



End of Life

Customs and Traditions

The Chabad Gardens

Policies and Procedures





CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF SARASOTA & MANATEE COUNTIES

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Dear Friends and Members:

As the Chabad Center grows in members and friends, so do the activities and programs increase to accommodate the needs of our community.

A very active program at Chabad is Chabad Gardens, a Jewish cemetery located within Palms Memorial Park, serving the Jewish residents of Sarasota and Manatee Counties. This cemetery is open to all Jews in our community, the affiliated and non-affiliated alike.

The following booklet includes a short summary of the Jewish customs and traditions regarding the end of life, as well as policies and procedures which were adopted by the Board of Chabad Lubavitch of Sarasota and Manatee Counties. Please review the booklet carefully. Should you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to call the office or myself.



Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Because we love, the passing of a loved one brings sorrow and grief. These feelings are both natural and healthy. At such times, life can feel empty and the future uncertain. As Jews, we are blessed with the guidance of Torah and tradition, which help us face loss with dignity, faith, and support. Jewish rituals and practices give us a meaningful way to express our grief, share our memories, and move step by step from the pain of loss toward renewed strength and daily life.

This booklet is intended to provide a basic understanding of end of life customs as observed in traditional Judaism. It is not a complete presentation of all the laws and customs related to this subject. The booklet also includes the policies and rules pertaining to Chabad Gardens at Palms Memorial Park Cemetery. It is offered as a guide for our members and community, and as an introduction to the sacred traditions that bring comfort, honor, and meaning at life's most difficult moments.

What To Do When a Death Occurs

When a death occurs, contact a local funeral home that serves the Jewish community to arrange for the proper care of the deceased. A list of funeral homes may be obtained from the Chabad office. Please also contact Rabbi Steinmetz, who can offer guidance, support, and assistance in arranging the funeral. If funeral prearrangements have not been made, it is often helpful to ask a close friend or family member to assist with the necessary decisions and arrangements.

Before the Funeral

Together with Rabbi Steinmetz and the funeral home, set the time and place for the funeral. Jewish tradition encourages burial to take place as soon as possible after death, though there are times when a delay may be appropriate. The service may be held at the synagogue, at the funeral home, or at the graveside.

Once the funeral details are confirmed, notify immediate family, close friends, employers, and business colleagues. An obituary may then be prepared, including details such as age, place of birth, occupation, education, military service, communal involvement, noteworthy achievements,

surviving family members, funeral information, and where memorial contributions may be made.

Pallbearers should also be chosen. Traditionally, six people carry the casket. A Kohen may not serve as a pallbearer, and it is customary not to choose immediate family members. Others may be designated as honorary pallbearers.

The family should also discuss the eulogy with the Rabbi and share personal memories and meaningful insights about the deceased. The eulogy should be sincere and truthful, avoiding exaggeration while warmly highlighting the person's good qualities, life, and legacy.

The Mourner

The period between death and burial is called Aninut, and the bereaved is called an Onen. During this time, the Onen's primary responsibility is to arrange the funeral and burial. Because of this responsibility, an Onen is exempt from positive mitzvot, including the obligation to put on Tefillin and to pray.

During this time, visits should generally be limited to relatives and very close friends, especially those who can assist with funeral and Shiva arrangements. After the burial, the mourner is known as an Avel. The obligation of mourning applies to the loss of a parent, child, sibling, or spouse.

Preparation for Burial

Jewish tradition emphasizes simplicity, dignity, and equality in funerals and mourning. For this reason, a simple wooden casket is preferred. Cremation is not in keeping with Jewish tradition or Jewish law.

Before burial, the deceased, known as the Met, is prepared through the sacred ritual of Tahara, a ritual washing performed by the Chevra Kadisha, the holy burial society. The Chevra Kadisha then dresses the body in traditional burial shrouds, called Tachrichim, which are simple white garments symbolizing purity, humility, and equality before G-d.

Shomer

It is a sacred Jewish tradition that the body of the deceased not be left unattended before burial. A person who remains near the deceased is called a Shomer, meaning “guardian.” The Shomer recites Psalms and stays nearby as an expression of honor, dignity, and care for the departed. Shomer services, including someone remaining with the body overnight when needed, are often available. Please consult the funeral director for details and arrangements.

