

The guiding principle for the components of Jewish funerals is Kavod Hamet (honor for the deceased).

Death, and its accompanying sense of loss, grief, and anguish, pose an intense challenge to the spiritual and psychological state of mind of the bereaved.

Our practices are grounded in the unshakable belief in the sanctity of human life, the dignity of the person, and supporting the emotional and spiritual needs of the mourners.

Traditionally, we believe that humankind is created in the image of God and we are, therefore, mandated to have respect for the deceased and also the body of the deceased. This is called kavod hamet and is the guiding principle for Jewish burial and mourning customs.

Since these customs vary widely within the Jewish community, this short guide is designed to provide general information. Its purpose is to assist in maintaining the customs and traditions of the Jewish people, to help mourners provide a funeral for their loved ones with the greatest respect and dignity and to help the mourners onto the road to healing.

Member Organizations

Chabad Jewish Center of Santa Fe

230 West Manhattan Avenue, Santa Fe, NM, 87501
505-983-2000 | www.chabadsantafe.com

Congregation Beit Tikva

2230 Old Pecos Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87505
505-820-2991 | www.beittikva.info

HaMakom

P.O. Box 6777, Santa Fe, NM 87502
Meets at Congregation Beit Tikva (address above)
505-992-1905 | www.hamakomtheplace.org

Kol BeRamah

1409 Luisa Street, Santa Fe, NM 87505
505-216-6136 | www.kbr.com

Los Alamos Jewish Center

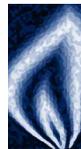
2400 Canyon Road, Los Alamos, NM 87544
505-662-2140 | www.lajc.org

Temple Beth Shalom

205 East Barcelona Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505
505-982-1376 | www.sftbs.org

*Death is not the end, but a point
in life that goes beyond our reach.
The greatest respect we can pay the
deceased is to live up to the high ideals
of Judaism and to perpetuate their
memory by filling the void created by
their passing, by finding new avenues
to express our love and concern for
those who need us.*

*May the memory of our loved ones be
for an eternal blessing.*



Chevrah Kadisha
of Northern New Mexico

E-mail: cknnm.info@gmail.com | HOTLINE – 505-395-6627

Chevrah Kadisha of Northern New Mexico
c/o Jewish Community Council of Northern New Mexico

The Jewish Community Council of Northern New Mexico is a
beneficiary agency of The Jewish Federation of New Mexico



A Guide to Jewish Burial and Mourning Practices

*“The lamp of the Eternal One is
the human soul”*

~ Proverbs 20:27



Chevrah Kadisha of Northern New Mexico
www.jccnm.org

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Funeral Arrangements

Obtaining a Burial Plot

The only Jewish cemetery in the Santa Fe area is Santa Fe Memorial Gardens. Chevrah Kadisha of Northern New Mexico (CKNNM) personnel can assist in obtaining a plot at Santa Fe Memorial Gardens (please see our website at www.jccnm.org). A Jewish burial can also be performed at other cemeteries in the area. Consult your rabbi to make the arrangements.

Timing of the Funeral Service

It is most appropriate to bury the deceased without undue delay, taking legal and logistical considerations into account. Setting the time of the funeral requires consultation with the rabbi, the funeral director, and the cemetery. Please see contact information for local rabbinical assistance.

Burial

Based on the biblical verse “For dust you are, and to dust you shall return” (Gen. 3:19), Jewish tradition has maintained that burial should be in the earth. Traditionally, cremation is not in accordance with Jewish practice. Specific questions regarding Jewish burial should be discussed with a rabbi. It is best to let your family know your desired burial wishes in advance.

Autopsies and Embalming

Whenever possible, routine autopsies should be declined because this practice violates the principle of kavod hamet – respect for the body of the deceased – as does embalming. New Mexico State law does not require embalming.

Organ Donation

In Jewish law, the topic of organ donation is complex. Under some circumstances, it is considered a mitzvah. Check with a rabbi for guidance.

Public Viewing of the Deceased

Judaism strongly discourages open-casket funerals as this practice is regarded as not respectful of the deceased.

Taharah

When a newborn child enters the world, the baby is washed and purified. “As he came,” writes Ecclesiastes, “so should he go” (Ecclesiastes 5:14). In reverence for the soul of the deceased, when a person departs this world, a taharah is performed. The deceased is washed and purified through a time-honored ritual prior to burial. Then the body is dressed in a traditional Jewish burial garment called tachrichim. The Chevrah Kadisha of Northern New Mexico has volunteers trained to perform the taharah, this sacred rite.

Shmira

Traditionally, the deceased is supported through prayerful thoughts in an adjacent room. A shomer (guardian) reads Psalms and recites prayers on behalf of the dead. When possible, the deceased is attended at all times prior to burial. The Chevrah Kadisha of Northern New Mexico has volunteers who will sign-up to perform shmira along with members of your synagogue, and/or friends and family who may want to participate.

Choosing the Casket

In choosing a casket, Jewish tradition mandates that ostentation should be avoided. Caskets used in Jewish funerals are simple and made entirely of wood.

K’riah

The rending of the mourners’ outer garment is a Jewish mourning practice, symbolizing the tearing of the heart one feels at the time of loss. When one is mourning for parents, k’riah is performed on the left side, over the heart, while when mourning for children, siblings and spouses, it is done on the right side.

Meal of Consolation

The mourners’ first meal after returning from the cemetery (seudat havra’ah) is usually provided by friends, neighbors or a synagogue committee. The meal generally includes hard boiled eggs (symbolic of the potentiality of renewal) or other round objects symbolizing the wheel of life, continuity, and the need to move on.

Shiva

The first, most intense stage of mourning is called shiva, the Hebrew word meaning “seven” and refers to a seven-day period of formalized mourning by the immediate family of the deceased. Shiva begins immediately after the burial. A rabbi should be consulted regarding the details of shiva practices.

Sheloshim

Sheloshim (thirty) are the mourning practices done for the first 30 days, ending on the morning of the 30th day after the funeral. It marks the end of the traditional formal mourning period for all, except parents. A rabbi should be consulted regarding the details.

Yahrzeit

Yahrzeit is observed on each anniversary of the day of death according to the Hebrew calendar. For clarification, consult your rabbi.

Yizkor

Yizkor (“May God Remember”) services in memory of our deceased loved ones are held on Yom Kipper, Shemini Atzeret, on the last days of Pesach, and Shavuot. A Yahrzeit candle is lit at sunset on the evening before the Yizkor prayer is recited.

Resources and Information

CKNNM Central Contact:

505-395-6627 | cknm.info@gmail.com | www.jccnm.org

Rivera Funeral Home and Memorial Gardens (Jewish Cemetery)

505-989-7032 | www.riverafamilyfuneralhome.com

Berardinelli Family Funeral Service

505-984-8600 | www.berardinellifuneralhome.com

Kavod v’Nichum and Gamliel Institute

www.jewish-funerals.org

The National Association of Chevrah Kadisha (NASCK)

www.nasck.org