

# RESOURCES AND REFLECTIONS

## A Practical Guide to Issues Surrounding Death and Mourning

Written by  
The Ritual/Life Cycle Events Committee of  
Congregation Beth Adam in Cincinnati, Ohio

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## Introduction

Addressing the issue of death remains a difficult and highly emotional issue. Yet no matter how much we wish to hide from reality, we cannot. At one time or another, each of us will have to face the death of a loved one. And as with all living creatures, we ourselves will die.

This book has been written by and for the members of Congregation Beth Adam (Loveland, Ohio) in an effort to help all of us think about and prepare for the reality of death. It is intended to clarify the religious, practical, and philosophical issues surrounding death, thus helping us cope with this difficult event.

The suggestions presented in this book are based upon Jewish tradition and customs, common practices, research, and the opinions of the authors. If you feel that any of the guidelines presented here do not meet your or your family's needs, do not feel compelled to follow them. We must each confront death in our own unique way. No single set of rituals will serve all of us. We each have the right to modify these rituals as we think best.

All who worked on this project hope that it will serve as a guide and resource for members of our congregation. We also hope that this will encourage discussion within families. In preparing this guide, the authors recognized that not all issues or customs related to death have been presented here. Thus, a bibliography and other resources have been included for those who want additional information. Although no resource can take away the pain of death, knowledge, planning, and forethought can make facing the issues less difficult.

This guide was prepared through the combined efforts of the Ritual/Life Cycle Events Committee of Congregation Beth Adam and Rabbi Robert B. Barr. The members of the committee acknowledge the comments and suggestions of Rabbi Daniel Friedman, Rabbi Rami Shapiro, and Mr. Bob Weil. The original booklet was prepared in 1985, and it was updated in 2008.

*If you found this guide useful and informative, please tell your friends about [www.OurJewishCommunity.org](http://www.OurJewishCommunity.org) and also please consider making a donation through our website to help fund the development of new materials.*

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## **Emergency References in the Event of Death**

The following telephone calls need to be made.

### **1. The funeral home**

Once you decide on which funeral home you would like to use, write their name and number here or in another safe place \_\_\_\_\_.

The information the funeral home will need immediately:

- a. Name of deceased
- b. Age of deceased
- c. Location of deceased
- d. Physician
- e. Rabbi officiating
- f. Next of kin and telephone number
- g. Cemetery
- h. Permission to embalm

### **2. Your local rabbi**

You can also call or email the rabbis of [OurJewishCommunity.org](http://OurJewishCommunity.org) for resources you can use at the funeral or memorial service (966-918-2326).

### **3. Friends of family members who need to be contacted**

## **Pre-Death Arrangements**

Though thinking about our own death is a difficult and painful experience, not confronting this reality makes it no less real. There are many arrangements and decisions that can, and in some cases should, be made long before death is imminent. By doing so, our loved ones generally will have fewer difficult decisions to make. Thus we are helping and caring for those who will survive us.

This section includes information and resources about pre-death arrangements. Some of the ideas presented are of a legal or financial nature; we caution that prior to making any legal or financial decisions, a lawyer or accountant be consulted.

Any pre-death arrangements and information should be readily available to one's survivors. Information concerning pre-death arrangements should be in a safe place that will also be accessible after death. Included in the appendix is a list of significant information which surviving family members will need.

It should be noted that safe deposit boxes are sealed immediately upon notification of the box-holder's death. For this reason, safe deposit boxes are not necessarily the most appropriate place in which to keep the documents that will be needed upon one's death.

### WILL

It is easy for us to delay and thus avoid preparing our wills. Such procrastination is one method of denying our own mortality. Yet, by not having a will, we may do a disservice to those who will survive us. In the will, wishes regarding distribution of assets are made known, thus avoiding possible confusion or conflict. If you die without a will, the state in which you reside will determine the distribution of your assets according to law. This may not be in accordance with your wishes. Additionally, having a will allows you to make specific gifts to charitable organizations, choose an executor, or name a guardian for minor children. Because of its far-reaching consequences and legal requirements, it is essential to have an attorney draft a will.

