chain which has bound us together, yet strong bonds of home and love hold us each to the other.

We give thanks for the blessing of life, of companionship and of memory. We are grateful for the strength and faith that sustained us in the hour of our bereavement. Though sorrow lingers, we have learned that love is stronger than death. Though our loved one is beyond our sight, we do not despair, for we sense our beloved in our hearts as a living presence. Sustained by words of faith, comforted by precious memories, we kindle the yahrzeit light in remembrance.

"The human spirit is the light of Adonai" (Proverbs 20:27). As this light is pure and clear, so may the blessed memory of the goodness and nobility of character of our dear \_\_\_\_\_ illumine our souls.

The light is kindled.

**זָכוֹנוֹ [זְכוֹנוֹהָ] לְבִרְכָה**

*Zichrono/Zichrona Livracha*

May his/her memory be for blessing.

Adapted from Gates of the House  
(Central Conference of American Rabbis)

## APPENDIX L

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### Readings and Reflections

A person had three friends. One friend was loved most dearly. The second was also loved. But the third was regarded with the least affection. One day the elders commanded this person to appear before them immediately. The person was greatly alarmed. Had someone falsely accused him? In fear and trembling, the person called upon each of the friends.

First, the person turned to the dearest of friends, and was greatly disappointed when this friend found it impossible to go to the elders of the community.

Next, the person turned to his second friend: "Will you go with me?"

But the latter answered: "I will go with you only as far as the city gates, but I cannot enter with you into the city."

In desperation, the person finally appealed to the third friend, the one to whom there was the least amount of devotion. Without hesitation, this neglected friend said: "Certainly I will accompany you, but first I'll go immediately to the city and plead for you with the elders."

The first friend is one's wealth which one must leave behind when departing from this world, as it is written: "Riches profit not in the day of reckoning."

The second friend is one's relatives, who can only follow a person to the graveside, as it is written: "No person can by any means redeem his fellow person from death."

The third, least-considered friend, is the good deeds of a person's life. These can never go away and can even precede you to plead your cause before God, as it is written: "And your righteousness shall go before you."

Adapted from Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer

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## APPENDIX L

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### Readings and Reflections

Our exit from the world, as compared to and contrasted with one's entry into it, is portrayed by Rabbi Levi thus: Of two vessels sailing on the high seas, the ship which has come into port is in the eyes of the wise much more an object of joy than the ship about to leave the harbor. Even thus should we contemplate our departure from this world without sorrow or fear, seeing that at death we have already entered the harbor - the haven or rest in the World-to-Come.

Shemot Rabbah, 48:1

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In recording King David's death, the Bible states, "And David slept with his father." (I King 2:10) Why does it not state, "And David died"? The Sages answered their own question: "David was survived by a son who followed the good ways of his father's life, continuing his father's noble deeds. Therefore, it could not be said that David was really dead, for David lived on through the good deeds of his son."

Talmud, Baba Batra 116a

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These are the things the fruits of which the individual enjoys in this world, while the stock remains for the World-to-Come: honoring father and mother, the practice of deeds of kindness, timely attendance at the house of study morning and evening, hospitality to travelers, visiting the sick, rejoicing with the bride and groom, attending the dead to the grave, devotion in prayer, and making peace between neighbors; but the study of Torah is equal to all of them.

Mishnah, Peah 1:1

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The future is not like this world. In the future world there is no eating or drinking, no propagation or business or jealousy or hatred or competition, but the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads feasting on the brightness of the divine presence.

Talmud, Berachot 17a

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## APPENDIX L

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### Readings and Reflections

There is a time for everything,  
A time for all things under the sun.  
A time to be born and a time to die,  
A time to plant and a time to uproot,  
A time to kill and a time to heal,  
A time to break down and a time to build up,  
A time to cry and a time to laugh,  
A time to mourn and a time to dance,  
A time to scatter and a time to gather,  
A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embraces,  
A time to seek and a time to lose,  
A time to keep and a time to cast away,  
A time to rend and a time to sew,  
A time to keep silent and a time to speak,  
A time to love and a time to hate,  
A time for war and a time for peace.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

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It is hard to sing of oneness when our world is not complete, when those who once brought wholeness to our life have gone, and naught but memory can fill the emptiness their passing leaves behind.

But memory can tell us only what we were, in company with those we loved; it cannot help us find what each of us, alone, must now become. Yet no one is really alone; those who live no more, echo still within our thoughts and words, and what they did is part of what we have become.

We do best homage to our dead when we live our lives most fully, even in the shadow of our loss. For each of our lives is worth the life of the whole world; in each one is the breath of the Ultimate One. In affirming the One, we affirm the worth of each one whose life, now ended, brought us closer to the Source of life, in whose unity no one is alone and every life finds purpose.

