

Gamliel Institute Course Catalog

January 1 March 31
2020-2021



חברא קדישא
גומלי חסדים

גמליאל

Gamliel Institute
jewish-funerals.org/gamliel

Gamliel Institute
Jewish Learning
Course Catalog

January 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021

5780-81

Comprehensive Jewish End-of-Life Education



www.Jewish-Funerals.org

Cover design by Kerry Swartz

Cover image: Plaque from the Ceremonial Hall of the *Chevrah Kadisha* in Prague, built circa 1907 to replace the original. Note plaque on lower left in photo below.



Photo copyright Jim Linwood

Title page image: Old cemetery in Prague

Photo credit Richard A. Light, 2015

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Course dates and topics subject to change without notice

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Catalog design, creation and editing by Rick Light

Dedicated to the memory of
an elegant lady who inspired many:
Betty Lou Rosenthal Light, z"l

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	Aging, Preplanning for Death, Jewish Literature around Death
	Jewish Death Rituals, End-of-Life Practices, Burial Practices
	Jewish Mourning Practices, Jewish View of Soul and Afterlife
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	Core Curriculum Courses

Gamliel Institute Courses

Welcome to a new program of Gamliel Institute offerings. In addition to our Core Curriculum, we are thrilled to unveil an expanded suite of Taste of Gamliel Short Courses.

This catalog lists the January 2020 through May 2021 schedule of “**Taste of Gamliel Short Courses**,” our new series of one- to three-session offerings, along with our Core Curriculum of full-semester in-depth courses, on all aspects of Jewish rituals and traditions around the end of life.

It also describes the **Gamliel Institute Core Curriculum Courses**. Courses involved in the Core Certificate Program are all taught within a three-year period, but not every course is offered every year.

Both long and short courses cover Jewish practices, liturgy, and rituals related to aging, comforting the ill, attending to the dead, and mourning their loss. They are designed for adults, including Jewish educators, clergy, lay leaders, *Chevrah Kadisha* participants, and community members.

The Taste of Gamliel Short Courses may be offered once or scheduled on a regular basis. Topics and instructors are chosen to provide a mix of exploration areas and learning levels.

Core Curriculum courses offer a tuition discount for clergy. Students with financial need can [contact the Registrar](#) to inquire about **scholarships**.

All courses are taught online using a tool called **Zoom** ([see page 45](#)), with the exception of the live courses offered at conferences. Zoom “meeting numbers” connect students to the right class. These are sent to registered students a few days prior to the first class of each course. All classes within a course use the same meeting number.

[Click to learn more](#) about the Gamliel Institute and its parent organization, Kavod v’Nichum, or visit the website www.Jewish-Funerals.org.

This catalog is updated regularly online and can be viewed as a “flipbook” as well as downloaded as a PDF from the link below. Hyperlinks within the catalog allow navigation and connection to websites outside of the catalog. See:

www.Jewish-Funerals.org/gamliel

Taste of Gamliel Short Courses

The Gamliel Institute is excited to offer new learning opportunities for 2020 and 2021. Our very successful Taste of Gamliel series will become a full suite of Short Courses.

The new Short Courses will provide an opportunity to learn across a broad range of topics throughout the year. Instructors are chosen for their reputation as experts in their field, subject knowledge and teaching abilities. Gamliel seeks to achieve the highest of standard of education in all aspects of our courses.

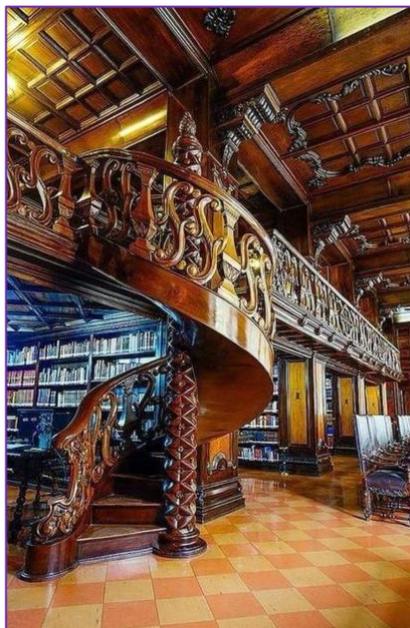
Each class within a course is 90 minutes in length, taught online using a tool called Zoom. **Zoom account** information is given on [page 45](#).

Course registration information is on [page 48](#). For all Taste of Gamliel Short Courses, registrants have access to the **recordings of the sessions**. If the live course has already happened, new students can register for the recordings after the fact – just use the same registration form as for the live course but register for the recordings. You will be sent the link to access the recordings.

Courses in this catalog are listed chronologically by date. There is a [detailed index at the back](#) of the catalog to assist you in finding specific topics or instructors.

Online, click on the dates below to go directly to each listing:

- [January, February, March 2020](#)
- [April, May, June 2020](#)
- [July, August, September 2020](#)
- [October, November, December 2020](#)
- [January, February, March 2021](#)



Paradigms of Parting: Exploring Jewish Texts About Facing Death

Rabbi Richard Hirsh

January 9, 23, and February 6, 2020

Thursdays, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific (one 90-minute class)

Topic area is Jewish mourning practices

Course fee is \$108 ([register now](#))

Using stories from biblical, rabbinic and hasidic texts, we will explore how biblical heroes, talmudic sages and hasidic masters faced the inevitability of impermanence. In reading the texts, we will look for insights that might be applied to contemporary spiritual practice--and those that might be avoided. Implicit in these stories about the end of life are suggestions about how life is lived most fully in the face of its inevitable end, and insights into how family and friends can provide context, care and compassion that can ease moments of parting. All texts will be available in English.

The Well-Dressed Jewish Corpse – The Etiology of Jewish Shrouds

Isaac Pollak

February 20, 2020

Thursday, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific (one 90-minute class)

Topic areas are *taharah* and Jewish burial practices

Course fee is \$36 ([register now](#))

Why white shrouds? Why ideally linen? Why no pockets? Where do the knots come from? What is the historic, textual and archeological background for the shrouds used today? In this course we will study and examine some of the relevant data currently available to understand *tachrichim* used in today's *Chevrah Kadisha* work.

Zayan Adar Day of Learning: The Jewish Memory of Death

Yakir Englander, PhD

March 1, 2020

Sunday, 12:00pm Eastern / 9:00am Pacific (three 90-minute classes)

(Sessions begin at 12:00pm, 2:30pm, 5:00pm Eastern / 9:00am, 11:30am, 2:00pm Pacific)

Topic area is Jewish theology around death

Course fee is \$108 ([register now](#))

In this unique day of learning, we will focus on moments in Jewish history where death shifted from the private sphere to the public one. By reading materials and using theory around Memory vs History -- we will explore how in times of crisis our leaders used literature to create a meaning narrative around it. Our first session will focus on how Israeli literature uses the biblical narrative of the Binding of Isaac in order to deal with the loss of soldiers during war and terror attacks. The second session will explore how the Ultra-Orthodox theology reacted to the horrible events of the Holocaust. The Holocaust challenged the traditional terms of Kiddush Hashem and the leaders of the community found a fascinated way how to include the events of the war under this category. In our third session we will explore the how the Jewish Midrash speaks about suffering and death of nature, and the responsibility of our Jewish leadership toward it.

History of Chevrah Kadisha

Rick Light

March 11, 2020

Wednesday, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific (one 90-minute class)

Topic area is *Chevrah Kadisha*

Course fee is \$36 ([register now](#))

The historical development of the practices of the *Chevrah Kadisha* begins with Biblical sources and continues through the Talmud and later Medieval period. It is here that we discover the values and principles which underlie the work of the *Chevrah Kadisha* and make it an essential Jewish institution. In the limited time of a single class we will explore the development of these values through our historical journey, culminating with the publication of the *Ma'avar Yabok* in 1626 with its influence on the modern time, to discover the foundations of the rituals and practices of the *Chevrah Kadisha* today.

Prayer as Deepest Desire: Writing Contemporary Liturgy

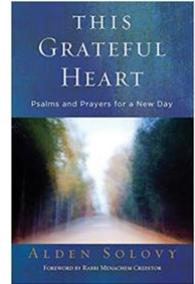
Alden Solovy

March 25, April 1, 2020

Wednesdays, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific (two 90-minute classes)

Topic area is Jewish literature around death

Course fee is \$72 ([register now](#))



Join liturgist Alden Solovy on a spiritual journey into to prayer, as you to expand your skills and techniques for creating new Jewish liturgy. This workshop – blending source study, discussion and writing exercises to explore the deepest desire of prayer – will be mystical, playful and practical. The sessions will encourage experimentation, challenging participants to find their own authentic voice(s) of prayer. Participants will practice tools for creating or expanding a spiritual writing practice.



Gamliel Institute *Israel Spiritual Care at the End of Life* Mini-Conference in Jerusalem, 2015

Grit and Grace: Meeting the Spiritual Challenges of Aging

Rabbi Dayle Friedman

April 22, 2020

Wednesday, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific (one 90-minute class)

Topic area is aging

Course fee is \$36 ([register now](#))

The path beyond midlife presents both spiritual challenges and opportunities. We will explore a Jewish spiritual framework for mapping this journey. We will investigate practices and habits that can maximize resiliency and wisdom, as well as implications for spiritual caregivers

Seven Sacred Circles: Cultivating the Divine Feminine

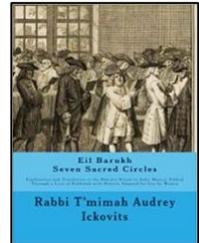
Rabbi T'mimah Ickovits

April 29 and May 6, 2020

Wednesdays, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific (two 90-minute classes)

Topic area is *taharah*

Course fee is \$72 ([register now](#))



The circle has no end and no beginning, no leaders nor followers. It models equality and inclusivity. Every point has a moment to shine - similar to the way the constellations of the Zodiac each get to lead for a portion of the year, everyone gets a turn. We will explore the relevance of seven *hakafot*; circles referencing Kabbalah's tree of life, spiritual poetry of the *Ana B'khoah*, and *Sefer Ma'avar Yabok*. You will develop a deeper understanding of the potency of *hakafot*; circuit dancers and tools to support honoring the sacredness of each of the seven cycles. The first session we will consider and experience the sacred seven and circuits in Jewish practice. The second session will focus on the seven sacred circles around a *meit* or *meitah* from *Sefer Ma'avar Yabok*.