### LIVING WILL

Just as medical science has provided many benefits, so too it has produced many questions. One of the most difficult issues—from a legal, ethical and emotional standpoint—is the care and treatment of persons with a terminal illness. While each situation is unique and no one approach applies in all situations, certain principles exist which we as humanistic Jews affirm. It is the right and responsibility of each individual to make decisions concerning his/her life. This is the essence of human dignity. The dying person retains the right to live his/her final days with self-respect, self-determination, and dignity. Sometimes, an individual's dignity is preserved through discontinuing extraordinary measures that do not add quality to life, but merely prolong the process of dying.

The "living will" is one method for the terminally ill to make known their wishes concerning treatment. The "living will" enables an individual, who becomes incompetent due to illness, to make certain decisions in advance. Each state has different guidelines and so you should check with an attorney about the details of preparing a living will.

### DONATION OF BODY OR ORGANS

The science of organ transplantation has made it possible for one who has died to help the living. This is an opportunity which, though difficult to appreciate, allows for a continuation of life in the face of death. Many Jewish scholars consider "pikuach nefesh," the saving of a life, as the most pressing of Jewish concerns. This viewpoint arises from the Talmud, which states, "Nothing must take precedence over saving a life." We can choose to affirm, even in our death, the values by which we lived.

The family of the deceased may be asked to consent to an organ donation if the individual did not make known his/her choice prior to death. In this circumstance, we have a unique and sacred opportunity, the preserving of life. Those who want to donate their body or body parts can do so through various organizations.

## AUTOPSIES

Autopsies serve to advance the science of medicine and thus to enhance the quality of life. Therefore, from a humanistic Jewish viewpoint, autopsies are acceptable.

Many Jewish funeral customs arose from ancient beliefs and superstitions. Many of these practices have remained even when people's beliefs are not in line with the ancient system. The modern Jew often finds that certain customs do not reflect his/her worldview. Similarly, as humanistic Jews, we embrace some practices because they give expression to who we are and what we value, even though they were not accepted by our ancestors. Our attitude toward body donation and autopsies reflects this approach. We accept these medical procedures because of our concern for life and helping those who survive us.

## ETHICAL WILL

The tradition of composing an "ethical will" relates back to biblical times, yet today it is unknown by many. The "ethical will" is composed by an individual as a legacy to be given to future generations. In this document, a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, or other concerned person, passes on his/her wisdom and concern to those who will follow. The goal is to share with those who will live on after us our values and hopes for their future.

## PRE-ARRANGEMENT WITH THE FUNERAL HOME

It is possible to prearrange one's funeral with most funeral homes. By prearranging a funeral, you can make decisions regarding all aspects of the funeral. Prearranging also spares survivors from having to make decisions, which are extremely difficult because they are made under stress.

An alternative to making pre-arrangements with the funeral home is to write one's wishes concerning his/her funeral. This information should be placed in a location accessible to one's survivors. Such a document could include preferences regarding burial or cremation, cemetery, location of burial plot, and location of funeral service.

## **Funeral Arrangements and The Funeral**

Though we all know that every person will die, learning of someone's death is always difficult; our emotions are stirred and thinking tested. The closer we are to the one who has died, the more trying the experience. Words cannot describe the feelings. Yet, even in the midst of our sorrow, there are arrangements which must be made.

Depending on our relationship to the deceased, we may be called upon to assist or make the arrangements for the funeral. The following section will describe in detail the procedures, arrangements, and decisions involved in planning a funeral. Because each situation is unique, what follows will vary from family to family.

## IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING DEATH

When death occurs, several calls must be made. The family needs to call the funeral home. If you would like a local rabbi to officiate at the service, contact one you know or ask the funeral director to help you with that. The rabbis of OurJewishCommunity.org can also be reached at the toll free number (866-918-2326) and can assist with selecting readings for the funeral service.

The first call to the funeral home is usually brief. The funeral director will need to know the name, age, and location of the deceased. If the person has died at home, the funeral home will arrange to have the body picked up immediately. The funeral home will also need the name of the doctor of the deceased, as well as the name and phone number of next of kin. Also, the funeral director will want to know the officiating rabbi and the cemetery that has been selected. Further, the funeral director will want to know if the body is to be embalmed. Embalming is considered contrary to Jewish tradition, but

some families do choose to embalm; you should find out from the funeral director what the state laws are regarding embalming. Finally, the funeral director will set a time to meet with the family to make the rest of the arrangements.

The family may also want to call a close friend or relative to assist at this difficult time. Informing friends allows them to contact others, so that those who desire can attend the funeral and extend their sympathies. As described later in this guide, there are many ways that friends can be of comfort at this time.