Autopsy

Jewish tradition generally does not permit an autopsy, due to the sacred dignity of the body. However, there are situations in which an autopsy may be required by law or may involve other serious considerations. Each case should be reviewed individually, and Rabbi Steinmetz should be consulted for guidance.

Embalming

Embalming is not in keeping with Jewish tradition and is generally prohibited by Jewish law, as the body should be treated with simplicity, dignity, and respect.

Flowers

Flowers are not part of traditional Jewish mourning practice. Instead of sending flowers, it is more appropriate to honor the memory of the departed through tzedakah, mitzvot, and acts of kindness. Families may suggest in the obituary that, in lieu of flowers, donations be made to an appropriate charity. If flowers are sent, they may be shared with the living by giving them to a hospital, senior residence, or another institution where they can bring comfort or joy.

Kriah

A few minutes before the funeral begins, the first formal act of mourning, Kriah, is performed. Kriah is the tearing of a garment worn by the mourner and is a centuries-old expression of inner grief and loss. The mourners stand during Kriah, and before the tear is made, they recite a blessing, reaffirming faith in Hashem even at a moment of sorrow.

THE FUNERAL SERVICE

A funeral may be held at the synagogue, at the funeral home, or at the graveside. A graveside service includes the same essential elements as a service that begins elsewhere, though it is often shorter because certain prayers are not repeated in two locations. A graveside funeral is no less dignified and gives full honor to the deceased.

The funeral service is generally brief and meaningful. Psalms are recited, and a eulogy is delivered to reflect on the life, values, and good deeds of the deceased, offering inspiration and guidance to the living. On most days, Kel Maleh Rachamim is recited, expressing our faith in the eternal life of the soul.

At the graveside, the service includes Tziduk HaDin, a prayer affirming our acceptance of G-d's judgment, followed by Kaddish and Kel Maleh Rachamim.

After the burial, except on certain special days, those present form two lines, allowing the mourners to pass between them. As they pass, the traditional words of comfort are recited:

HaMakom yenachem etchem betoch she'ar aveilei Tziyon v'Yerushalayim.
May G-d comfort you among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Shoveling Earth

After the casket has been lowered into the grave, those present may participate in the mitzvah of placing earth into the grave. This is known as *Chesed Shel Emet*, true kindness, because it is an act of love and respect done for someone who can no longer repay it. By helping complete the burial, we accompany the deceased on their final earthly journey with dignity and care. For many mourners, this act also provides a meaningful sense of finality and closure.

Children at a Funeral

Whether children should attend a funeral depends on the child's age, maturity, and relationship with the deceased. If a child is old enough to understand the purpose of the funeral and that people will be grieving, it is often appropriate for the child to attend. The child should sit with a familiar adult who can offer comfort and explanation. Children, like adults, may need the opportunity to say goodbye and begin the process of grieving in a healthy and supported way.

AFTER THE FUNERAL

Shiva

Shiva is the seven-day period of mourning observed after burial. The day of the funeral counts as the first day, and even a short part of the seventh day is considered a full day. Shiva is paused on Friday afternoon in honor of Shabbat and resumes after Shabbat ends. If a major Jewish holiday, such as Pesach, Shavuot, Sukkot, Rosh Hashanah, or Yom Kippur begins during Shiva, the Shiva period is concluded before the holiday. For specific guidance, please speak with Rabbi Steinmetz.

Shiva begins after the burial with a simple meal called Seudat Havra'ah, the meal of consolation. Before entering the home, it is customary to wash one's hands by pouring water from a cup or vessel three times on each hand, alternating between the hands. This first meal is traditionally provided by family and friends, not by the mourners themselves. It often includes hard-boiled eggs and bread or a bagel. Meat and wine, which are associated with joy, are not served at this meal.

Sitting Shiva

During Shiva, mourners should try to remain together in the home where Shiva is being observed. If necessary, they may sleep in their own homes and return to the Shiva house in the morning. Mourners generally do not go to work during this time, as Jewish tradition recognizes the need to step away from ordinary activities after a major loss. If it is absolutely necessary to return to work, one may do so after three full days, but Shiva continues, and the mourner should return home afterward to resume Shiva observance.

