



# TRADITIONAL JEWISH FUNERALS



Melbourne  
Chevra Kadisha

# OUR ETHOS

The guiding principle for Jewish burial and mourning customs is that human beings are created 'in the image of our Creator' and we are mandated to have respect for both body and soul. Preserving the physical integrity of the body to allow burial as soon as possible is of the utmost importance.

The mandate of the Chevra Kadisha Burial Society is to treat all Jews equally to ensure a Jewish burial. All Jewish people should have a Jewish burial and funeral according to Jewish Law. Burying the deceased as soon as possible minimises any distress the soul may go through as it takes leave from this physical world.

## WHEN A JEWISH LOVED ONE DIES... WILL YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO?

# OUR ROLE

## THE ROLE OF THE CHEVRA KADISHA BURIAL SOCIETY

Our professionally trained staff handle all funeral arrangements in accordance with ancient Jewish customs that have been passed down from one generation to another in an unbroken chain of tradition.

Each individual's family needs are met in conjunction with these Jewish practices, catering to all Jews regardless of religious affiliation. Our funeral directors provide compassionate support at this sensitive time, discussing various options with families and are contactable 24 hours a day. Our dedicated team attend to all details from the time of death until after the funeral service and has access to all Jewish cemeteries.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DEATH AND ITS IMPACT ON BURIAL DECISIONS

When a person dies, the soul (neshama) hovers around the body. This soul is the essence of the person, their consciousness and totality. At the point of death, the body, created in the image of its Creator, deserves and needs respect and dignity.

On a deeply spiritual level, there is a sublime awareness that senses what is going on around the body that has hosted the soul during its life's journey. The soul is unable to make its way back to its Eternal source until its host body has been buried.

# OUR WORK

## A JEWISH APPROACH TO THE FINAL MOMENTS OF LIFE

The final moments of life are considered to be hallowed and sacred. As such, during these last minutes, those found in the presence of the dying person, aside from those whose emotions are overwhelming, should endeavour to remain with the individual. It is a matter of the greatest respect to be with a person as they pass from this world to the next. Understandably, this is not always possible.

- Place the arms beside the body
- Remove all pillows from around the body and leave one under the head
- Cut off all tubes, cathodes, etc. from their source, do not pull them out
- Do not wash the body
- Cover the face with a top sheet
- Jewellery may be left on the body, as we remove and return it to the family
- From the moment of death until the burial, the deceased should not be left alone

## CAREFUL HANDLING OF THE DECEASED BEFORE BURIAL ACCORDING TO JEWISH TRADITION

After death has been determined, the eyes and mouth of the deceased should be closed, either by family or friends or staff.

The deceased should not be touched or moved except for their honour such as:

- To straighten the body if it is found in an awkward position (by touching through the bed linen)
- Adjust the bed so the body remains flat.

Removal of the body from a hospital or aged care facility to our care can be facilitated by:

1. Contacting Melbourne Chevra Kadisha Burial Society on 03 9534 0208 (This is a 24 hour number, including Shabbat and Jewish Holidays).
2. Once a registered medical practitioner has certified the death of the individual (required by Victorian law), the Medical Certification of Cause of Death (MCCD) is issued immediately.

If there are any difficulties in obtaining the MCCD, this may impede the removal of the deceased.

# OUR PURPOSE

## WHAT IS A CHEVRA KADISHA?

The Chevra Kadisha, Burial Society, is a not for profit organisation comprising of Jewish men and women who see to it that the bodies of deceased Jews are prepared and buried according to Jewish tradition. Chevra Kadisha organisations exist in every city with a Jewish community. The Melbourne Chevra Kadisha been serving the community since 1909.

## WE PRAY YOU NEVER NEED US

However in the event you do ... please call one of our caring staff to discuss your needs.

# A SOUL'S JOURNEY

## FROM THE MOMENT OF DEATH TO THE MOMENT OF BURIAL THE BODY IS CARED FOR

The totality of the person who has died continues to exist for a certain time in the vicinity of the body. A Jewish funeral is concerned with this sensitivity of the deceased, together with the feelings and emotions of the mourners. Jewish funerals focus specifically on respecting, honouring and endearing the deceased.

Traditional Jewish funeral services are all conducted in a similar manner, acknowledging that in death we are all equal. The traditional funeral package includes Chapel (Shtiebel) services, ritual washing of the body (Tahara), shrouds, a funeral director, transport to the cemetery and plain pine casket.

As soon as a death occurs, family members begin a state of grieving. It is at this often challenging time, that MCK can assist by being able to bring the deceased into its care, at all times preserving dignity and arriving at your discretion, to allow for timely and respectful removal of the body. Contacting MCK is the beginning of the relationship between you and the professional staff who will guide you through all arrangements and legalities until post burial.

## PLAN YOUR FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

Preparing for the end of life by purchasing a cemetery plot and making your burial arrangements before the need arises is a gift of love. Your family will not have to make difficult decisions at the most trying of times. They'll know your wishes and will be able to fulfil them and you will reduce the financial burden on your loved ones. Pre-planning your funeral arrangements can take some of the logistical and financial stress away from your family and ensures that you get the kind of funeral you want.

While some have no problem planning their own funeral, it's understandable if you find it too difficult or overwhelming. Don't feel pressured to plan it down to the last detail. However, you can still let your family or those close to you know a few aspects to make it much smoother for everyone involved.

Things to consider:

- Have you chosen and purchased your final resting place
- Have you appointed a family member, an executor or trusted family advisor to handle your funeral arrangements
- Are your wishes clear to your loved ones

We are available for a private, discreet and no obligation discussion if you would like to explore your options.

## TELL YOUR FAMILY WHAT YOU WANT



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Chevra Kadisha

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