You Shall Surely Bury Them? The Jewish Community's Cremation Challenge

David Zinner

May 20 and 27, 2020

Wednesday, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific (two 90-minute classes)

Topic area is Jewish burial practices

Course fee is \$72 ([register now](#))

Should the *Chevrot Kadisha* of the U.S. and Canada expend significant effort to encourage the Jewish community to shun cremation and promote ground burial? The Jewish community spends little time talking about the issues of Cremation, Ground Burial and Cemetery Preservation. Even among those active in the *Chevrah Kadisha* world, there is a significant lack of education about Jewish cemetery issues in general, and the issue of cremation in particular. The tsunami of cremation challenges basic Torah teaching. It also can create a dilemma for *taharah* teams and is a fundamental threat for Jewish cemeteries. The teaching is clear: cremation is not part of the traditional Jewish funeral and burial practice; burial is an essential element of traditional funeral and burial practice. The strategy to reverse the trend is not so clear, with a number of alternatives discussed in class.

18th Annual Chevrah Kadisha and Jewish Cemetery Conference

Online this year using Zoom!

June 7-10, 2020

Sunday through Wednesday

Topic areas include all aspects of Jewish end of life practices



Detailed information about this year's conference is found here:

<https://www.jewish-funerals.org/conferences/about-this-years-conference/>

Registration is open!

Register here: <https://www.jewish-funerals.org/online-conference-registration/>

See more information about the June Conference on [page 43](#).

“You Want It Darker” – The Death Awareness Practice of Leonard Cohen

Gary Goldberg

June 25, 2020

Thursday, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific (one 90-minute class)

Topic area is Jewish end of life practices

Course fee is \$36 ([register now](#))

Inspired by relevant selections drawn from *Tangle of Matter and Ghost, Leonard Cohen's Post-Secular Songbook of Mysticism(s) Jewish & Beyond*, by Rabbi Aubrey Glazer (Academic Studies Press, 2017), we will examine how the poet, lyricist and performer celebrated life and prepared for the transition out through his art and the gift he left behind for the living to contemplate and enjoy. As Rabbi Glazer states: “I would argue that this call to love in approaching death is revealed with greater courage than ever in Cohen’s, *You Want It Darker*. This bold self-assessment of the soul’s journey taking place in this song is the work of all real philosophy.” We will examine the paradoxical relationship between light and dark, becoming and being, appearance and existence, life and death; and how the art of Leonard Cohen searches deeply and continues to inspire us to grasp onto the redemptive power of the light of love—the *Chessed*—that penetrates through the crack in everything to guide us through life’s journey.

July, August, September 2020 Short Courses

Death with Dignity

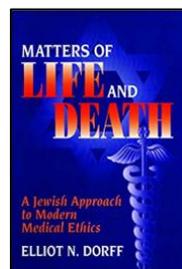
Rabbi Elliot Dorff, PhD

July 16 and 23, 2020

Thursdays, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific (two 90-minute classes)

Topic area is Jewish end of life practices

Course fee is \$72 ([register now](#))



Rabbi Dorff will discuss the new *tshuvah* he authored for the Conservative Movement that considers the ethical and halachic implications of medical aid in dying. Medically assisted death is a practice in which a terminally ill adult with less than six months to live who feels that the dying process has become unbearable may request a lethal dose of drugs from their doctor for self-administration to bring about death.

Jewish Sacred Aging

Rabbi Richard Address

August 5 and 12, 2020

Wednesdays, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific (two 90-minute classes)

Topic area is aging and Jewish practice

Course fee is \$72 ([register now](#))

The longevity revolution has produced major changes in our Jewish community. We are older, more active and more eager to engage the tradition. In this two-session course we will examine some of the texts that form a spiritual foundation for positive aging in this new frontier and then examine some of the more powerful new rituals and prayers that are being created to respond to the new life stages that have emerged as a result of our longevity.

Journey of the Soul in the World Beyond: Wisdom from Kabbalah

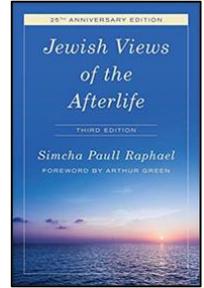
Simcha Raphael, PhD

October 15, 2020

Thursday, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific (one 90-minute class)

Topic area is Jewish view of the afterlife

Course fee is \$36 ([register now](#))



Does Judaism believe in the afterlife? Unequivocally, the answer is yes! Unfortunately, in contemporary Jewish life we have lost touch with traditional Jewish wisdom on the afterlife. We shall explore Judaism's teachings on life after death, particularly in Kabbalah – Jewish mysticism. Through discussion, storytelling and study of mystical texts, we shall explore the relevance of these teachings in dealing with the human encounter with death and the connection between Jewish teachings on the afterlife and traditional Jewish death rituals.

Building a Citywide Shmirah Community in the 21st Century

Gail Tosto

October 29, 2020

Thursday, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific (one 90-minute class)

Topic area is *shmirah*

Course fee is \$36 ([register now](#))

Learn how the Jewish community of Austin, Texas – from Chabad to the unaffiliated – collaborate to provide *shmirah* across congregations and denominations, on a volunteer basis. Take a tour of a *shmirah* coordination website that can be cloned for use by your local community. Learn about:

- Using technology to streamline *shomer* recruitment and shift-filling duties
 - Building up a city-wide pool of *shomrim* while respecting multiple approaches to end-of-life rituals and upholding the dignity and autonomy of each *shomer*
 - Avoiding burnout for both coordinators and *shomrim*
 - Inspiring people to give this mitzvah a try and stick with it
 - Putting a little joy – and your own personal signature – on a potentially somber practice
-

Forgotten Mourners

Rabbi Daniel Greyber

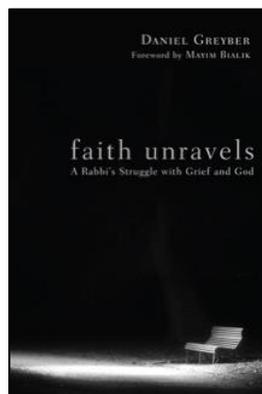
November 5, 2020

Thursday, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific

(one 90-minute class)

Topic area is Jewish mourning practices

Course fee is \$36 ([register now](#))



Jewish law defines the mourning process for a parent, spouse, sibling, and child. But what happens when we lose someone who does not fit in those categories? Author of *Faith Unravels: A Rabbi's Struggle with Grief and God*, Rabbi Daniel Greyber will recall his own experience of being a forgotten mourner after the death of two close friends and we will explore how we can build communities that acknowledge all who grieve and help them to heal.

Chayei Sarah Day of Learning

Our program for this day is CANCELED so you can attend Limmud Global Day

November 8, 2020

Please attend the GlobalDay international day of learning through Limmud North America. More information is found here:

<https://limmudna.org/globalday/>

Exploring Taharah Strings

Rena Boroditsky

December 2, 2020

Wednesday, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific (one 90-minute class)

Topic area is *taharah*

Course fee is \$36 ([register now](#))

May of those who volunteer to perform *taharah* find the biggest challenge is tying the knots in the *tachrichim*. There are many approaches to this task, with variations from *chevrah* to *chevrah* based on local *mihagim*. We will explore the challenges and solutions to this procedure. Participants should bring a 2- to 3-foot piece of cord to the session so they can practice techniques shown.

Funeral Home Contracting

Arthur R. Hessel

December 16, 2020

Wednesday, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific (one 90-minute class)

Topic area is Jewish burial practices

Course fee is \$36 ([register now](#))

For several decades, the Jewish Funeral Practices Committee of Greater Washington, Inc., a DC nonprofit, has contracted with local funeral homes to provide traditional Jewish funerals at a price far below market charges. Funerals use plain pine caskets, and the funeral homes have facilities and space for both *shmirah* and *taharah*. This one-night course will focus on the details of the current contracts, and some of the problems that need to be overcome.

Kavod v'Nichum for the Living and the Dead – Health and Safety During Taharah

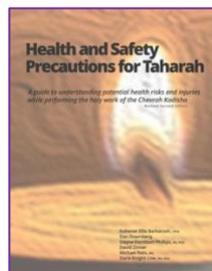
Kohenet Ellie Barbarash and Elayne Phillips, PhD

January 7 and 21, 2021

Thursdays, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific (two 90-minute classes)

Topic area is *taharah*

Course fee is \$72 ([register now](#))



For *Chevrah Kadisha* members, the focus of their work is usually on the holy task of *taharah*, with seamless coordination, silence and sacred text. This course shifts the perspective to the equally sacred work of protecting our own bodies from harm while performing this mitzvah. In this seminar, you will learn about hazard assessment, disease transmission and simple best practices to maintain safety before, during and after the tasks associated with preparing bodies for burial in the Jewish tradition. The course will follow the Gamlie publication, "[Health and Safety Precautions for Taharah.](#)" There will be ample time for sharing stories and asking questions throughout the presentation.

Jewish Advance Directives

Edna Stewart

February 10, 2021

Wednesday, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific (one 90-minute class)

Topic area is preplanning for death

Course fee is \$36 ([register now](#))

The Advance Directive is a medically associated document that aids you in specifically stating what your end of life wishes will be. The Advance Directive is a legal document whereas the Jewish Advance Directive is not. Based on the formality of the Advance Directive, the Jewish Advance Directive instructs your loved ones about how you want your Jewish rituals for death, burial, and during mourning to be carried out. How many days of *shiva* do you want? Who would you like to do your funeral? The Jewish Advance Directive is most helpful to the *Chevrah Kadisha* who will assist with ensuring your wishes are carried out. It may also bring you peace of mind.

Zayan Adar Day of Learning: A Day with Ma'avar Yabok

Instructors TBD

February 21, 2021

Sunday, 12:00pm Eastern / 9:00am Pacific, 3 sessions (three 90-minute classes)
(Sessions begin at 12:00pm, 2:30pm, 5:00pm Eastern / 9:00am, 11:30am, 2:00pm Pacific)

Topic area is yet to be determined

Course fee is \$108

This will be a full day of learning will be similar to the ones shown on pages [9](#) and [16](#). As the topic and instructors are selected, this paragraph will be updated to reflect accordingly.