Several customs are associated with Shiva. A seven-day memorial candle is lit upon returning from the cemetery. Mourners avoid entertainment and other activities of joy during the week. It is also customary to cover mirrors in the home, reminding us to turn away from personal appearance and focus on mourning, reflection, and the memory of the departed. Mourners are also encouraged to observe the customs of not wearing leather shoes and sitting on low stools, expressing the change in daily life during this period of mourning.

Visiting Mourners

Visiting mourners during Shiva is a mitzvah known as *Nichum Aveilim*, comforting the bereaved. These visits show the mourners that they are not alone and that the community shares in their loss.

Conversation should center on the life and memories of the departed. Speaking about the loved one is often comforting and helps the mourner begin to process the loss. Visitors should be sensitive, listen more than they speak, and follow the mourner's lead. If the mourner asks about your own experience with grief, it may be helpful to share briefly and gently.

Mourners are not expected to serve food or drinks to those who come to visit.

Shiva Services

It is traditional to hold prayer services in the Shiva home. Chabad can provide Siddurim and Yarmulkas for use during the services, and family members or friends may lead the prayers. Service times should be arranged with Rabbi Steinmetz.

If morning and evening services cannot be held in the Shiva home, mourners may attend services at the synagogue and then return home to continue observing Shiva. During Shiva, mourners attend Shabbat services at the synagogue on Friday evening and Shabbat morning.

After Shiva

The length of the mourning period depends on the mourner's relationship to the deceased. For most relatives, the formal mourning period, known as *Avelut*, concludes with *Shloshim*, thirty days after the funeral. For the loss of a parent, the mourning period continues for a full Hebrew year.

Shloshim is the second stage of mourning. During this time, mourners may return to their regular responsibilities at home and at work. However, it is appropriate to refrain from festive activities, such as attending parties, movies, theater, or other forms of entertainment.

Saying Kaddish

Kaddish is recited in the presence of a minyan, ten Jewish men. Children say Kaddish for a parent, and parents may say Kaddish for a child. Reciting

Kaddish is a sacred way of honoring the soul of the departed, while also giving the mourner structure, comfort, and connection to the community during a difficult time.

When the mourning period is a full year, Kaddish is recited for eleven months and one day. This obligation can be fulfilled by attending daily and Shabbat services at Chabad.

If one is unable to attend services daily, every effort should be made to say Kaddish regularly, as often as possible, or at least on Shabbat. For those unable to attend services on a regular basis, there is a custom to arrange for someone else to say Kaddish on behalf of the departed. Please contact the Rabbi for further details.

UNVEILING AND DEDICATION OF A GRAVE MARKER

The dedication of a grave marker is an important part of honoring the memory of the deceased and is led by the Rabbi. The ceremony generally includes selected Psalms, prayers, and Kel Maleh Rachamim. If a minyan is present, Kaddish is recited as well.

The usual custom is not to delay the unveiling for too long. In any case, it should take place within the first year after the passing. For more information or to arrange an unveiling service, please contact Rabbi Steinmetz.

Yahrzeit

Yahrzeit is observed each year on the Hebrew date of passing. Since the Hebrew and secular calendars do not coincide, the secular date of Yahrzeit will vary from year to year. When Yahrzeit records are on file, Chabad will notify members of the corresponding secular date.

The Yahrzeit observance lasts for a full day. It is customary to attend services on the day of Yahrzeit, recite the Mourner's Kaddish, and, when appropriate, lead portions of the service.

It is also customary to give tzedakah in memory of the departed. One of the best-known Yahrzeit customs is to light a candle that burns for at least 24 hours. The candle is lit on the evening that the Yahrzeit begins. If the Yahrzeit

begins on Shabbat or Yom Tov, the candle should be lit before the Shabbat or holiday candles. No blessing is recited when lighting the Yahrzeit candle, though one may offer personal words of prayer or reflection.

A suggested meditation: Dear G-d, I light this candle on the Yahrzeit of my dear _____. May I be inspired to deeds of charity and kindness in his/her memory. May the light of this candle remind me of the light he/she brought into my life. May his/her soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life. Amen.

Yizkor

Yizkor, the memorial prayer, is recited four times a year: on Yom Kippur, Shemini Atzeret, the last day of Pesach, and the second day of Shavuot, during the morning service. These sacred moments allow us to remember loved ones who are no longer physically with us, especially during the holidays when their absence is deeply felt. It is most appropriate to attend synagogue and join the congregation in reciting Yizkor.

