

Shiva – Comforting the Mourner

After the death of a spouse, parent, child or sibling – it is traditional for mourners to “sit *shiva*.” This idiomatic term is packed with meaning. In a traditional *shiva*, the mourners sit on low chairs; that’s what Job did when his friends came to comfort him (Job 2:13). The word “*shiva*” – its literal meaning is simply the number seven — signifies the seven days of intense mourning. We mourn for seven days just as the Biblical Joseph did when his father Jacob passed away (Genesis 50:10).

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HFBA’S GUIDE TO SHIVA ETIQUETTE: USEFUL TIPS WHEN PAYING YOUR RESPECTS

Let yourself in. Traditionally, a *shiva* home will leave the door unlocked or open, welcoming all to comfort the mourners. Walk in and take a seat near a mourner; no greeting is offered.

Let the mourner lead the conversation. Conversation should focus on the deceased. Sharing a memory or a story can be particularly comforting, especially if it is a personal story that the family does not already know. Alternately, you can ask the mourners to tell you about their loved one’s life or to share a favorite memory.

Do not discourage the mourners if they cry. Crying is a normal part of the grieving process.

Sometimes saying nothing expresses everything. The simple words, “I’m so sorry for your loss” can fill an awkward silence. However, silence is normal at a *shiva* house. If you do not know what to say, it is best to say nothing.

The purpose of a *shiva* call is simply to comfort the mourner; this can be done even in silence. Just by being there, you are saying: “I am here for you. You are not alone.”

A *shiva* call does not need to be longer than 15 minutes. The process of *shiva* can be exhausting for

the mourner, so visitors should not overstay. Short visits are just as meaningful.

Before leaving, recite the traditional phrase to the mourner in Hebrew or English. Ashkenazi visitors say “*HaMakom yenacheim etchem betoch sha’ar aveiliei Tzion v’Yerushalayim*” – May the Almighty comfort you among those who mourn for Zion and Jerusalem.

Sephardic visitors say, “*Min haShamayim tenuchamu*,” – May Heaven comfort you. This is another reminder to the mourners that they are not alone.

It is customary to give charity in memory of the one who passed away. This is believed to elevate the soul of the deceased. Charity boxes may be placed by the door.

Following the *shiva* period, it can be particularly difficult for the mourner to resume everyday life. Tell the mourner that you are thinking of her, and let her know that after *shiva*, the support from the community will remain.

The tradition of *shiva* brings family and friends together to support those in mourning. Maimonides says that the practice of *nichum aveilim*, comforting the mourners, is a *chesed* towards both the living and the dead.

When there are no family or friends, HFBA steps in to ensure that every Jew, regardless of financial means or religious affiliation, receives a traditional, dignified funeral and burial. HFBA performs this chesed daily on behalf of the Jewish community, for all those who have no one else.

What is yizkor?



Yizkor is the Ashkenazi mourning prayer recited on Yom Kippur, Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot by those who have lost family members. It is based on the Jewish belief that the deceased can accumulate merit through the good deeds and prayers of surviving family members.

The central part of the prayer is composed of individualized paragraphs to be recited for deceased parents, grandparents, siblings, other relatives and Jewish martyrs. A pledge for charity accompanies a prayer that the deceased be rewarded for the charitable donation with a place among the righteous souls in the celestial Garden of Eden.

The custom of saying *yizkor* on Yom Kippur resonates with Jews across the denominational spectrum and has a special place in the hearts of all Jews regardless of their level of observance.

HFBA and the Opioid Epidemic

The drug epidemic in the United States has claimed more victims from overdose than the number of accidental victims of traffic and shooting accidents combined. The primary culprit is the legal and illegal use of opioids. Tragically, the American Jewish community has not been immune to the scourge.

Only recently has the community confronted the denial surrounding this issue and rejected the myth that Jews do not become alcoholics and drug addicts. Organizations are taking a more active approach to the problem and promoting a more clear-eyed, realistic perspective that Jews, like members of all groups, can, and do become addicted. They are trying to remove the stigma and shame of asking for help and are reaching into the community to train lay leaders and



rabbis to recognize the signs of addiction and learn how to help the addict and their family.

HFBA has stepped in when help has failed or come too late. Sadly, we have recently buried several victims of drug overdose including Beth, a 26-year-old woman who is survived by her grief-stricken mother and sister. The funeral was one of the largest funerals in HFBA history where fully one third of the burials have no family members or friends in attendance.

As the crowd dispersed, a middle-aged man was observed shaking a young man by his shoulders. His words were overheard by others: "If you don't stop, you'll be next!"