An outline listing the information needed by the funeral home is located at the beginning of this guide. It will serve as an easy reference. We urge you to take the time to look at this section and fill in the appropriate phone numbers as soon as possible. The reference section will be of little use if the telephone numbers have not been entered.

## MAKING THE ARRANGEMENTS

There are many decisions to be made in planning a funeral. Though Jewish traditions and customs prescribe specific responses to these issues, we, as Jews who view Judaism from a humanistic perspective, reserve the right and responsibility to determine our own responses in accordance with our needs and heartfelt desires. There is a guiding principle which has been part of the traditional mourning rites, and which we still find appropriate and meaningful. This is the principle of dignity and simplicity. As we make the decisions regarding the funeral, we make them with this principle in mind.

The time for the funeral service is arranged with the funeral home, the officiant, the cemetery, and the family. In Jewish tradition, burial is to occur within one day after death. Though not bound by this time period, we try to have the funeral as soon as possible. Experience has shown that this makes the grieving process easier on the survivors. While we try to plan the service without undue delay, we also take into consideration the needs of the family members who may have to travel to attend the funeral.

## CEMETERY

If cemetery arrangements have not been made in advance, the family will have to choose a cemetery. The funeral home will assist in this process. The requirements of the cemetery must be observed. Thus, Orthodox customs must be followed when burying in an Orthodox cemetery, even if the family is not Orthodox.

Cremation or entombment in a mausoleum are alternatives to burial. Though these alternatives are not found in Jewish tradition, they are acceptable in our liberal Judaism. Because of our ancestors' beliefs concerning afterlife, these options did not exist for them. But, as Judaism has developed and changed over time, these practices have become available. If either cremation or entombment is desired, these arrangements can be made with the funeral home.

Individuals may have requested that their ashes be scattered following cremation. Arrangement for this can also be made with the funeral home.

## CASKET

One of the most difficult decisions for the family to make is the selection of the casket. Choosing the casket brings out a host of conflicting thoughts and emotions as well as the practical aspect of cost. As we view the selection of caskets, it is perfectly normal to feel overwhelmed, guilty, angry and vulnerable. We begin to wonder how we will choose. We need to understand and express the feelings we have, while being guided by the principles of simplicity and dignity. Although Jewish custom dictates that the casket be of wood, the decision of material and design is at the discretion of the family.

## LOCATION OF SERVICE

The family can determine the location of the funeral service. There are several alternatives available. The location most often selected is the funeral home. Following the service at the funeral home, a short service is conducted at the cemetery or mausoleum prior to the interment of the casket.

The family may choose to have a graveside service only. In that instance, the entire service is conducted at the cemetery or mausoleum.

Another option is to have a memorial service at home. In this instance, the body is not present.

## TRIBUTES

Tributes are donations which both honor the memory of a loved one and affirm the value of life. Many families choose organizations to which contributions may be made. This information can be given to the funeral director so that it can be included in the obituary. Many families ask that contributions be made "in lieu of flowers." Jews do not customarily send flowers to a funeral.

## THE FUNERAL

The funeral is a time for myriad thoughts and emotions. We come together with family and friends to share our grief and to mourn our loss. The funeral service, as with all services at Beth Adam, is an expression of our feelings as well as an affirmation of our humanistic philosophy. While each service combines reading and reflections about the one who has died, the pain of separation, and the struggle of life, no two services are alike.

## VIEWING THE BODY

The decision whether or not to view the body of the deceased prior to the funeral is a very individual matter. Though Jewish tradition disapproves of this practice, many people find it an important and meaningful act. As Jews who view Judaism from a humanistic perspective, we have the right to decide what will most help us through the grieving process. Whatever our decision, the funeral home will accommodate our wishes.

## **Mourning Rituals**

There are many different mourning rituals that have evolved throughout Jewish history. These customs have developed over time for many reasons. As heirs to these various customs, we may select those which bring us the most comfort.

When a loved one dies, most of us find it helpful to have the support and friendship of a loving community and those closest to us. In turn, friends want the opportunity to express their support.

## SHIVA

Shiva is the traditional seven day mourning period following a death. It is during this time that mourners receive visitors who wish to express sympathy. The shiva is a time for sharing warm memories with friends and relatives. As progressive Jews we are not bound to observe shiva for seven days. We may choose a time which will serve our needs and the needs of our families. Many have found that three days is an appropriate and comfortable period. Some families may wish to light a shiva candle. The shiva candle is lit by mourners upon their return home from the funeral service. A reading for the lighting of the shiva candle can be found in Congregation Beth Adam's publication [A Benediction for Life](#) which can be ordered from [OurJewishCommunity.org](http://OurJewishCommunity.org).