Memorial Funds

At Chabad of Sarasota, families may establish a named endowment fund in memory of a loved one. Once the fund reaches the required minimum balance, the principal is held in perpetuity as an ongoing memorial. The family may suggest areas of Chabad's work to be supported by the income from the fund. Please contact the Rabbi for further details.

Yahrzeit Plaques

Chabad offers Yahrzeit plaques that record the Hebrew and English name of the deceased, along with the Hebrew date of passing. For more information about dedicating a Yahrzeit plaque, please contact the Chabad office.

Dealing with Grief

Every person experiences grief differently. It is not unusual for a mourner to feel sadness one day and moments of strength or even happiness another day. These emotional ups and downs are part of the process of adjusting to life after loss.

Jewish tradition recognizes that life is never quite the same after the passing of a loved one, while also encouraging the mourner to gradually return to a sense of normalcy and renewed strength. If grief becomes overwhelming, prolonged, or especially difficult to manage, mourners are encouraged to speak with Rabbi Steinmetz or a qualified counselor. The Chabad Center is here to offer support, guidance, and care during this difficult time.

Organ Donation

The issue of organ donation involves many important halachic considerations and is beyond the full scope of this booklet. However, the following points should be noted:

When an organ donation can save a life, many halachic authorities consider it a great mitzvah.

At the same time, organ donation may involve serious halachic questions and must be handled with great care. Anyone considering organ donation should consult a knowledgeable rabbi in this field. Donors should request that a rabbi be consulted and give approval before any organ donation takes place.

CONCLUSION

This booklet is intended to provide a basic understanding of Jewish end of life customs and practices. It is not a complete presentation of all the laws and traditions related to this subject. For further guidance, please contact the Rabbi, who will be happy to provide additional material and explanation.

We hope this booklet has been helpful and meaningful. As always, the Chabad staff is here to serve, support, and guide you with care and sensitivity.



Chabad of Sarasota has consecrated Chabad Gardens as a Jewish cemetery within Palms Memorial Park Cemetery, located at the corner of Fruitville Road and Honore Avenue in Sarasota.

While no one likes to think about death, the loss of a loved one is something every family will face at some point. Many people choose to make pre-need arrangements in order to give their families peace of mind and relieve them of difficult decisions and financial burdens at a time of grief.

When a death occurs, families are often unprepared for the many responsibilities, decisions, and costs involved. Purchasing a burial plot in advance removes one significant source of stress. Just as importantly, clearly stating your wishes in advance ensures that your spouse, children, or loved ones will not be left wondering, “Did I do the right thing? Is this what they would have wanted?”

Chabad strongly encourages you to complete the form titled “My Burial Wishes,” which is available at the Chabad office. Copies should be shared with Rabbi Steinmetz, your funeral director, doctor, attorney, and family members.

In the following pages, you will find the Chabad Gardens rules and policies, as well as information regarding various cemetery-related costs.

CHABAD GARDENS CEMETERY RULES AND POLICIES



Introduction

The following rules and regulations have been adopted by the Board of Directors of Chabad Lubavitch of Sarasota & Manatee Counties, a religious nonprofit corporation and the owner of Chabad Gardens at Palms Memorial Park Cemetery in Sarasota.

For the mutual protection of all owners of interment rights, every owner of interment rights within Chabad Gardens, and all interment rights sold therein, shall be subject to these rules and regulations as they currently exist and as they may be reasonably amended or revised in the future by the Board of Directors of Chabad.

For pricing related to funeral and burial services, please obtain a current price quote from a local funeral home. Chabad is the sole owner of Chabad Gardens grounds and retains ownership of all plots within Chabad Gardens. Any agreement with Chabad regarding placement of the deceased in a plot at Chabad Gardens is for interment rights only.

Owners of interment rights in Chabad Gardens at Palms Memorial Park Cemetery are bound by the current and future rules of Palms Memorial Park Cemetery, as well as the current and future rules of Chabad of Sarasota. In any case where Chabad's rules are more restrictive, Chabad's rules shall govern.

Definitions

A. Jewish Law

“Jewish Law” means adherence to Jewish laws, traditions, and customs in accordance with Halacha, as recorded in the Code of Jewish Law known as the Shulchan Aruch and as interpreted by the Rabbi of Chabad.