Mourner *continued from page 1*

The purpose of a *shiva* visit (known as a *shiva* call) is to comfort the mourners during their immense grief and intense loneliness. We let them know that they are not alone, but part of a larger, supportive community.

In lieu of flowers, community members may prepare all meals for the mourners. This is both a practical help and a spiritual comfort that helps to fill an emotional void.

Visiting customs may differ between Ashkenazim and Sephardim, but these guidelines can help make a *shiva* call more meaningful.

The *Midrash (Kohelet Rabbah on 3:5)* tells us what happened when Rabbi Mana's wife died. His colleague, Rabbi Abin, came to pay a *shiva* call.

Rabbi Mana asked,
"Are there any words of Torah you would like to offer us in our time of grief?"

Rabbi Abin replied,
"At times like this the Torah takes refuge in silence!"

HFBA MISSION STATEMENT

THE HEBREW FREE BURIAL ASSOCIATION devotes its resources to performing *chesed shel emet* (the ultimate act of loving kindness). It is the only agency in the New York metropolitan area dedicated to assuring that every Jew, regardless of financial means or religious affiliation, receives a dignified, traditional Jewish funeral and burial.

Leave Your Mark

We thank the following for donating four gravestones to mark unmarked graves. Their names will appear on a plaque in Mount Richmond Cemetery. You, too, can "leave your mark" by donating \$150 per stone. For a donation of \$600 you will receive a plaque and have your name included on the roster in the cemetery.

Dr. & Mrs. Brian Anziska	Mr. & Mrs. Milton Honig	Dr. Boris & Rabbi Halina Rubinstein
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JEWISH HOLIDAY SCHEDULE: FALL 2017

*Following the custom of visiting the graves of loved ones during the High Holy Day season, visiting hours at **Mount Richmond Cemetery** are listed below. Please note that the cemetery closes at 1:00 PM every Friday all year.*

ROSH HASHANA	OPEN/CLOSE
Wednesday, September 20	9 AM-1 PM
Thursday, September 21	CLOSED
Friday, September 22	CLOSED
EREV YOM KIPPUR	
Friday, September 29	9 AM-1 PM
SUKKOT	
Wednesday, October 4	9 AM-1 PM
Thursday, October 5	CLOSED
Friday, October 6	CLOSED
SHMINI ATZERET and SIMCHAT TORAH	
Wednesday, October 11	9 AM-1 PM
Thursday, October 12	CLOSED
Friday, October 13	CLOSED

YIZKOR is recited on Yom Kippur, September 30 and Shmini Atzeret, October 13.

Silver Lake Cemetery will be open: 9AM-3:45 PM
Sunday, September 17 and 24

*Для соблюдения обычая посещать могилы близких во время праздников, ниже приведены **часы работы кладбища Маунт Ричмонд в еврейские праздники осенью 2017 года**: Пожалуйста помните, что по пятницам кладбище закрывается в час дня в течение всего года.*

Расписание в осенние праздники

РОШ ХАШАНА:

Среда	20 сентября	9:00-13:00
Четверг	21 сентября	ЗАКРЫТО
Пятница	22 сентября	ЗАКРЫТО

ВЕЧЕР ПЕРЕД ЙОМ КИПУР:

Пятница	29 сентября	9:00-13:00 ровно
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СУККОТ:

Среда	4 октября	9:00-13:00
Четверг	5 октября	ЗАКРЫТО
Пятница	6 октября	ЗАКРЫТО

ШМИНИ АЦЕРЕТ и СИМХАТ ТОРА:

Среда	11 октября	9:00-13:00
Четверг	12 октября	ЗАКРЫТО
Пятница	13 октября	ЗАКРЫТО

Поминальную молитву Изкор будут читать на Йом Кипур 30-го сентября и в праздник Шмини Ацерет 13-го октября.

Кладбище Сильвер Лейк будет открыто в воскресенье 17-го и 24-го сентября, с 9:00 до 15:45.

РУССКИЙ ДАЙДЖЕСТ

BELOW ARE TRANSLATED SUMMARIES OF THE ARTICLES APPEARING IN THIS ISSUE OF *CHESED*.

Шива – утешение скорбящих

После кончины кого-то из близких – родителей, детей, супруга или супруги, брата или сестры, – еврейская традиция предписывает скорбящим сидеть шиву. Буквально это слово означает семь, указывая на семь дней скорби после смерти и похорон. Цель посещений во время *шивы* (ещё их называют приходом на *шиву*) – утешение скорбящих в первый период после утраты.