During the shiva, family members may wish to have a service conducted at their home. Members of [OurJewishCommunity.org](http://OurJewishCommunity.org) can contact the rabbis for relevant readings.

Due to our mobile lifestyles, families are spread across the country. Inevitably, some of us will attend funerals geographically distant. When this happens, we may miss the support of our local friends. Because of this common occurrence, the idea arose at Congregation Beth Adam that upon the mourner's return to their hometown, shiva could be continued. The extension of the shiva, which can be observed at either the mourner's or a friend's home, is there for those who want it. If the mourner desires, a service could also be conducted at his/her home during this time.

## Yahrzeit

It is customary for Jews to remember one who has died on the anniversary of his/her death. It is traditional on the yahrzeit day, i.e. the anniversary of the day of death, to kindle a twenty-four hour light in the memory of the deceased. Many of us at Congregation Beth Adam find this ritual important and meaningful. A short service that can be said upon the lighting of the yahrzeit light can be found in Congregation Beth Adam's publication [A Benediction for Life](#) which can be ordered from OurJewishCommunity.org.

It is also customary for the name of the deceased to be read at a Sabbath service nearest to the yahrzeit. We at Congregation Beth Adam have continued this tradition for those who find it meaningful.

## Unveiling

Within the first year following death, it is customary for a family to place a marker at the burial site. The placing of a marker is traditional dating back to biblical times. Just as we are guided by the principles of dignity and simplicity in casket selection, so too with selecting a marker. A family may choose to have a ceremony of dedication or an "unveiling," after the marker is placed. It is important, however, that it remain a small private ceremony and not become a second funeral. This ceremony, which is of modern origin, is strictly a matter of personal choice.

## Yizkor

Within Jewish tradition, special times have been set aside when the community as a whole remembers its dead. The Yizkor service, a memorial service held on certain holidays, is this prescribed time. Traditionally, Yizkor services are held on: Passover, Shavuot, Yom Kippur and Shemini Alzeret. However, for most individuals, four memorial services a year are neither helpful nor desirable. Consequently, at Congregation Beth Adam, we observe the Yizkor service only during Yom Kippur. This service provides us the opportunity to remember our loved ones whom death has taken from us. It is a significant and powerful time, when together we pay tribute to those who have been special in our lives.

## **The Role of Friends**

As friends of those who are mourning, we have the opportunity to help them through a difficult time. It is a theme throughout Jewish writings that we help those who mourn and those who are in need. As Jews, it is our belief that we should reach out to those who know sorrow.

There are many ways to reach out to those who mourn; each of us should do what feels comfortable to us. Some of our expressions of concern may reflect Jewish custom while others arise from our own hearts.

It is customary for individuals to visit the house of shiva. Yet sometimes it is hard to find words to express concern. Simply sitting with, listening to, and holding the hands of one who is in sorrow, are often the best things we can do.

It is also customary for friends to organize and prepare the meal for the mourners upon their return from the funeral. This "meal of consolation," as it is traditionally known, is a time for family and friends to be together. Friends may also bring food throughout the period of shiva in order to relieve the family of this daily task. Bringing food and preparing meals at the house of shiva are ways in which we can express our support for those bereaved.

The concept of continuing shiva after a mourner's return from a funeral which has taken place outside the city presents another opportunity for friends to help. (A complete explanation concerning continuing shiva for geographic reasons can be found in the section on mourning rites.) It would be appropriate to contact an individual who has recently experienced a death in his/her family out-of-town and ask if he/she wants to have a shiva upon his/her return home. If the individual does desire this, a friend could offer his/her home for the occasion as well as serve as a contact to inform other friends so that all who wish can attend.

Another way to show concern and to affirm life in the face of death is to make a contribution in honor of one who has died. A tribute can be made to an organization named by the family, or if one is not named, to an organization of the giver's choice.

Finally, the time period following shiva can be an extremely lonely time for one who has lost a loved one. This is the time when a phone call, note, or visit can be very helpful. Two weeks, three weeks, or longer may be just the time to see how a friend is doing. Showing our concern is an ongoing opportunity.

