

Planning For Death

Rabbi Perlin's sermon, **Life is Too Short**, on Erev Rosh Hashanah stated "And planning for your death is the greatest gift you give to those you leave behind." Are you and your family prepared to handle the logistics of a family member dying? Recently Julia Salpeter and I sat down with Brian Derlunas, one of the funeral directors from Jefferson Funeral Chapel to go over the procedures of what needs to be done when a loved one dies. Hopefully, the information that follows will get you started in pre-planning for a death of a loved one.

Jefferson Funeral Chapel in Alexandria is the contracted funeral home in Northern Virginia that handles Jewish deaths; <http://jeffersonfuneralchapel.com/aboutus.html>. They also will help you with the arrangements for an out of state funeral/burial.

The funeral director stated that the best thing one should do is to pre-plan with the funeral home. Make an appointment to visit the funeral home. The information that is needed is at <http://jeffersonfuneralchapel.com/preplan.html>. You can also pre-pay for their services. There is a contracted price for the basic professional services of the funeral director and staff; such as transporting the body from place of death to funeral home, care for the body, the shroud, arrangement conference with family, filing of necessary permits and certificates, and placement of obituary. The cost of a "kosher casket" ranges from \$295 -7,000.

If you have not made any arrangements with Jefferson Chapel before a death occurs you should immediately after the death and ask for the licensed funeral director. They take calls 24 hours a day. They will ask you for some basic information. Please note that there are different procedures for picking up a body depending on where the death occurs. You will need to make an appointment with Jefferson Chapel to have the arrangement conference. All the necessary information that you will need to have for the conference is on their website <http://jeffersonfuneralchapel.com/atneed.html>.

In addition to doing your pre-planning with the funeral home you need to make arrangements with the cemetery where the burial will take place. You could begin the pre-planning process for burial by purchasing your plots ahead of time! (King David Memorial Gardens, 703-560-4400).

Remember, one of the best gifts that you can give your family is to pre-plan for your death.