B. Shabbat

“Shabbat” refers to the sacred Jewish day of rest, which begins at sundown on Friday evening and ends after nightfall on Saturday evening.

C. Jewish Holiday

“Jewish Holiday” refers to holidays on which labor is prohibited according to Jewish law. Each holiday begins at sundown on the eve of the holiday and ends after nightfall on the concluding day.

D. Rabbi

“Rabbi” refers to the currently serving Rabbi of Chabad.

Halachic Rules

Chabad Gardens is maintained and operated in accordance with Jewish law. Interment rights will be sold only for persons of the Jewish faith, as defined by Jewish law.

No cremated remains may be buried in Chabad Gardens unless death resulted from accidental burning.

All bodies must be prepared in accordance with Jewish law. This includes the Tahara ritual performed by an appointed Chevra Kadisha, as well as the use of traditional burial shrouds.

All burials and burial ceremonies shall be conducted by the Rabbi. No other person or persons may conduct or participate in the burial ceremony without the written approval of the Rabbi.

Any religious matters pertaining to interment or disinterment shall be decided solely by the Rabbi.

Transfer or Return of Interment Rights

Interment rights in Chabad Gardens may not be sold, assigned, transferred, gifted, or otherwise conveyed to another person or party. Once interment rights have been purchased, they remain with the purchaser and may not be transferred under any circumstances.

However, a purchaser who no longer wishes to retain the interment rights may return the original Interment Rights Certificate or proof of purchase document to Chabad. Upon acceptance of the returned document, Chabad will issue a full refund of the original purchase price paid for the interment rights.

All requests to return interment rights must be submitted in writing to

Chabad. For purposes of such notice, Chabad may be contacted by mail at:
7700 Beneva Road
Sarasota, FL 34238

General Rules

No interment, disinterment, unveiling, delivery, or cemetery work of any kind shall be permitted on Shabbat or Jewish holidays.

Disinterment shall be permitted only in accordance with Jewish law and with the written approval of the Rabbi.

No interment shall take place unless and until the interment rights have been paid in full.

Each gravesite, as well as the entire Chabad Gardens section, is maintained by Palms Memorial Park Cemetery. No planting of trees, shrubs, or flowers is permitted. Decorations, flowers, artificial flowers, or other items are not permitted.

Only one casket may be placed in each plot. Palms Memorial Park requires the use of a concrete burial vault for all ground casket burials. In order for the casket to touch the earth in accordance with Jewish law, the vault must either have a large circular opening in the bottom or be interred inverted without its lid.

Gravesite locations are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. Therefore, spouses or family members who wish to be interred in adjacent plots must purchase interment rights at the same time in order to ensure availability.

Monuments and Markers

Each burial site must have a monument installed within one year of burial. All monuments must comply with the standards established by Chabad.

Monuments should be traditional upright headstones, made of stone and designed in a shape and color generally consistent with those found within Chabad Gardens.

All monuments must be approved in writing by the Rabbi before installation.

When family members are buried next to one another, a double headstone may be installed identifying the family name.

Photographs of the deceased may not be incorporated into the design of the monument.

Flower vases are not permitted as permanent installations in conjunction with a headstone or other marker.

Each monument must include the deceased's name in Hebrew lettering, and preferably the Hebrew birth date and Hebrew date of passing. Inclusion of English names and secular dates is optional.

The maintenance and upkeep of a monument is the responsibility of the heirs of the deceased. Any monument that is damaged, whether by acts of nature, vandalism, or any other cause, or that is deemed by the cemetery committee to have become hazardous or unsightly, shall be repaired or replaced at the expense of the heirs or responsible family members.

CHABAD GARDENS

RELATED FEES:

Interment Rights	\$5,000
Single Headstone	\$2,150
Double Headstone	\$3,350
Star of David/Menorah Emblem	\$150
Additional Letters/Numbers	\$9
At-need Name/Date Engraving	\$150
Memorial Bench	\$3,000

The following four styles of solid-granite headstones are available:



Gable



Dome



Straight



Serpentine

Headstone Sizes:

Single: Stone: 22" w x 26" h x 6" thick
Base: 34" w x 12" h x 6" thick

Double: Stone: 36" w x 30" h x 8" thick
Base: 44" w x 14" h x 8" thick

Prices include lettering of names and dates in Hebrew at no extra cost.





SARASOTA-MANATEE

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