



ק"ק אהבת תורה

Woodside Synagogue Ahavas Torah
9001 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Cheshvan 5772

Rabbi Emeritus
Yitzchak Breitowitz

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Even Jews who have wandered quite far from their tradition-intentionally or otherwise-often feel a strong need to reconnect to their G-d and their people when faced with the tragedy of the death of a loved one. They want to sit shiva, say kaddish, and generally explore the ways they can perpetuate the memory of the departed one and bring repose to his/her soul as well as comfort and solace to the surviving family. And lurking in the background is the hope that someone will do the same for them when their time to depart comes. Experience has shown that exposure to the mourning rituals of Judaism and the deep inner healing they provide are often a bridge that brings a person back to to Yiddishkeit.

Unfortunately, however, the laws and rituals are complicated, their philosophy and inner meanings are poorly understood-many Jews assert, for example, that Judaism does not believe in a Hereafter-and people often lack a rabbi or spiritual mentor who can answer their questions.

Two young rabbis, Stefan Coleman and David Kotlyar, identified this problem and laudably want to correct it. They have created a comprehensive website which contains articles, graphics and videos which not only explain in a clear and concise manner the rituals and halachos of the mourning process but also provide spiritual insights into death and bereavement as well as practical steps for elevating the soul of the departed by Torah study, charity, and kaddish. The site has separate tabs for the final moments of life, the funeral, shiva, the setting up of a monument, observance of yahrtzeit (anniversary of death), and the periodic recitation of yizkor. The site also provides a yahrtzeit calculator, and a service that arranges kaddish and/or mishna study for a fee.(All other information on the site is free.) The site is extremely well-designed and user-friendly and will undoubtedly help many people in their time of need.

Bereavement is inescapably painful but knowing that our activities on earth can elevate the soul of the one we love can be a source of great comfort and strength. Yasher koachem to the authors for their fine and important work, a work that will remain necessary until the blessed day that G-d "swallows up death forever and removes the tears from all faces."(Isaiah 35:8).

Yitzchak A. Breitowitz, Magid Shiur, Yeshivat Ohr Somayach and Rabbi Emeritus,
Woodside Synagogue Ahavat Torah.