Kavod v'Nichum: Understanding Jewish End of Life Rituals – The Why and the What of Jewish Rituals

Rabbi David Levin

February 25, 2021

Thursday, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific (one 90-minute class)

Topic area is Jewish end of life rituals

Course fee is \$36 ([register now](#))

The Jewish wisdom tradition is designed to both honor the deceased and comfort the grieving. The things we do and the way we do them serve both goals. In our time together we will explore the deep wisdom of our rituals and the story behind them.

Final Kindness: Honoring K'rovei Yisrael

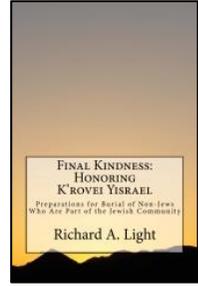
Rick Light

March 3, 2021

Wednesday, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific (one 90-minute class)

Topic area is *taharah*

Course fee is \$36 ([register now](#))



In today's modern Jewish society we are faced with an increasing number of interfaith families in which one spouse is Jewish and the other is not. When the Jewish spouse requests that their non-Jewish loved-one be buried as a Jew, a dilemma arises. How does one prepare a non-Jew for burial using Jewish traditions? Many *chevrot* and synagogues simply deny the request, stating that Jewish practices are for Jews only. Yet with so many families now expressing interest in this, it is timely that we now have such a ritual. Rick Light's book is the first of its kind in the field of Jewish death rituals and extends the scope of the current Jewish umbrella under which our dead are respectfully prepared for burial. Every community in which there are mixed-religion marriages should be aware of this manual.

When the "Silver Cord is Snapped Asunder"

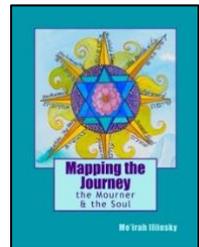
Rabbi Me'irah Iliinsky

March 11, 2021

Thursday, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific (one 90-minute class)

Topic areas are Jewish mourning and view of soul

Course fee is \$36 ([register now](#))



Surviving the death of someone dear catapults us into a unique, slowed down, here-and-now time in which the doings of everyday life seem irrelevant. The liminal place is pregnant with meaning and wild possibility. It can be calm or uplifting, profound or frightening. Having a map would assist us. I have created just such a map. Using projected images from the map, we will trace the journey from deathbed through the first year of mourning with an aim to locating where the mourner is, and what the soul is doing during the same period.

Need info about Jewish death traditions and practices?

www.Jewish-Funerals.org

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Kavod v'Nichum and Gamliel Institute website. At the top, there is a header with the organization's name in Hebrew and English, and a mission statement: "Kavod v'Nichum and Gamliel Institute provide resources, education, and training along the Jewish end-of-life continuum: from visiting the sick and pre-planning, to care for the body after death, to providing comfort to the mourners." Below the header is a search bar. The main content area is a grid of six colored boxes, each representing a different resource category: "There's Been a Death" (grey), "Understanding Jewish Practices" (orange), "Educating Your Community" (purple), "Starting a Chevrah Kadisha" (light orange), "Enhancing a Chevrah Kadisha" (light green), and "Chevrah Kadisha News Feed" (teal). Each box contains a brief description of the resources available. At the bottom of the page, there is a navigation menu with links to Home, About Us, Conferences, Courses, Registration, Resources, Shop, Need Help?, Donate, Aging, Chevrah Kadisha, Taharah and Shmirah, Funeral and Burial, Topic Index, Contact Us, and Feedback. There is also a green button that says "Click here to support Chevrah Kadisha events throughout North America" and a small logo for "Kavod v'Nichum and Gamliel Institute".

The most comprehensive online source
for Jewish rituals around the end of life.

How to handle a death, Jewish practices and rituals,
educating your community, starting and enhancing a *Chevrah Kadisha*,
comforting friends and family, transforming aging, dying, and death.

- [Kavod v'Nichum and Gamliel Institute website: Resources for Jewish End-of-Life Practices](http://www.Jewish-Funerals.org)
- [Expired and Inspired Blog](#)
- [Chevrah Kadisha FaceBook Page](#)
- [Kavod v'Nichum Listserve](#)
- [Kavod v'Nichum Twitter](#)
- [Kavod v'Nichum Instagram](#)

Also see [Jewish Sacred Aging](#) podcast interviews with David Zinner:
[July 21, 2014 \(part I\)](#), [August 1, 2014 \(part II\)](#), [March 17, 2017](#)



Kavod v'Nichum Publications

Consider publishing your *chevrah*-related book!

Will it further the genre of Jewish dying, death and mourning literature?
Does it help with the holy work of caring for those who encounter death?

Contact the Kavod v'Nichum Publications Coordinator to see how we can help:

- Book formatting and layout guidance
- Kavod v'Nichum seal of recommendation if our Publications Committee determines it enhances the literature of the field
- Publications receiving our seal will be promoted on our website and in appropriate printed materials
- Examples of books we've helped publish include:
 - *The Alef Bet of Dying Jewishly* – Rabbi Ariel Stone
 - *Divrei Nichum ~ Comforting Words During Times of Loss* – Lisa Rappaport
 - *Health and Safety Precautions for Taharah* – Ellie Barbarash, Dan Doernberg, Elayne Kronblatt Philips, Michael Rein, and David Zinner
 - *Jewish Rites of Death* – Richard A. Light

Contact Rick Light at rlight@jewish-funerals.org or 505-412-3976





Kavod v'Nichum Scholar in Residence

Invite us to teach and help organize in your community!

Staff members of Kavod v'Nichum provide training and support for new and existing *Chevrah Kadisha* groups throughout North America. One of our experienced knowledgeable staff will come to your community to teach and train over several days, usually including a weekend. We tailor and format our training to your community's specific needs and desires, mixing and matching topics and formats, to ensure a positive, fruitful, rewarding, energizing and productive interaction.

The fees for a weekend Scholar in Residence include \$3,500 honorarium plus transportation and lodging. We offer a 5% discount if you mention [20/20 Judaism](#). Fees are negotiable if the full price is unaffordable.

The typical schedule includes:

- Thursday funeral home tour
- Friday night and/or Saturday morning *drash*
- Shabbat lunch and learn based on Torah or Talmud
- After *Havdallah* taharah liturgy study
- Sunday morning religious school class on comforting
- Sunday afternoon *taharah* training
- Sunday evening planning continuing education
- Monday morning strategizing next steps

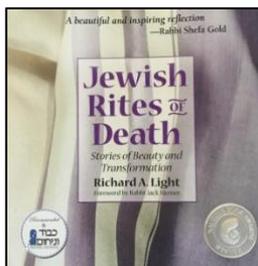
Schedule your scholar today:

Contact David Zinner at info@jewish-funerals.org or call 410-733-3700

Jewish Rites of Death: Stories of Beauty and Transformation



Winner 2016 Nautilus Book Award



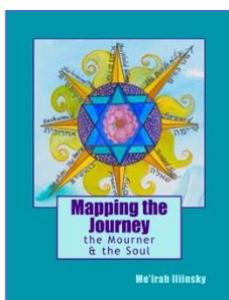
Personal stories about what it feels like to do the holy work of taking care of the dead: what it feels like to enter into the liminal space between death and life to midwife a soul between worlds. Over 20 authors' stories are included.

For information on all of Rick Light's books:
<https://richardalight.com>

Profoundly insightful, inspired and inspiring, impressively well written, organized and presented, **Jewish Rites of Death** is a unique and very highly recommended addition to personal, synagogue, community, and academic Judaic Studies collections.

— Midwest Book Review, March 2016

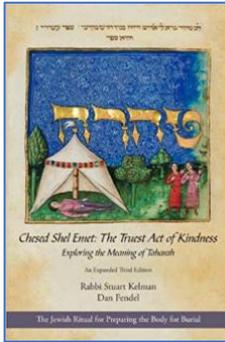
Mapping the Journey: The Mourner and the Soul



Surviving the death of someone dear catapults us into the liminal place: a place between familiar routines in which the doings of everyday life seem irrelevant. The liminal place is pregnant with meaning and wild possibility. Anything can happen here. It can be calm or uplifting, profound or frightening. It would be helpful to have a map.

In her book, author Rabbi Me'irah has created just such a map within the timeframes of Jewish Tradition and has included the "whereabouts" of the soul during that first shaky year of mourning.

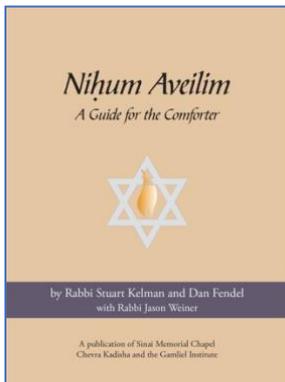
For information on all of Rabbi Me'irah's art:
<http://www.versesilluminated.com>



[A Taharah Manual that Illuminates Liturgy](#)

Taharah practices have deep historical roots. Beginning in Mishnaic times, specific procedures and customs evolved in various locations and through many generations. As a result, numerous traditions exist today. This booklet is one link in the chain of our Jewish tradition. **Chesed Shel Emet: The Truest Act of Kindness** details the ritual of preparing a body for burial. The 3rd edition adds a liturgical understanding of the prayers that are said while performing a *taharah*. This booklet is an essential resource for any existing *Chevrah Kadisha* or for a community interested in forming one.

Authors Rabbi Stuart Kelman and Dan Fendel give *kavanot* for each aspect of this meaningful ritual, along with insights into how the liturgy works among all of the “players in the room.”



[Nihum Aveilim: A Guide for the Comforter](#)

By Rabbi Stuart Kelman and Dan Fendel
with Rabbi Jason Weiner

Those who attend Jewish funerals are often not familiar with Jewish traditions, practices and prayers. **Nihum Aveilim** provides guidance and insight. What do you do? What should you expect? What do you say? How should you behave in a way that is respectful and appropriate, while honoring Jewish traditions?

For information on bulk purchasing email orders@ekspublishing.com or call 877-743-2739.

Core Curriculum Courses

There are eight Core Curriculum Courses, of which, Courses 1–5 and 7 are required for the Gamliel Institute Certificate of *Chevrah Kadisha* Study. These core courses cover the spectrum of illness, comfort, death, funerals, burial, and mourning, and are designed both to educate students and to help create a foundation of knowledge and skills to help students become leaders in their own communities.

Courses 6 and 8 are offered periodically and are not part of the Certificate Program. Certificate courses 1–5 are composed of twelve weekly 90-minute online class sessions. (Course 7 has a different structure and is described on the page [34](#).)