Полезные советы для посещений во время шивы:

- Посетители заходят не стучась, так как по традиции двери дома, где сидят шиву, не запирают. Следует зайти и просто сесть рядом со скорбящим.
- Пусть скорбящий или скорбящая сами начнут беседу.
- Не следует уговаривать скорбящих не плакать. Плач – это нормальная часть скорби.
- Простые слова «я так сожалею о вашей потере» помогут заполнить неловкую паузу. Если неясно, что сказать, то лучше помолчать.
- Пятнадцатиминутного визита на шиву достаточно, это обычно короткие посещения.
- Перед уходом, если Вы чувствуете себя в силах, произнесите традиционную фразу утешения. Обычно ее можно найти на карточке, которую помещают на виду, рядом со скорбящим.
- По традиции, во время визитов дают на благотворительность в память об усопшем. Коробки для благотворительности помещают либо в комнате, где сидят шиву, либо у входной двери.

HFBA помогает

• Джордж, скончавшийся в возрасте 75-и лет, жил в одной квартире со своей душевнобольной сестрой Лилиан. Как-то весной владелец дома зашёл в квартиру оценить потребности в ремонте и обнаружил Джорджа мёртвым на полу. Лилиан утверждала, что брат скончался несколько минут назад, но медицинский эксперт установил, что Джордж умер за неделю до того, как его обнаружили. Лилиан была не способна хотя бы частично оплатить похороны брата и не могла предоставить требуемые документы для городского управления вэлфера. В конце концов HFBA взяло на себя похороны Джорджа на кладбище Маунт Ричмонд и зарезервировало место рядом с его могилой для Лилиан.

• Лестер скончался в 97 лет. Он не был женат, и в его жизни были эпизоды психического расстройства и бездомности. Хотя Лестер был из большой семьи, он не общался ни с кем из близких. Его «семьёй» стали пациенты и сотрудники дома для престарелых, где он жил в последние годы. Несмотря на проблемы с памятью, Лестер помнил имена всех своих родных и кто куда переехал. Но никто из ше-

сти братьев и сестёр Лестера не приехал на его похороны, организованные HFBA. Присутствовал наш *миньян* добровольцев, включавший несколько подростков из местной йешивы, который и прочитал подходящие молитвы на похоронах Лестера.

Что такое Изкор?

Изкор – это погребальная молитва, которую ашкеназские евреи, потерявшие кого-то из близких, произносят на Йом Киппур, Пэсах, Шавуот и Суккот. Молитва отражает еврейскую веру в то, что усопший может «накопить» заслуги для мира грядущего благодаря молитвам и добрым делам оставшихся членов семьи. Центральная часть молитвы состоит из особых параграфов, посвящённых родителям, бабушкам и дедушкам, братьям и сёстрам, другим родственникам, или еврейским мученикам. Молитва сопровождается обещанием пожертвовать на благотворительность, с тем чтобы усопший удостоился в райских куцах особого места среди еврейских праведников. Обычай читать молитву Изкор на праздник Йом Кипур присущ всем направлениям иудаизма. Этот обычай занимает особое место в сердце каждого еврея, вне зависимости от уровня соблюдения религиозных предписаний.

HFBA и эпидемия опиоидов

Волна передозировки наркотиками, захлестнувшая в последнее время США, унесла уже больше жизней, чем общее число жертв дорожных аварий и несчастных случаев с огнестрельным оружием. Главный виновник – это употребление как легально выписанных, так и нелегальных опиоидов (обезболивающих препаратов). Только недавно еврейская община начала бороться с отрицанием самого существования проблемы, отвергая миф о том, что религиозные евреи не подвержены наркомании или алкоголизму. Еврейские организации начали искать более активные подходы к проблеме опиоидов, начав с честного принятия того факта, что евреи, так же как члены других групп, могут стать и становятся наркозависимыми.

Еврейское Благотворительное Похоронное Бюро (HFBA) оказывается вовлечённым в эти процессы тогда, когда обычная помощь не подействовала или запоздала. Увы, в последнее время мы организовали похороны нескольких жертв передозировки наркотиков, включая 26-летнюю Бет, которую оплакивали её убитые горем мать и сестра. Когда группа скорбящих уже расходилась, некий мужчина средних лет был замечен, когда он потряс юношу рядом с ним за плечи и произнёс: «Если не прекратишь, то будешь следующим!»