## **Other Issues**

While preparing this guide, the members of the committee considered many issues which were significant, but which did not fit into any easily defined category. Consequently, it was decided that this section should be included, in order to raise some of the issues and provide the basis for future consideration among families.

As with the other sections, not every issue or suggestion presented here will relate to your particular situation. Each of us, with the support of family and friends, must come to our own resolution.

The format of this section is different from that of the other sections. Each issue begins with a question, followed by a short discussion.

### WHERE DO WE BURY OUR DEAD?

A reality of modern life is that few of us live in the city in which we were born. Fewer still live in the same city in which parents or grandparents live or were born. This fact becomes a source of difficulty when there is a death. Where should the person be buried? Should he/she be buried in the city in which he/she lived most recently, in the city where he/she lived the majority of his/her life, in the city in which the majority of the children live—where?

This is a situation experienced by many. As we become more mobile, the problem grows more complex and there is no simple solution. Each family must decide for itself what is the best solution. The situation can be made easier if some forethought is given, so that the decision is not made in haste.

### HOW CAN THE FUNERAL SERVICE BE STRUCTURED TO ACCOMMODATE FAMILY MEMBERS WITH DIFFERING APPROACHES TO JUDAISM?

In choosing a rabbi to officiate at a funeral, differing approaches to Judaism among family members may become apparent. Trying to reconcile these differing approaches and disagreements that may arise is a significant, and at times, challenging task. Depending on the circumstances, the following suggestions may be of help.

The funeral service of Congregation Beth Adam, as in all of our humanistic services and rituals, affirms our beliefs about the rights and responsibilities of human beings, the values of human dignity, creativity and integrity, and the belief that what occurs in our world is the result of human action and natural law. The service focuses upon the relationships that bind us, one to another, and the pain and emotions that arise when we are confronted with death. The unique character and qualities of the person who has died are remembered. We affirm our connection to him/her, acknowledging that what we have learned from and shared with him/her can never be taken from us.

Our congregation has created many memorial readings which give expression to our humanistic values. These materials are available from the rabbis of [OurJewishCommunity.org](http://OurJewishCommunity.org).

All of the preceding suggestions are simply that—suggestions. Every family must find a solution that meets its own needs and wishes. The death of a loved one may at times create conflict within families. It is important that we be aware of this so that we are better able to cope if problems do occur.

### HOW DO WE EXPLAIN DEATH TO CHILDREN AND DECIDE IF THEY SHOULD ATTEND THE FUNERAL?

Each child, being a unique individual, becomes capable of confronting death at a different time in his/her development. There is no set age when a child is or is not ready. How a child should be told of a death and whether that child should attend a funeral should be determined by parents based upon the maturity of the particular child. It is important, no matter what age the child, to approach death honestly and truthfully. Telling children fantasies or employing euphemisms such as “gone away” or “sleeping” in reference to death can do more harm than good. Children will sense in our responses when we are not being honest with them. If a child asks a question about death that you cannot answer, simply respond by saying: “There are some things I don’t know.”

Included in the selected bibliography are several books dealing specifically with children and death. It may be of value to examine these works.

#### WHAT ABOUT RITUALS WHICH ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THIS GUIDE?

There are customs and rituals associated with funerals and mourning which are not included here due to limited space. The customs discussed here were thought to express our Jewish identity. Ultimately, families observe those rituals and customs, which best express their identity and fulfill their needs.

If you or members of your family have questions about funerals and mourning not addressed in this guide, other resources are available. A bibliography has been included which lists a wide selection of books addressing many different areas of death and mourning. Funeral directors are also willing to answer questions. Family members are often good resources, providing information about customs which may be specific to your family or to the community from which your family came.

The rabbis of OurJewishCommunity.org are also happy to answer your questions.

## APPENDIX

### PERSONAL DATA NEEDED IN THE EVENT OF A DEATH

NOTE: The following information, as well as your will, discharge papers from military service, cemetery deed, and any wishes concerning your funeral arrangements should NOT be kept in your safe deposit box, as the box will be sealed in the event of your death. Because a will is not read for some time after death, your wishes concerning funeral arrangements should be stated elsewhere. Many funeral homes will keep your requests concerning your funeral on file.

### INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR THE DEATH CERTIFICATE (although this may vary in your state)

Birth date and age  
State of birth  
Citizenship  
Origin or descent  
Social Security number  
Dates of Military service; discharge papers  
Name of surviving spouse; wife's maiden name is required  
Occupation; type of business or industry  
Address; including county  
Father's name  
Mother's maiden name  
Mailing address previous to nursing home or hospital

### INFORMATION NEEDED BY THE FUNERAL DIRECTORS

Names of surviving family members and their residences – to be placed in the obituaries

### PERSONAL DATA NEEDED BY SURVIVING FAMILY MEMBERS

Making this information readily available to survivors enables them to address the financial and business issues which will remain after death.

A list of professional advisors and representatives (attorney, accountant, insurance agents, broker, banker, executor, guardians for children and elderly parents or relatives)

- Employer's name and address
- Employee benefit plans
- Bank accounts
- Location of safe deposit boxes and keys
- Investments
- Loan accounts
- Details of each child's likes/dislikes, strengths/weaknesses, night time habits, eating habits, health problems; the more details your child's guardian knows about him/her, the transition will be less painful.
- Location of important documents

### Glossary

AUTOPSY—An examination of the deceased to determine the cause of death.

CASKET—A container in which the deceased is buried.

CHEVRAH KADISHA—A communal burial society, which is responsible for washing and

preparing the body for burial in accordance with traditional Jewish practice.

**CREMATION**–The burning of a body until ashes remain.

**DEATH NOTICE**–A paid classified ad announcing the individual’s death, surviving family members, and the location and time of the funeral service.

**EMBALM**–The replacing of bodily fluids of the deceased with chemicals in order to disinfect and preserve the body.

**ENTOMBMENT**–Placing a casket in a mausoleum, an above-ground burial.

**ETHICAL WILL**–A philosophical or moral letter written and bequeathed to future generations.

**EULOGY**–Remembrances about the deceased, delivered by the rabbi or close friend during the funeral service.

**FUNERAL**–The service associated with burial, entombment or cremation at which the body is present.

**INTERMENT**–Placing a casket in a grave.

**KADDISH**–an Aramaic prayer praising God, which has become associated with burial and mourning of the dead.

**LIVING WILL**–A non-binding document in which a person states, prior to illness, his/her wishes in regard to the use of ordinary and extra-ordinary medical treatment. The document is referred to if the person is, due to illness, unable to communicate his/her desires.

**MAUSOLEUM**–A building in which caskets are placed. A mausoleum is an alternative to ground burial.

**MEAL OF CONSOLATION**–The meal, usually prepared by friends, which the family in mourning eats upon their return from the funeral.

**MEMORIAL SERVICE**–A funeral service at which the body is not present.

**OBITUARY**–A notice, usually in a newspaper, informing people of a death. Included in the obituary is a short biography, funeral information, and sometimes the organization to which tributes are asked to be sent.

**PALLBEARER**–An individual who helps to carry the casket during the funeral ceremony.

**SHIVA**–The mourning period following the funeral.

**URN**–A container in which cremated remains are placed.

**VAULT**–A large container that is placed inside the grave and into which the casket is placed. The vault is used to protect the casket from the earth. Many cemeteries require that a vault be used. Also referred to as an “outer burial container.”

**WILL**–A legal document setting forth a person’s wishes concerning distribution of his/her property following a death.

**Yahrzeit**–The anniversary of the day of death.

YIZKOR–The memorial service held on certain holidays.

## **Selected Bibliography**

As stated at the outset, this book is not comprehensive. There are issues that arise when we confront the reality of death which are not addressed in this book. Therefore, this selected bibliography has been included for those who are interested in further information.

### **JEWISH**

**GATES OF MITZVAH: A Guide to the Jewish Life Cycle**, edited by Simeon J. Maslin, 1979, published by the Central Conference of American Rabbis

*A major section of this book discusses customs and traditions related to funeral and mourning rituals. This text approaches the topic from a Reform Jewish perspective.*

**THE HOLY AND THE PROFANE**, by Theodore H. Gaster, 1998, published by William Morrow and Company, Inc.

*This text describes in detail the evolutionary development of Jewish traditions surrounding life cycle events. A major section of the book is devoted to discussion of rituals and customs regarding death. This book provides interesting insights into how modern Jewish customs arose.*

**JEWISH REFLECTIONS ON DEATH**, edited by Jack Reimer, 1974, published by Schocken Books

*This is a collection of essays by noted Jewish thinkers. The focus of the essays is philosophical rather than pragmatic.*