Each class session includes live presentations and discussions via the [Zoom](#) meeting app. Students are also expected to explore the readings, participate in weekly study group discussions, and contribute regularly to a written discussion forum about the issues discussed in the course. No exam is required.

Information about establishing and accessing a **free Zoom account** is on [page 45](#). Information about **course registration** is on [page 48](#). **The Academic Bulletin** describing the Gamliel Institute policies can be viewed [here](#).

The Gamliel Institute Core Curriculum Courses are:

- [Course 1: Chevrah Kadisha: Origins and Evolution \(register now\)](#)
This course traces the evolution of *Chevrah Kadisha* practice and the *chevrah's* role in the community from early times, through the standard of practice in Medieval Europe, and into the changes that took place in the transition to the Western Hemisphere and modern times.
- [Course 2: Chevrah Kadisha: Taharah and Shmirah \(register now\)](#)
The central elements of *Chevrah Kadisha* practice include the rituals of *taharah* —preparation of the body for burial; and *shmirah*—the watching (or “guarding”) of the body between death and burial. This course addresses liturgy, training, safety, and more.
- [Course 3: Chevrah Kadisha: Educating, Organizing and Training \(register now\)](#)
Creating and maintaining a *Chevrah Kadisha* involves leadership, communal education, and organizational skills, including developing relationships with funeral homes and cemeteries. This course addresses these issues, while providing a skill-foundation for students to use in their own communities.

- [Course 4: *Chevrah Kadisha*: Nechamah](#)
The mitzvah of *nechamah* (comfort)—both comfort for the ill (*bikur cholim*) and comfort for the grieving (*nichum aveilim*)—is a vital part of *Chevrah Kadisha* work. This course looks at the skills involved in this work, and includes areas such as listening techniques, the concept of an ethical will, and principles involving remembrance. It also provides students with opportunities to examine and deepen their own attitudes and outlooks about illness and death.
- [Course 5: *Chevrah Kadisha*: Liturgy and Ritual Practice](#) ([register now](#))
Our tradition has a broad and rich liturgy and practice around end-of-life issues. This course examines the liturgy and related practice in detail, focusing on funeral and burial prayers, local *minhagim*, and the role of the rabbi.
- [Course 6: *Chevrah Kadisha*: International Perspectives](#)
Jewish end-of-life practice has changed not only over time, but also from place to place. This study-mission examines variation in practices around the world, centered around a two-to-three-week exploratory adventure to New York, Prague, and Israel.
- [Course 7: *Chevrah Kadisha*: Student Projects](#)
Student projects may involve various aspects of *Chevrah Kadisha* work, including organizing and education as well as more academic pursuits. Projects have two primary goals: (a) to improve students' leadership skills and/or knowledge, and (b) to serve as contributions/resources for others in the field. This course is open only to students who have successfully completed Course 3.
- [Course 8: *Chevrah Kadisha*: 10-Week Overview Course](#)
This course is intended to summarize the main topic areas of Core Courses 1, 2, and 3, whose central focus areas are, respectively, the history of *Chevrah Kadisha* work, *taharah* and *shmirah* ritual practices, creating and managing a *chevrah*, and community and *chevrah* educating and training. This course is taught in 10 class sessions instead of the 12 classes taught in Certificate courses and this course is generally offered online to specific communities throughout North America and Europe.

Course 1: *Chevrah Kadisha*: Origins and Evolution

Course Dates

September 1 through November 17, 2020
Tuesdays, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific
(each class is 90 minutes) ([register now](#))
Rick Light, David Zinner



Subject Matter Topics

History and origin of *Chevrah Kadisha* practices

Prerequisite Requirements

This course has no prerequisites.

Description

This course traces the evolution of *Chevrah Kadisha* practice and the *chevrah's* role in the community from early times, through the standard of practice in Medieval Europe, and into the changes that took place in the transition to the Western Hemisphere and modern times.

Each topic in this course is enhanced by text study related to the specific time period being discussed.

Topic areas include:

- Introduction to *Chevrah Kadisha*
- Textual foundations and developments
- Historical evolution of this work
 - Biblical and Talmudic to Europe
 - Europe to North America
 - North America pre-1960
 - North America post-1960
 - North America pre-1975 Models
 - North America post-1975 Models
 - Recent decades
- *Meit mitzvah* historically and today
- The larger community today
- Disasters and the *Chevrah Kadisha*
- Future directions, challenges and opportunities

Course 2: *Chevrah Kadisha: Taharah and Shmirah*

Course Dates

October 5 – December 21, 2021
Tuesdays, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific
(each class is 90 minutes) ([register now](#))
Instructors TBD



Subject Matter Topics

The rituals between death and burial, namely, *taharah* and *shmirah*

Prerequisite Requirements

This course has no prerequisites.

Description

The central elements of *Chevrah Kadisha* practice include the two important rituals of *taharah*, preparation of the body for burial; and *shmirah*, the watching (or “guarding”) of the body between death and burial. This course addresses liturgy, training, safety, and complications.

This course examines the Jewish religious significance of what a *Chevrah Kadisha* does, as we examine the meanings of the rituals associated with *taharah* and *shmirah*. Students explore not only the physical and emotional aspects of these rituals, but also delve into the liturgy behind them and how to understand why the liturgy works the way it does. This course provides students with a tremendous amount of detail and useful information to take back to home *chevrot* and to help students develop a significantly deeper understanding of these sacred tasks.

Topic areas include:

- *Taharah* and *shmirah* overview
- Understanding *tahor* and *tamei*
- *Chevrah* and *taharah* leadership
- *Chevrah* policy considerations
- *Taharah* complications
- Handling emotional aspects of this work
- Liturgy and *taharah* manuals
- *Tachrichim* and *Aronot*
- Health and safety precautions for *taharah*
- *Shmirah*
- *Taharah* and *shmirah* facilities

Course 3: *Chevrah Kadisha*: Educating, Organizing and Training

Course Dates

February 23 through May 11, 2021
Tuesdays, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific
(each class is 90 minutes) ([register now](#))
Susan Barnes, Holly Blue Hawkins



Subject Matter Topics

How to do death education, educating communities and *chevrot*, starting a new *Chevrah Kadisha*, leadership in the *chevrah* context

Prerequisite Requirements

This course requires students to have successfully completed at least one other Core Curriculum course, with strong preference for more than one. This course is a prerequisite for Course 7.

Description

This course covers (1) how to educate various audiences about our traditions at the end of life, specifically, community education and *Chevrah Kadisha* member education; (2) how to start a new *chevrah*, and (3) what is involved in leading and managing a *chevrah*.

Creating and maintaining a *Chevrah Kadisha* involves leadership, communal education, and organizational skills, including developing relationships with funeral homes and cemeteries. This course addresses these issues, while providing a skill-foundation for students to use in their own communities.

Students are required to write two “exploration papers” during this course as a means to learn how to apply the concepts presented.

Topic areas include:

- Overview and context
- Educational planning
- Educational motivation
- Educating youth and children
- Creating a new *Chevrah Kadisha*
- Operational management
- *Chevrah Kadisha* leadership
- Funeral homes and cemeteries
- Applying these teachings in your own community

Course 4: *Chevrah Kadisha: Nechamah*

Course Dates

The next offering of this course is yet to be determined



Subject Matter Topics

Comforting the dying and the mourning

Prerequisite Requirements

This course requires students to have successfully completed at least one other Core Curriculum course, or life experience doing related work as approved by the instructors.

Description

The mitzvah of comforting (*nechamah*) — both comfort for the ill (visiting the sick, *bikkur cholim*) and comfort for the grieving (*nichum aveilim*) — is a vital part of *Chevrah Kadisha* work. This course teaches some of the skills involved in this work, and includes areas such as listening techniques, the concept of an ethical will, bedside prayer, and principles involving remembrance. It also provides students with opportunities to examine and deepen their own attitudes and outlooks about illness and death.

The course deals with acquiring the skills necessary to provide the mitzvah of *nichum aveilim* (comforting mourners) across the entire continuum of experience at the end of life. The skills needed for *nichum aveilim* are similar to those needed for *bikkur cholim* (visiting the sick).

Topic areas include:

- Introduction to *nechamah*
- Death cafes
- Text foundations
- Aging
- Practical skills for *nechamah* and *bikkur cholim*
- Challenging situations
- Chaplaincy and healing, hospice
- Family considerations
- Prayer and song
- Ethical wills, advance directives, organ donation, et al
- Grief and *nichum aveilim*
- Putting it all together

Course 5: *Chevrah Kadisha*: Liturgy and Ritual Practice

Course Dates

December 1, 2020 through February 16, 2021
Tuesdays, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific
(each class is 90 minutes) ([register now](#))

Dan Fendel, Rabbi Stuart Kelman, Rabbi Janet Madden



Subject Matter Topics

Funeral and burial liturgy and practices (other than *taharah* and *shmirah*)

Prerequisite Requirements

This course has no prerequisites.

Description

Our tradition has a broad and rich liturgy and practice around end-of-life issues, steeped in history and diverse in content. This course will explore that liturgy and those practices in areas such as visiting the sick, behavior at the deathbed, funeral and burial practices, and issues of mourning and remembrance.

Note: The course does not address issues related to the common *Chevrah Kadisha* practices of *taharah* and *shmirah*, which are covered in Course 2.

Topic areas usually included in this course:

- Continuum of care
- Prayer, liturgy and ritual
- What is ritual?
- *Bikkur cholim* (visiting the sick)
- *Vidui* (deathbed confession)
- Moment of death and preparations for the funeral
- *Levayah* (accompaniment)
- Funeral service, liturgy and ritual
- Burial service
- Cemeteries
- Mourning and community
- Remembrance
- Kaddish
- Jewish ideas of afterlife

Course 6: *Chevrah Kadisha*: International Perspectives

Course Dates

The next offering of this course is yet to be determined



Subject Matter Topics

Chevrah Kadisha practices historically and geographically, and how these change through time and location

Prerequisite Requirements

The prerequisites for enrolling in this course include completion of Gamliel Core Courses 1 through 5, and permission from the Dean.