George, 75 years old at the time of his death, shared an apartment with Lilian, his mentally ill sister. One spring day, the landlord visited the home to assess needed repairs and found George, dead, on the floor. Lilian claimed that George had died only minutes before but the medical examiner estimated that George had been dead for a week when he was found. Lilian was unable to assist financially with George's burial and would provide no documents to the city's welfare assistance program. Ultimately HFBA buried George at Mount Richmond Cemetery and reserved a grave for Lilian at his side.

Lester was 97 years old at the time of his death. He had never married and had a history of mental illness and homelessness. While he had come from a large family, he was in touch with none of his siblings and his "family" had become the staff and residents of the nursing home in which he was living. Even with dementia, Lester could name all of his siblings and where they had moved, yet none of his six brothers and sisters attended his burial

by HFBA. The HFBA volunteer *minyan*, including teenage boys from the local *yeshiva*, did attend, ensuring that the mourner's prayers could be said as Lester was laid to rest.

Hannah suffered from extreme obesity and died suddenly in her bathtub at the young age of 58 years. Her younger brother had already died and she was survived by her mother and a sister who listened by phone to the funeral proceedings as they took place at Mount Richmond Cemetery.

The chaplain at Coney Island Hospital called HFBA when a deceased patient's body went unclaimed for over a week. Shelly, a woman in her 80's, had died of cardiac arrest and none of her recorded personal contacts could be reached. Her death was reported to the Public Administrator who sent an investigator to her unkempt apartment looking for a will, any information about a grave or contact information for surviving relatives. None could be found. However, through persistence and luck, HFBA was able to connect with Shelly's former home health aide, Sarah, who confirmed that Shelly was not in touch with any of her family members. Sarah was the only person who came to Shelly's funeral, in addition to our volunteer *minyan*.

Names and details have been changed to protect confidentiality.

Save the Dates!

**Sunday, November 12, 2017
10am-12pm**

**Community Chesed Day at
Silver Lake Cemetery**

926 Victory Boulevard, Staten Island, NY

Join us to clear and clear debris from our historic cemetery! For information call the HFBA office 212-239-1662.



December 10, 2017

Staten Island Community Breakfast

**Young Israel of Staten Island,
835 Forest Hill Road, Staten Island, NY**

Guest speaker: Rabbi J.J. Schachter

To receive more details and an invitation to attend, please call us at 212-239-1662.



Shana Tova!

In an ever more uncertain world, we stand before G-d to pray for forgiveness for humanity's sins and ask for good health, good fortune and peace. We wish our HFBA supporters a very Happy New Year!



Chesed Shel Emet – How You Can Help

REMEMBER to include HFBA in your will with a bequest.

ESTABLISH an HFBA Forever Gift Annuity or Charitable Trust Plan. In addition to the guaranteed income and tax benefits, these plans ensure that HFBA's promise of a Jewish burial to future generations of indigent Jews will be fulfilled.

CELEBRATE a *simcha* or commemorate a loss with HFBA cards. Cards cost \$18 and can include a personalized message.

CONTRIBUTE to HFBA to ensure an annual *yahrzeit* reminder for your lost loved ones.

INSTITUTE a perpetual *yahrzeit* *kaddish* for your loved one for a donation of \$180.

ARRANGE for *kaddish* to be said for the eleven month mourning period following a death of a relative or friend for a donation of \$360.

DONATE unused graves. If the graves are not part of a burial society or family plot and are located in New York or New Jersey, please consider donating them to HFBA and receiving a tax deduction for your gift.

SPONSOR perpetual grave care for an indigent's grave for \$600.

ENROLL a Bar/Bat Mitzvah in our "Mitzvah Circle" by suggesting a gift to HFBA to your guests. The generous child who shares his/her *simcha* in this way receives a framed certificate.

VOLUNTEER with your friends, classmates, fellow group members, or family at Silver Lake Cemetery Chesed Days.

GET INVOLVED as a professional with HFBA by donating your expertise and skills in an area that can help us.

DONATE your property, used vehicle or boat and receive a generous tax donation.



PLEASE HELP OUT TODAY BY SENDING A DONATION IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE.

THE HEBREW FREE BURIAL ASSOCIATION was formed in 1888 on Manhattan's Lower East Side by a group of philanthropic and community-minded Jews who were committed to burying their indigent dead according to Jewish tradition, rather than having them buried in a mass grave in City Cemetery. Since its inception HFBA has interred over 65,000 Jews in its two cemeteries. HFBA is also committed to retrieving the identities of those interred and is attempting to provide a gravestone for each unmarked grave.



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