Gates of Prayer  
(Central Conference of American Rabbis)

## APPENDIX L

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### Readings and Reflections

Our Rabbis taught: Formerly they were wont to convey (victuals) to the house of mourning, the rich in silver and gold baskets and the poor in osier baskets of peeled willow twigs, and the poor felt shamed; they therefore instituted that all should convey(victuals) in osier baskets of peeled willow twigs out of deference to the poor.

Our Rabbis taught: Formerly they were wont to serve drinks in a house of mourning, the rich in white glass vessels and the poor in colored glass, and the poor felt shamed; they instituted therefore that all should serve drinks in colored glass, out of deference to the poor.

Formerly they were wont to uncover the face of the rich and cover the face of the poor, because their faces turned livid in years of drought, and the poor felt shamed; they therefore instituted that everybody's face should be covered out of deference to the poor.

Formerly they were wont to bring out the rich (for burial) on an ornamented bed, and the poor on a plain bier, and the poor felt shamed; they instituted therefore that all should be brought out on a plain bier out of deference to the poor. . .

Formerly the expense of taking the dead out to one's burial fell harder on one's near of kin than one's death so that the dead person's near-of-kin abandoned and fled, until at last Rabban Gamliel came forward and, disregarding his own dignity, came out to his burial in flaxen vestments. Said Rav Papa, And nowadays all the world follow the practice of coming out even in a paltry shroud that costs but a zuz.

Talmud, Moed Katan 27a-b

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I will lift up my eyes to the mountains. What is the source of my help? The source of my help is Adonai, Creator of Heaven and Earth. Adonai will not let you falter; your Guardian will not slumber. Surely the Guardian of Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. Adonai is your protector, Adonai is your shelter at your right hand. The sun will not smite you by day, nor the moon by night. Adonai will guard you from all harm; God will preserve your soul. Adonai will guard your going and your coming, now and forevermore.

Psalm 121

## APPENDIX L

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### Readings and Reflections

For the love that death cannot sever; for the friendship we shared along life's path; for those gifts of heart and mind which have now become a precious heritage; for all these and more, we are grateful. Now help us, God, not to dwell on sorrow and pain, but to honor our beloved by the quality of our lives. Amen.

Adapted from Gates of the House  
(Central Conference of American Rabbis)

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*Eshet Chayil - A Woman of Valor*

Proverbs 31

A New Version by Susan Grossman

A good wife, who can find her? She is worth far more than rubies. She brings good and not harm all the days of her life. She girds herself with strength and finds her trades profitable. Wise counsel is on her tongue and her home never suffers for warmth. She stretches her hands to the poor, reaches her arms to the needy. All her friends praise her. Her family blesses her. She is known at the gates as she sits with the elders. Dignity, honor are her garb. He smiles at the future.

A good man, who can find him? He is worth far more than rubies. All who trust in him never lack for gain. He shares the household duties and sets a goodly example. He seeks a satisfying job and braces his arms for work. He opens his mouth with wisdom. He speaks with love and kindness. His justice brings him praises. He raises the poor, lowers the haughty. These two indeed do worthily. True leaders in Zion give them their due credit. Let their works praise them at the gates.

## APPENDIX L

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### Readings and Reflections

1. Hallelujah. Happy are the people that fear Adonai  
That delight greatly in God's commandments.
2. Their seed shall be mighty upon earth;  
The generation of the upright shall be blessed.
3. Wealth and riches are in their house;  
And their merit endures forever.
4. They shine as a light in the darkness for the upright,  
Gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.
5. Well is it with the people that deal graciously and lend,  
That order their affairs rightfully,
6. For they shall never be moved;  
The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.
7. They shall not be afraid of evil tidings;  
Their heart is steadfast, trusting in God.
8. Their hearts are established, they shall not be afraid,  
Until they gaze upon their adversaries.
9. They have scattered abroad, given to the needy;  
Their righteousness endures forever.  
Their horn shall be exalted in honor.
10. The wicked shall see, and be vexed;  
They shall gnash with their teeth, and melt away;  
The desire of the wicked shall perish.

Psalm 112

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## APPENDIX L

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### Readings and Reflections

Blessed is the one who was reared in Torah and who labored in Torah, who pleased one's Creator, who lived with a good name and who departed this world with a good name. Of such a person, Solomon said: "A good name is better than precious oil, and the day of death is better than the day of birth." (Ecclesiastes 8:1)

Talmud, Berachot 17a

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There are stars whose light reaches the earth only after they themselves have disintegrated and are no more. And there are people whose scintillating memory lights the world after they have passed from it. These lights which shine in the darkest night are those which illumine for us the path. . . .

Hannah Senesh

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A rabbi was passing through a field when he noticed an old man who was planting an acorn.

"Why are you planting that acorn?" he asked. "You surely do not expect to live long enough to see it grown into an oak tree."

The man replied, "My grandparents planted seeds so that I might enjoy the shade and the fruit trees. Now I do likewise for my grandchildren and all those who come after me."

Talmud, Taanit 23a

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