Description

This is an unusual course. Jewish end-of-life practice has changed not only over time, but also from place to place. Course 6 is a trip to historical sites, cemeteries, museums, memorials, *Chevrot Kadisha*, synagogues, cities, towns, and villages. It is an exploration through time and geography, to compare and discover the depth of *chevrah* practices throughout the world. This trip examines variation in practices around the world, centered around an 18-day study mission to New York, Prague, and Israel. The details of this course are dependent upon when and where we go.

This course has been offered only once so far, and that trip included New York City, Prague, Tzfat, Jerusalem, and other historic sites related to *chevrah* evolution, practice, and development. It is expected that future offerings of this course will be very similar. During the 2015 trip we visited many cemeteries, synagogues, *Chevrot Kadisha*, and ancient historical sites. We experienced 45 events in 18 days. It was very intense, beautiful, meaningful, and rich. The next Course 6 offering will balance these while giving students a truly amazing experience of a lifetime.

The course format also includes three 1.5-hour online classes (one per week) prior to departure to prepare students for the experience of the trip, and two 1.5-hour online sessions after returning home.

Dates and itinerary for the next Course 6 will be announced as they are finalized.

Course 7: *Chevrah Kadisha*: Student Projects

Course Dates

August 5 through October 28, 2021
Specific Thursdays, 8:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Pacific
(each class is 90 minutes) ([register now](#))
Instructors TBD



Subject Matter Topics

Student projects in the field of *Chevrah Kadisha* work

Structure, Prerequisite Requirements, and Registration

Course 7 is among the courses required to receive the Gamliel Institute *Chevrah Kadisha* Certificate of Completion. This course requires that students have completed Gamliel Institute Core Course 3: *Chevrah Kadisha*: Education, Organizing, and Leadership.

Registration for this course requires students to submit a proposal for a project with their intent to register. ([Download submission form here.](#)) **All proposals must be received no later than June 1st, 2021**, by email to info@jewish-funerals.org. Once accepted, students must then [register online](#) to pay tuition.

Course fee is \$250. This course is taught in six sessions.

Description

The focus of Course 7 is to assist students in conceptualizing, developing, and completing projects related to *Chevrah Kadisha* work. The projects may involve organizing or education, as well as more academic pursuits.

These projects are intended to serve two primary goals: (a) improving students' leadership skills and/or knowledge, and (b) creating contributions and resources for others in the field.

The basic *Chevrah Kadisha* concepts that underlie these projects are embedded in individual Gamliel courses. These ideas are expanded upon in Course 3, which includes "exploration papers" designed to help students begin thinking about the nature of the projects they want to do in their own communities, or as general contributions, and possible project goals. Project proposals are not limited to the areas of the exploration papers.

Each Course 7 student will have an assigned staff mentor. Course 7 includes both online class sessions and one-on-one meetings with mentors, to provide a combination of peer and mentor support for students as they develop their projects. The first two class meetings are scheduled one week apart. Four additional class meetings will occur approximately every 2-3 weeks, with students working on projects and conferring with mentors between class meetings.

Many of the projects that have already been completed and accepted are listed online here: <https://www.jewish-funerals.org/courses/gamliel-student-projects/> Students are encouraged to look at these samples to get an idea of the range of possibilities.

Students will be expected to make significant progress within the first two months of Course 7, and by the end of Course 7 are expected to have completed their projects or have created a clear and explicit plan and timeline for doing so. Evaluation of a student's progress will be made by the student's mentor in collaboration with the full Gamliel staff. Any student who has not made significant progress by the end of Course 7 may petition the Dean for a time extension.

When the student and mentor consider the project complete, it will be brought to the entire Gamliel teaching staff for review. The project may be sent back for further work. Completed projects may be posted to the Gamliel website or considered for publication through Kavod v'Nichum.



Studying historical maps in Jerusalem. Photo by Richard A. Light, 2015.

Course 8: *Chevrah Kadisha*: 10-Week Overview

Course Dates

The next offering of this course is yet to be determined



Subject Matter Topics

An introductory overview of *Chevrah Kadisha* practices that includes the central elements of Gamliel Core Courses 1, 2 and 3

Prerequisite Requirements

This course has no prerequisites.

Description

This course is taught in 10 sessions instead of the normal 12 sessions found in Core Curriculum Certificate Courses 1-5. This course is intended to summarize the main topic areas of Core Courses 1, 2, and 3, whose central focus areas are, respectively, the history of *Chevrah Kadisha* work, *taharah* and *shmirah* ritual practices, creating and managing a *chevrah*, and community and *chevrah* educating and training. By covering the material normally taught in 36 sessions in only 10 classes, the depth of investigation supports an introductory overview of these topics.

Topics covered in this course include:

- Walking in the Ways: Texts Supporting Jewish Death Practices
- History of *Chevrah Kadisha* Practices
- Liturgy & Manuals
- *Tachrichim*
- *Taharah* and *Shmirah*
- Taharah Complications
- *Vidui*
- Talking about Death in the Community
- Formal Education
- *Chevrah Kadisha* in the Community
- Current Topics
- Clergy Motivating & Organizing
- Rabban Gamliel and a Funeral Package

Gamliel Institute Study Group Discussion Offerings

The Institute is delighted to offer ongoing opportunities for in-depth study and exploration of specific topics through Study Group Discussion Offerings. These semester-length series are not offered as courses in which a curriculum is followed, but rather as open forums for discussion-oriented study opportunities. Each course has a facilitator and central topic of focus for the semester.

Ma'avar Yabbok Study Group

Course Dates

October 1 – December 24, 2020

Thursdays, 1:00pm Eastern / 10:00am Pacific

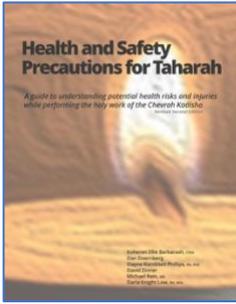
(each class is 90 minutes) ([register now](#))

Rabbi Steve Moss

Description

A 12- week *Ma'avar Yabbok* text and discussion study group to discuss and learn with a focus on a new translation and modern understanding of this foundational book.

Staying Safe in the Taharah Room



Today's most comprehensive guide to understanding potential health risks and injuries while performing the holy work of the *Chevrah Kadisha*.

As the most specific and appropriate guide to *taharah* safety available today, it is a must-have addition to personal, synagogue, and *Chevrah Kadisha* libraries.

This thorough guide covers the most common disease transmission mechanisms as well as practical aspects of dealing with the *taharah* room environment.

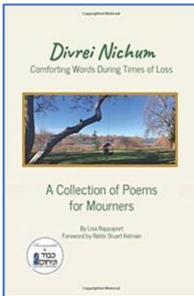
Health and Safety Precautions for Taharah provides a layperson's overview of potential health risks and injuries related to the sacred task of washing and dressing the *meit'ah* (the deceased).

The authors include health, occupational safety, and Jewish professionals with over 100 years of experience performing *Taharah* rituals and working to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Their recommendations are grounded in public health, workplace safety, and a commitment to respecting Jewish tradition.

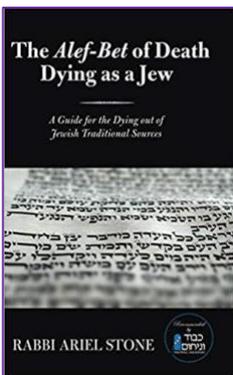
The guide includes explanations of and recommendations about:

- Disease Acquisition and Transmission
- Precautions
- Facility Assessment
- Facility Overview
- Equipment
- *Meit'ah* Care
- *Taharah* Team Care
- Immunizations
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Handwashing
- Assessing the *Meit'ah*
- Accident Responses
- Risk Assessment

Comforting Words During Times of Loss: A Collection of Poems for Mourners



Drawing on Jewish theology and traditional rituals around death and dying, this collection guides the mourner toward meaning and transformation. Using the ancient road map as a template, **Divrei Nichum** explores this terrain with modern eyes. The language is current, accessible, honest. While exploring the themes associated with loss primarily from a Jewish perspective, **Divrei Nichum** is intended to reach all who grieve the loss of loved ones. The poems in this collection affirm there is only one essential truth that binds every living creature--the cycle of birth and death. These poems attempt to connect us all through the pain of loss and the mystery of death.



The Alef-Bet of Death Dying as a Jew: A Guide for the Dying out of Jewish Traditional Sources

Dying is not a moment at the end of life, but instead a path lined with opportunities to reflect, explore, and contemplate. In an insightful guidebook on the meaning of death, Rabbi Ariel Stone shares spiritual commentary, Jewish stories, and other writings that provide information and inspiration about the process of death as seen through the prism of Jewish learning and culture. Through stories

of those who have gone before us and a step-by-step process that addresses the spiritual significance of death, Stone offers ways to think, feel, and wonder about death while inviting the dying to overcome fears and view the end of earthly life as an opportunity to repent, reflect on the influence we have upon others, and find peace as our light merges with the eternal light. **The Alef-Bet of Death: Dying as a Jew** is a valuable guide that teaches the meaning of death in the Jewish tradition while offering clarity, light, and comfort to those walking the often vague and dark path to dying.

JEWISH SACRED AGING©

www.jewishsacredaging.com

Rabbi Richard F. Address, D.Min

Resources, programs workshops for individuals, families, and congregations on issues related to spirituality and aging.

Weekly SEEKERS OF MEANING podcasts on jewishsacredaging.com

RichardAddress@JewishSacredAging.com

rfaddress@gmail.com

856-430-0678

About the Gamliel Institute and Kavod v’Nichum

Introduction to Rabban Gamliel

“Formerly, the expense of carrying out the dead was harder on the family than the death itself; the family therefore abandoned the corpse and fled... [This practice changed when] Rabban Gamliel [President of the Sanhedrin] disregarded his own dignity, and had his body carried out in flaxen shrouds. Afterwards, all the people followed his lead and had themselves carried out in flaxen shrouds.”

Babylonian Talmud, Moed Katan 27a-27b

Creating Holy Community in Life and Death

The Gamliel Institute is a center for study, training, and advocacy concerning Jewish end-of-life practices. The Institute is a project of Kavod v’Nichum (Honor and Comfort, Jewish-Funerals.org), started by Rabbi Stuart Kelman and David Zinner as a North American organization to provide assistance, training, and resources about Jewish death and bereavement practice for *Chevrah Kadisha* groups and bereavement committees in synagogues and communities throughout the U.S. and Canada.