**THE JEWISH WAY OF DEATH AND MOURNING**, by Maurice Lamm, 2000, published by Jonathan David Publishers

*This text discusses in detail burial, funeral and mourning rituals. It is written from an Orthodox perspective.*

**THE LIFETIME OF A JEW**, by Hayyim Schauss, 1998, Union of American Hebrew Congregations

*Similar to the book cited above, *The Lifetime of a Jew* describes the development of rituals throughout Jewish history. A section of this book addresses the origins and development of death and mourning rituals.*

### **GENERAL**

**CONCERNING DEATH: A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR THE LIVING**, edited by Earl A. Grollman, 1974, published by Beacon Press

*This book is a collection of essays by various authors, each addressing a different aspect of the subject. Essays included in the book are: "To Cremate or Not" by Paul Irion, "The Widow and Widower" by Robert L. Buchanan, "Care of the Dying Person" by N.H. Cassem.*

**LIVING WHEN A LOVED ONE HAS DIED**, Earl A. Grollman, 1997, published by Beacon Press

*This book is for the grieving individual, written in a straight-forward yet poetic fashion giving expression to the many thoughts and feelings a person in mourning experiences.*

**ON DEATH AND DYING**, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, 2007, published by Scribner

*Describes the stages the dying person experiences in coming to terms with his/her imminent death.*

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON DEATH AND DYING**, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, 1997, published by Scribner

*Reviews the process of coming to terms with terminal illness, and goes on to describe how family and friends can help both the dying person and themselves.*

## **CHILDREN**

### **BEREAVED CHILDREN AND TEENS: A SUPPORT GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS**, Edited by Earl A. Grollman, 1995, published by Beacon Press

*This is a resource for parents and professionals who want to help children cope with death. There are chapters written by 14 different authors on a wide range of relevant subjects.*

### **EXPLAINING DEATH TO CHILDREN**, Edited by Earl A. Grollman, 1987, published by Beacon Press

*A collection of writings dealing with children's concepts of death. A chapter is included which can be read with children to introduce the subject of death.*

### **THE GRIEVING CHILD: A PARENT'S GUIDE**, Helen Fitzgerald, 2003, published by Fireside

*This book offers practical advice for helping children deal with the death of a parent or other loved one. The book explores how children respond emotionally and also how to help children adjust to the new situation.*

### **GUIDING YOUR CHILD THROUGH GRIEF**, Mary Ann Emswiler and James P. Emswiler, 2000, published by Bantam

*The authors of this book are counselors who founded a program for grieving children. They offer advice about helping children around the loss of a parent or sibling.*

### **HOW IT FEELS WHEN A PARENT DIES**, J. Kremetz, 1988, published by Alfred A. Knopf

*Children, ages seven to sixteen, tell in their own words their experiences surrounding the death of a parent.*

### **HOW TO EXPLAIN DEATH TO CHILDREN**, (Pamphlet), Earl A. Grollman, 1979, published by the Jewish Funeral Directors of America, available from local Jewish Funeral Homes

*This pamphlet addresses questions which parents ask in regard to children and death. Should children be shielded from death? Do children understand death? How do you tell children about death?*

### **TALKING ABOUT DEATH: A DIALOGUE BETWEEN PARENT AND CHILD**, Edited by Earl A. Grollman, 1991, Beacon Press

*In clear, compassionate language, the child is introduced to and encouraged to discuss a wide spectrum of issues concerning death. This is a book to be read together by parents and elementary age children.*

## **PARENTAL GRIEF**

### **THE BEREAVED PARENT**, by Harriet Sarnoff Schiff, 1978, published by Crown Publisher Inc.

*This book addresses the trauma of living through the death of a child. It is written to help a parent through the grieving process.*

### **A SONG FOR SARAH: A YOUNG MOTHER'S JOURNEY THROUGH GRIEF AND BEYOND**, by P. D'Qrcy, 2006, published by iUniverse

*A mother's diary from the months before her daughter's birth, the two years of her life, and the year following her death. The mother describes her transition from needing to hold on to her grief to arriving at a readiness to leave it behind.*

### **THE ULTIMATE LOSS: COPING WITH THE DEATH OF A CHILD**, J. Bordow, 1982, published by Beaufort Books

*Through case histories and commentary, this book sheds light on the subject of a child's death and describes styles of coping with it.*