Currently no North American rabbinical school, chaplaincy, mortuary, or thanatology certification program offers a comprehensive, articulated certification program to deal with all the issues surrounding the end of life from a Jewish perspective. The Gamliel Institute fills that gap by addressing the issues and challenges that face individuals, families and communities. In an environment that acknowledges the contributions of all the streams of Judaism, the Institute brings together diverse elements, including community organizing, consumer advocacy, *bikkur cholim*, chaplaincy and rabbinics, thanatology, hospice care, grief issues, funeral direction, cemetery management, and legacy planning and preparation into the creation of a unique, comprehensive training program. Institute students include *Chevrah Kadisha* volunteers, rabbis, chaplains, funeral directors, and Jewish communal professionals. Institute faculty are drawn from notable, respected educators, historians, scholars, and activists.

The centerpiece of the Institute is a multi-semester certification program employing a variety of distance-learning and on-site practicum formats. Our core courses focus on five major areas: *Chevrah Kadisha* history, *taharah* and *shmira*, education and training strategies, *nechamah*, and ritual and liturgy. In addition to these there is a student project course that enables students to apply their learning.

In addition, students meet each year at the annual Kavod v'Nichum Conference (usually in the early summer) for a Gamliel Institute Day of Learning, an in-person training and networking opportunity. Students are expected to participate in local training opportunities as well as other relevant national conferences. The culminating component of the certificate program is a three-week practicum/study tour to New York, Prague (the home of the first “modern” *Chevrah Kadisha*), and Israel to study with local *Chevrah Kadisha* groups and experts.

By the end of the program, students develop theoretical and practical expertise in the *halachot*, *minhagim*, logistics, and finances surrounding serious illness, death, funerals, burial, mourning, and legacy preparation, including ethical wills. Students are prepared to work with and assist grieving families before and after death and to organize and train volunteers to perform these mitzvot in their communities.

There is a hunger for in-depth education in Jewish death practices. The Gamliel Institute fills this critical void in education and service delivery and has the potential to change the current culture surrounding end-of-life issues in the Jewish community—to help individuals and communities move from denial and neglect to awareness, acceptance, and healthy integration into family and community life.

Want Professional Training in Your Community?

The staff of Kavod v'Nichum provides training and support for new and existing *Chevrah Kadisha* groups throughout North America. Training a *Chevrah Kadisha* does more than prepare members to perform taharah; such training can be an essential element in enhancing community, for it is about team building, leadership training, networking, and creating close relationships with truly caring Jewish congregants. We supply your community with an experienced knowledgeable instructor to teach and train on a single day or over several days, usually including Shabbat-appropriate discussions followed by a Sunday training. We tailor and format our training to your specific needs and desires, mixing and matching topics and formats as desired, to ensure a positive, fruitful, rewarding, energizing, and productive interaction. For a suggested list of possible training topics and formats see:



<https://www.jewish-funerals.org/courses/kavod-vnichum-classes-and-trainings/>

Chevrah Kadisha and the Conservative Movement

Rabbinical Assembly [Resolution on Hevra Kadisha](#)

Published Tuesday March 26, 2019

Whereas in the traumatic aftermath of the October 27 Tree of Life synagogue shooting many Rabbinical Assembly colleagues have been deeply engaged in guiding the Pittsburgh Jewish community through the *mitzvot* of *bikkur holim* and *nihum aveilim* and

Whereas the Pittsburgh shooting aftermath demonstrated the important role played by the *Hevra Kadisha* in providing physical care for the bodies of the deceased, through the traditional Jewish practice of *taharah*, including prayer, washing, and purification performed through the actions of community members; and

Whereas the *Hevra Kadisha* provides comfort and support to the families who are mourning, and offers the entire community a meaningful way to demonstrate their caring through support of the *Hevra Kadisha* and

Whereas the experience of *Hevra Kadisha* work and participating in *shmirah*, ritual guarding of the body of the deceased, can transform lives, providing a profound emotional and spiritual experience, enabling us to see the world differently, to live more fully, and to appreciate this most amazing gift that God gave us – life; and

Whereas participation in the work of the *Hevra Kadisha* builds solidarity in each Jewish community and interdependence of all of the community and synagogue members;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Rabbinical Assembly encourage its members:

- to establish *Hevra Kadisha* in our communities, if there is none yet, and to strengthen such institutions if they already exist; and
- that, in communities that have the blessing of more than one *Hevra Kadisha*, clergy and other Jewish leadership work to build a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect among the groups; and
- that clergy and other Jewish leadership educate their communities about all the aspects of the richness of traditional Jewish practices at the end of life and encourage participation in any point on the continuum between *bikkur holim* and *nihum aveilim*, and

Be it further resolved that the Rabbinical Assembly commit to creating a place on its website and provide periodic training to serve as resources for its members in both creation of a *Hevra Kadisha* and education.

Kavod v'Nichum is working with the Rabbinical Assembly to implement the last paragraph of this resolution. [Contact us](#) to find out more about this exciting project.

The 18th Kavod v'Nichum North American *Chevrah Kadisha* and Jewish Cemetery Conference

Overview

This year's conference was held **online, June 7-10, 2020**, Sunday through Wednesday. All sessions used Zoom and had dedicated meeting rooms. All sessions were recorded, allowing attendees to see sessions they missed while attending other sessions. We had 220 registered attendees!

Recordings of the sessions will be made available by mid-July, 2020.

Registration

Conference registration is now closed, however we offered three levels of pricing:

- **full** conference participation – all sessions and all recordings
- **partial** conference participation – fewer than half of the sessions, and no recordings
- ***chevrah* group rate** – if three or more members from the same *chevrah* register, they all receive a special discounted rate

Program Highlights

The [2020 online program is shown here](#). With over 40 workshops and plenaries, this year's program was exciting and varied, covering many topics related to *Chevrah Kadisha* work, including specific learning related to the current pandemic.

For more details about this year's conference, see:

<https://www.jewish-funerals.org/about-this-years-conference/>

Zoom, ATutor, and Online Class Information

Gamliel Institute Core Curriculum and Taste of Gamliel sessions are **taught live online using a platform called Zoom**, which runs in any web browser. (Special events and the annual conference Day of Learning are taught in person.) All classes are live events, not video recordings, although most classes are recorded so that students who miss a class and want to revisit a topic can watch the video.

Zoom provides real-time video and audio for up to 200 participants to be online simultaneously. The tool supports the “sharing of a screen” which gives the ability to share documents, images, PowerPoint slides, and even video materials during classes. Participants can also post chats in a text chatroom to share links, and thoughts during the class without interrupting the teaching flow.

Instructors and class technical support are usually logged into Zoom classroom half an hour prior to class time, to answer questions and help with technical issues.

Students who register for a Taste of Gamliel Short Course or Core Curriculum Course will be sent a Zoom meeting number for that course (all classes in that course will use the same number).

Students who register for a Core course are also given a link to **ATutor online course materials**, which provide an online “textbook” for the class. These materials are a collection of learning resources presented through a library of course modules, each with pages of text, links to resources, and various levels of course topic-related information. The modules are meant to be a long-term resource for students, available during and after the course takes place. Students can return to research topics or revisit learning at any time after the course. Access to the materials for a course is granted once students register for that specific course. In addition, to simplify class logins, the ATutor home page has a link to the Zoom room for that course so students can easily login to a class with their study materials at hand.

Each Core course has a dozen or more modules in ATutor, each of which contains hours of reading and additional links for further research. Students are expected to spend approximately 2-3 hours per week studying these materials.

Core Curriculum Certificate Courses 1-5 are structured as follows:

These courses are taught in 12 class sessions, each 1.5 hours in length. All class sessions are taught live online using Zoom.

In addition to weekly homework, students in each course are placed into study-groups. Each group meets outside of class to discuss the homework and other topics, and then report back to the larger class what they have discovered. Along with in-class discussions, there is an online Forum (part of ATutor) into which students report what they have learned, sharing insights and resources with each other. These insights become part of the larger library available to students after the course is completed.

Core Curriculum Courses 6 and 7 have different structures. See the course descriptions for details. Course 8 is structured much like Courses 1-5, but only includes 10 sessions.





You can make a
difference!



For the last 20 years Kavod v'Nichum and the Gamliel Institute have been teaching and organizing in Jewish communities to help them develop support systems when someone dies. We've learned as much as we've taught. One of the most interesting aspects of this field is that this work supports reflection, promotes understanding, and encourages community participation.

Kavod v'Nichum is a non-profit organization providing training and resources on Jewish death and bereavement practice for *Chevrah Kadisha* groups in the U.S. and Canada, and with its education arm, the Gamliel Institute, which provides intensive, in-depth study, training, and advocacy concerning Jewish end-of-life practices. We've operated on a shoestring budget since our inception but are now seeking to put our financial footing on a stronger foundation. As the subjects of aging and death gain urgency today along with expanded public discussion and Kavod v'Nichum's educational programs are in growing demand.

**Jewish death practices have always formed the foundation
upon which a rich and flourishing Jewish life has been established.
Now more than ever we need your help.**

Please support this work, it affects the future
of the entire Jewish community.

<https://events.jewish-funerals.org/donations-to-kavod-and-gamliel/>

Donate Today!

Registration and Tuition Information

All course tuition payments and formal registration take place online.

- **Registration for Core Curriculum** courses:
<https://www.jewish-funerals.org/gamliel-course-registration/>
- **Registration for Taste of Gamliel Short Courses:**
<https://www.jewish-funerals.org/taste-of-gamliel-short-course-registration/>
- **Registration for June Conference:**
<https://www.jewish-funerals.org/online-conference-registration/>

Core Curriculum Course 7 uses a slightly different registration format. It requires students to request permission to attend by submitting a proposal for a project as part of their registration. More details are given in the Course 7 listing on page [34](#).

Tuition for each course is given within that course listing. Fees are structured in general as follows:

- Core Curriculum **Courses 1-5 and 8** have tuition of \$500, with discounted tuition available for clergy.
- Core Curriculum **Courses 6 and 7** have different course formats. Tuition for Course 7 is \$250. Course 6 includes many more variables since it includes travel. Tuition for Course 6 will be announced when the course is next scheduled.
- **Taste of Gamliel** short-course tuition is \$36 per class session within the course (\$36 for a single class, \$72 for two classes, \$108 for three classes).
- Gamliel Institute **Study Group Discussion Offerings** are \$36 per semester.

Any questions or concerns should be addressed to:

Gamliel Institute Registrar
info@jewish-funerals.org
410-733-3700

Gamliel Institute Faculty and Staff

The following personnel form the foundation upon which the Institute operates:

- [Rabbi Richard Address](#), Past Dean
- [Rabbi Joe Blair](#), Dean of Administration, Senior Faculty
- [Dan Fendel](#), Dean of Students, Senior Faculty
- [Rena Boroditsky](#), Senior Faculty
- [Rick Light](#), Senior Faculty
- [Edna Stewart](#), Senior Faculty
- [David Zinner](#), Executive Director, Senior Faculty
- [Rabbi Stuart Kelman](#), Founding Dean Emeritus

Additional teaching faculty:

- Holly Blue Hawkins
- Susan Barnes



Staircase in Jerusalem. Photo by Richard A. Light, 2015.

Gamliel Faculty and Guest Instructor Biographies



Rabbi Richard Address is the previous Dean of the Gamliel Institute and the Founder and Director of jewishsacredaging.com. Rabbi Address served for over three decades on staff of the Union for Reform Judaism; first as a Regional Director and then, beginning in 1997, as Founder and Director of the URJ's Department of Jewish Family Concerns and served as a specialist and consultant for the North American Reform Movement in the areas of family related programming. Rabbi Address was ordained from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 1972 and began his rabbinic career in Los Angeles congregations. He also served as a part time rabbi for Beth Hillel in Carmel, NJ while regional director and, after his URJ tenure, served as senior rabbi of Congregation M'kor Shalom in Cherry Hill, NJ, from 2011-2014.



Kohenet Ellie Barbarash, MS, CPEA, has advocated for more than 25 years for worker safety while designing and implementing safety training programs for employees in healthcare, municipal services, utilities, and labor unions. Ellie serves as a safety technical resource and coordinates educational programs in leadership and occupational safety for Health Professionals and Allied Employees (HPAE/AFT), a NJ labor union of 13,000 nurses and frontline healthcare professionals. She is certified as a Professional Environmental Auditor specializing in OSHA regulatory compliance and occupational safety. Ordained as a Hebrew Priestess (*Kohenet*) in 2009, Ellie is a *taharah* safety instructor at Kavod v'Nichum's Gamliel Institute and a member of the Philadelphia Reconstructionist *Chevrah Kadisha*.



Rabbi Joe Blair is the Dean of Administration and a faculty member for the Gamliel Institute, and on the staff of Kavod v'Nichum, as well as serving on the Board. Rabbi Joe attended the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and was ordained and earned a Master of Hebrew Letters degree. Following graduation, Joe entered into the academic world with Hillel at Duke University, and then moved to the Hillel at the University of Virginia. After a few years, he became a full-time pulpit rabbi, serving two small congregations in the central Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. He remained with those congregations for 15 years before taking his current pulpit in

Charleston WV. He holds a B.A. from the College of Arts and Sciences at UVA, a M.C.S. from the Graduate School of Engineering at UVA, and a J.D. from Marshall-Wythe School of Law at William & Mary College (and was admitted to the Bar in Virginia and the Fourth Circuit). He was honored to be involved as the source indexer for the Stanford University publication of the Pritzker Edition of The Zohar, with translation and commentary by Daniel Matt. Joe was selected to be a Star Peer Rabbi and has served as adjunct faculty member at multiple colleges and universities. He is a principal in the Jewish Values Online project (www.jewishvaluesonline.org), and previously served as coordinator and respondent for the online Ask A Rabbi service. He and Rena Boroditsky (also a KVN Board and Gamliel Faculty member) authored a module for the Chai Mitzvah program on Jewish Studies in Dying and Death.



Rena Boroditsky is the Executive Director of Chesed Shel Emes, the community non-profit *Chevrah Kadisha* in Winnipeg, Canada. Since 1996, she has been both a student and a teacher of Jewish thought and practice at the end of life, and a member of her ladies *Chevrah Kadisha*. Rena has presented at Limmud events in the US and Canada, and has experience training new and existing *Chevrah Kadisha* groups. In 2018, Rena completed a Certificate in Jewish Leadership at Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership in Chicago, IL. Rena is a Gamliel graduate and current faculty member and serves as a vice-president of the Kavod V'Nichum Board of Directors. Most recently, she co-authored and taught a 13-week course on *Chevrah Kadisha* for Aleph Rabbinic students with Rabbi Joe Blair. Rena is a proud recipient of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg's Larry Hurtig Jewish Communal Professional Award.



Rabbi Elliot Dorff, PhD, is AJU's Rector and Sol & Anne Dorff Distinguished Service Professor in Philosophy. For more than forty years as a Visiting Professor, he has taught a course on Jewish law at UCLA School of Law. Rabbi Dorff was awarded the Journal of Law and Religion's Lifetime Achievement Award and holds four honorary doctoral degrees. Rabbi Dorff is Chair of the Conservative Movement's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards and served on the editorial committee of Etz Hayim, the new Torah commentary for the Conservative Movement. He has chaired four scholarly organizations: the Academy of Jewish Philosophy, the Jewish Law Association, the Society of Jewish Ethics, and the Academy of Judaic,

Christian, and Islamic Studies. He was elected Honorary President of the Jewish Law Association for the term of 2012-2016. Rabbi Dorff is also a member of an advisory committee for the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History on the social, ethical, and religious implications of their exhibits. He is also a member of the Ethics Advisory Committee for the state of California on stem cell research. In Los Angeles, he is a Past President of Jewish Family Services and a member of the Ethics committee at U.C.L.A. Medical Center. He serves as Co-Chair of the Priest-Rabbi Dialogue of the Los Angeles Archdiocese and the Board of Rabbis of Southern California.



Yakir Englander, PhD, is the national director of Gvanim leadership programs at the IAC. In addition, he teaches at AJR and lives in an intentional community in Brooklyn, NY. Yakir grew up in a Hasidic community in Israel and served in the Israel Defense Forces in a special unit responsible for identifying bodies of the victims. A graduate of the Hebrew University and the Shalom Hartman Institute, Yakir earned his PhD in modern Jewish philosophy, with a focus on gender

issues. Englander was a Fulbright scholar and a visiting Scholar at Harvard Divinity School and before at Northwestern University in Chicago. He served as the Director of Kids4Peace in Israel and Palestine from 2007, and in 2012 became Vice President of Kids4Peace International, a grassroots interfaith youth movement dedicated to ending conflict and inspiring hope among Jewish and Arab families in the Jerusalem region and in multi-cultural Kids4Peace chapters in North America.



Dan Fendel, PhD, is the men's chair and co-founder of the *Chevrah Kadisha* in his own congregation, Temple Sinai (Reform; Oakland), and has been a member of the *Chevrah Kadisha* of Beth Jacob Congregation (Orthodox; Oakland) for nearly 20 years. He was in the first cohort of the Gamliel Institute, and is now Dean of Students for Gamliel. He is co-author, with Rabbi Stuart Kelman, of *Chesed Shel Emet: The Truest Act of Kindness – Exploring the Meaning of Taharah*

(Expanded Third Edition), and *Nichum Aveilim: A Guide for the Comforter* (also with Rabbi Jason Weiner). He also did volunteer grief support work for the Shanti Project and Namaste in the San Francisco area for 20 years and is now a Spiritual Care Volunteer at Kaiser Hospital in Oakland.



Rabbi Dayle A. Friedman, MSW, MA, BCC, is a spiritual guide, chaplain, and scholar. She has trained rabbis and chaplains, accompanied frail elders, taught and guided individuals embarking upon their “third chapters.” Her most recent book is *Jewish Wisdom for Growing Older: Finding Your Grit and Grace Beyond Midlife*. Through Growing Older (www.growingolder.net), her Philadelphia-based, national practice, Rabbi Dayle offers spiritual direction for people beyond midlife, spiritual care for people facing dementia and frailty, and consulting on medical decisions and end-of-life care. She currently serves as Interim Rabbi for Congregation Leyv Ha-Ir ~ Heart of the City in Philadelphia.



Gary Goldberg, BASc, MD, is Clinical Adjunct Professor in the Virginia Commonwealth University’s department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation with over 35 years of experience leading clinical rehabilitation teams treating persons with acquired brain injury in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Richmond. Currently, he serves injured active duty service-members and military veterans in the Polytrauma Rehabilitation System of Care at the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center. He is chair of adult education programming at Temple Beth-El Conservative synagogue in Richmond and plays guitar in Cantor Dara Rosenblatt's ‘Underground’ house band. He is a member of the Temple’s *Chevrah Kadisha* and serves on its cemetery corporation board. He maintains a life-long reverence for the poetry, novels and music as well as a deep fascination with the biography, philosophy and charisma of the late Leonard Cohen.



Rabbi Daniel Greyber is rabbi at Beth El Synagogue in Durham, NC, author of *Faith Unravels: A Rabbi’s Struggle with Grief and God* (www.faithunravels.com) and served as Team USA Rabbi at the 19th and 20th World Maccabiah Games in Israel. Formerly a Jerusalem Fellow at the Mandel Leadership Institute, faculty member at the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies in Los Angeles and the Executive Director of Camp Ramah in California, his writings have been featured in a wide range of Jewish publications. For more information visit rabbigreyber.com.



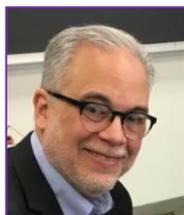
Holly Blue Hawkins is a Natural Death Care advocate and home funeral guide, poet, musician, sacred dance leader, artist, author of *The Heart of the Circle: A Guide to Drumming*, and co-editor of *The Soul's Legacy: Writing A Spiritual Will*, with twenty years of service in the *Chevrah Kadisha* of Temple Beth El, Aptos. Her experience in the field of life-death transition began as a volunteer for Shanti Nilaya Maui (founded by Elisabeth

Kübler-Ross) in the 1980's. As a Soul Memory Discovery facilitator, notary public/retired estate planning paralegal, and member of the Board of Trustees of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of the State of California, Holly Blue brings an eclectic array of knowledge to support personally authentic, spiritually and environmentally appropriate end-of-life choices. Principal of Last Respects Consulting (a private fiduciary and end-of-life navigation service) and Institute for Integral Thanatology (<http://www.integralthanatology.org/>), Holly Blue's life dedication is to holding the life-death passage sacred.



Arthur R. Hessel is a graduate of Harvard College and Yale Law School. He practiced law in the District of Columbia for over 40 years. He is the president of the Jewish Funeral Practices Committee of Greater Washington, vice-president of the Foundation for Jewish Studies, and a member of the Board of Directors of American Associates, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. He is a member, and former officer, of Adas Israel Congregation in Washington, where he is active on its

Bereavement Committee.



Rabbi Richard Hirsh recently completed five years of service to Philadelphia-area Reform congregations. In his forty-year career he has held a number of organizational, academic, editorial and congregational positions. He continues to serve Congregation Darchei Noam in Toronto for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, where he has been leading services for over twenty years. He is currently directing a pilot project, "Men as

Allies: Leading Equitable Workplaces" for Jewish Women International.



Rabbi T'mimah Audrey Ickovits, BSE, is the founding rabbi and spiritual leader of Holistic Jew in Santa Monica, CA where she cultivates spiritual gatherings combining prayer, Torah study, sacred movement, meditation with ethically sourced kosher community meals. Passionate about the environment and committed to equality in death, she teaches in support of green, cost effective, traditional end of life options. Rabbi T'mimah teaches siddur. T'mimah helps students cultivate insight through prayer, Continuum Movement – Liquid Kabbalah, sacred text study and spiritual counseling. Rabbi T'mimah recently published 1) "[Seven Sacred Circles](#)" to make underlying substructure of Jewish sacred circling practices easily accessible in support of cultivating the Divine Feminine, and 2) "[Shahareet for Weekdays](#)" featuring a full prayer service, heart focused English translation, and classical Kabbalah meditations translated into English for the first time.



Rabbi Me'irah Iliinsky received her master's degree in social work in 1980. She worked for 15 years as a psychotherapist before entering Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, where she received ordination in 2007 along with a Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters. She earned her certificate for four units of Clinical Pastoral Education in 2011 and has served as both a hospital and hospice chaplain. She is also an artist inspired by Medieval illuminated manuscripts and hopes to bring people to Torah through "visual portals to sacred texts." She has been aligned with Kavod v Nichum since its inception and specializes in end of life care. She serves as the community rabbi for Rhoda Goldman Plaza, an assisted living center in San Francisco, and also teaches Parshat ha Shavua as an introduction to Judasim at the JCC there.



Rabbi Stuart Kelman is the Founding Dean Emeritus of the Gamliel Institute, is a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary and taught at the Hebrew Union College. He has extensive experience in all parts of the Jewish community, from working at Jewish camps to helping develop CAJE. As founding rabbi of a Netivot Shalom, he was involved in the creation of the synagogue's *Chevrah Kadisha*. His PhD is in the Sociology of Education and he has published five *Chevrah Kadisha*-related books, including the just-published, *Nichum Aveilim*, on how to be a comforter to a mourner, and *Chesed Shel Emet*, delving into an extensive analysis of the *taharah* liturgy.



Rabbi David Levin is a reform rabbi ordained from the Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion (NY). David serves the community of Greater Philadelphia. He also devotes his time to special projects including Jewish Sacred Aging, teaching and free speech issues on the college campus. Rabbi David is a Fellow with Rabbis Without Borders, an interdenominational rabbinic group affiliated with CLAL. He proudly claims to be one of Rabbi Louis Frishman's (z"l) "Temple Kids", from Temple

Beth El in Spring Valley, NY. Rabbi David attended the University of Chicago earning an AB in Economics. He went on to the New York University Graduate School of Business where he earned an MBA in Finance.



Rick Light has been teaching spiritual development in various ways for more than 35 years and has been studying and practicing meditation for more than 45 years. He also teaches backpacking, rock climbing, and other outdoor skills. He is a leader in the community of those who prepare Jewish

deceased for burial, has published four books in this regard, including the award-winning 2016 publication, *Jewish Rites of Death, Stories of Beauty and Transformation*. For 18 years Rick was the leader of a local *Chevrah Kadisha* he started in 1996. He is a vice-president of the Board of Directors of Kavod v'Nichum, a graduate of and senior instructor for the Gamliel Institute. He continues to teach and raise awareness about Jewish death and burial practices at the local, state, and national levels. For more on Rick and his books, visit richardalight.com.



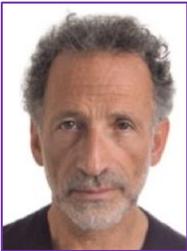
Elizabeth Menkin, MD, started with Kaiser Permanente in 1981 as a resident in Internal Medicine. She spent the last 18 years of her career in Geriatrics and end-of-life care, devoted to the concept that "Personalized Care" should include attention to family and community. She is founder and former president of Coda Alliance, the Silicon Valley community coalition for end-of-life care (see www.codaalliance.org) for which she received Santa Clara County Medical Association's "Outstanding Contribution in Community Service" Award in

2004. With a grant that year to Coda Alliance from the Archstone Foundation, she developed the Go Wish cards as a tool to facilitate family and community conversations about what in life is most important when time is short. For a variety of stories on uses of the Go Wish cards, see

http://gowish.org/index.php?topic=resources_stories.



Elayne Kornblatt Phillips, RN, MPH, PhD, FAAN, is a public health nurse and epidemiologist, and is knowledgeable and experienced in bloodborne pathogen transmission prevention. She retired as Research Director of the University of Virginia School of Medicine's International Healthcare Worker Safety Center. Dr. Phillips received funding from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to examine the impact of the Needlestick Safety & Prevention Act on hospital worker sharps injuries and blood exposures. She has developed low-cost strategies for reducing worker risk in resource-limited countries, has published widely, and has served on expert panels addressing healthcare worker safety across the U.S. and internationally. She serves as chair of the Women's *Chevrah Kadisha* at Congregation Beth Israel in Charlottesville, VA.



Isaac Pollak has been involved in the *Chevrah Kadisha* of the upper east side of Manhattan for 40 years, and does *taharah* for Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, and any other Jew desirous to meet his maker in the traditional fashion formulated by Aaron Berekhiah ben Moshe of Modena almost 500 years ago. In addition, Isaac collects and writes on *Chevrah Kadisha* material as well as cultural objects, and has a major collection accumulated over some 35 years, and has lectured in

various institutions including, YU, JTS, Temple Emanuel, University of Vienna, University of Amsterdam, and Tel Aviv University, on the cultural and anthropological aspects of *chevrah* work and on objects in his collection. Professionally, Isaac is CEO of an International Marketing Company. His education includes MBA from City College, MS in Industrial Psychology and Behavioral Science from Long Island University, MA in Jewish Material Culture from the Jewish Theological Seminary, and MA in Art History from Columbia University.



Simcha Raphael, PhD, is Founding Director of the DA'AT Institute for Death Awareness, Advocacy and Training. Adjunct Professor in the Department of Religion and Theology at LaSalle University, and Faculty on the New York Open Center's Art of Dying Institute, he works as a psychotherapist and bereavement counselor, affiliated with Mount Airy Counseling Center, in Philadelphia. Ordained as a Rabbinic Pastor by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, he is author of numerous

publications on death and Judaism including the ground-breaking classic *Jewish Views of the Afterlife*.



Alden Solovy spreads joy and excitement for prayer. A liturgist, poet, author and teacher, his writing was transformed by multiple tragedies, marked in 2009 by the sudden death of his wife from catastrophic brain injury. The Liturgist-in-residence for the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies, his teaching spans from Hebrew Union College-

Jewish Institute of Religion and the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem to synagogues throughout North America, as well as Leo Baeck College in London and Limmud Conferences in the U.S., Canada and the UK. He is the author of four books, two from CCAR Press: *This Grateful Heart: Psalms and Prayers for a New Day* and *This Joyous Soul: A New Voice for Ancient Yearnings*. In 2012, Alden made 58liyah to Israel. He lives in Jerusalem. More about Alden at tobendlight.com.



Edna Stewart, RN, is a member of the Faculty of the Gamliel Institute and regularly teaches Core Curriculum courses. Edna is a Registered Nurse with over 50 years of experience working in settings such as intensive care, pediatric oncology, nursing management and education, and senior housing and wellness. She has been an educator over 30 years both professionally and as a volunteer. She holds a Master's Degree from Columbia University in Public Health Administration, with a

focus on program and policy development. A member of Netivot Shalom in Berkeley, CA she is the former chair of the adult education committee and current co-chair of the *Chevrah Kadisha*, Edna holds popular "Death Cafes" around the Berkeley community and is the program coordinator for "Walking in the Valley...and Not Being Afraid."



Kerry Swartz is the President of Kavod v'Nichum. He holds an MA in social sciences from UC Santa Barbara and an MFA from Concordia College and University, Montreal. As a professional photographer for over 25 years, his images have appeared in the *New York Times*, *National Geographic*, *Time*, *Sunset*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Architectural Digest*, plus other national and regional publications. He has recently completed a five-year

documentary of Vancouver's alternative housing choices, with a gallery show and book planned for spring, 2020. Kerry has been an active member of the Congregation Schara Tzedek Community *Chevrah Kadisha* for over a decade and is also the Communications Coordinator of the Gamliel Institute.



Gail Tosto has served as lead Shmirah Coordinator of Congregation Agudas Achim (Austin) since 1999. In 2010, she spearheaded Austin Shmirah, which now includes over 200 *shomrim* from nine local congregations. She also teaches Hebrew and serves as CAA's "Adon-Olam-ologist in residence,"

inviting her fellow congregants to end Shabbat morning services with melodies from cultures and languages as diverse as Arapaho, Indonesian, and Hindi.



David Zinner is the founder and Executive Director of Kavod v'Nichum, which works to restore to Jewish death and bereavement practice, the traditions and values of *kavod hamet* and *nichum avelim*, and the founder and Executive Director and co-founder of the Gamliel Institute, a center for leadership training and advocacy of traditional Jewish practice

in the continuum of care at the end of life. As Vice-President of the Jewish Funeral Practices Committee of Greater Washington, David participates in developing citywide contracts with funeral homes and is a member of the Cemetery Committee. David is also the *Chevrah Kadisha* Chair at the Columbia Jewish Congregation, representative of religious non-profit cemeteries on the Maryland State Advisory Council on Cemetery Operations, and the former Executive Director of Tifereth Israel Congregation, a conservative synagogue in Washington, DC. David teaches workshops on Jewish traditions and practices that relate to death and dying both in his own synagogue, as well as all over the United States.

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גמליאל

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