

What is Happening Now? What Will Happen Next?

Teaching Teens and Adults About the Continuum
of Care and the Afterlife within Chevra Kadisha

A project Designed by Zoe A. Van Raan
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Course 3: Educating, Organizing and Training
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“The highest form of gemilut chasadim is that which is done for the dead, for there can never be any thought of repayment.”

-Tanchuma

Vayechi 107a

Elements of this course presupposes a higher power, G-d. It is important to note that belief in the existence of G-d need not be essential in gaining knowledge and insight into the content. Indeed, while the spiritual dimensions of the course may seem central, they need not close the student off from her/his beliefs. It is the author's hope that “non-believers” are included and important to both the material and the class discussions. There is a place for everyone in this course.

For the teacher: Texts to be used

- Jewish Views of the Afterlife, Simcha Paull Rafael
- Sefer HaAggadah
- So that Your Values Live On: Ethical Wills and How to Prepare them, Jack Riemer and Nathaniel Stampfer
- The Jewish Way in Death and Dying, Maurice Lamm

Page numbers for teaching from each book can be found in Chevra Kadisha Practice: An Interrelationship with the Afterlife in Judaism, Zoe A. Van Raan

LESSON PLAN FORMAT

- Class Objectives: Write out the goals or objectives for class. Try to limit these to one or two things.
- Connection to Course Goals: Describe how the daily objectives connect to the overall course goals.
- Anticipatory Set: Sometimes referred to as a "hook." Use an informal Writing to Learn (WTL) exercise, a question, a quote, or an object to focus students' attention at the start of class. This activity should be brief and directly related to the lesson.
- Introduction: Write down what will be needed to inform students of the daily goals and class procedures. Be sure to explain how these procedures relate to students' own writing.

- Procedures: List the activities, including any discussion questions and transitions along the way.
- Conclusion: Describe the objective for the lesson and point students forward by connecting the objective to the students' own writing.

Since this document is a broad outline of the course, it will be up to you, the teacher, to read through all of the materials in order to decide, in certain classes, what you will present from the books indicated for each class.

COURSE OUTLINE

WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW? WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

Teaching Teens and Adults about Chevra Kadisha by using the Lens of the Afterlife and Understanding how it Informs Current Chevra Kadisha Practices.

Audience: The audience will be teenagers in a post Bar/Bat Mitzvah class at a synagogue or adults either in a synagogue setting or at a home.

Behavior: Success will be measured by the students' ability to demonstrate, both intellectually and spiritually, the spectrum of chevra kadisha work in the context of following its history and current practices through the lens of the afterlife. This will be accomplished through various exercises and learning practices inherent in each class. The teacher will use prompts to promote discussions, as the course is meant to be discussion-oriented.

Condition: The students will be learning in a classroom or structured home setting. They will learn through texts, discussions and writing exercises. There will be eight sessions that will last 1.5 hours in duration.

Degree: The learners will be able to discuss the content with friends and family on a level which demonstrates not only knowledge of the subject matter but also deep, personal reflection. They will be able to spread this knowledge and educate the congregation or on a more personal level present the material to other interested parties in the congregation. The ultimate goal of this course is to recruit the students and the congregation to be involved in the Chevra Kadisha of Northern New Mexico.

CLASS 1: The students will discuss what they believe in with regard to the meaning of life, death, and the afterlife. They will also discuss what they have faced in the area of death. The teacher might want to begin sharing her/his experiences, followed by the students sharing their stories and experiences. The teacher will then read excerpts from Jewish Views of the Afterlife.

CLASS 2: The students will learn about and discuss various theories about the afterlife extrapolated from The Torah and the Sefer HaAggadah, as well as excerpts from Jewish Views of the Afterlife.

CLASS 3: The students will learn about chevra kadisha work historically, the progression and changes in chevrot kadisha through different time periods, and how they operate now. The teacher will use information from the Gamliel Institute's course on chevra kadisha.

CLASS 4: The students will learn about the liturgy said during tahara and shmira. The Viduy will also be discussed. The content will be taken from a class taught by Rabbi Stuart Kelman and Dan Fendel.

CLASS 5: The students will learn about the content and practices of a funeral, shiva, shloshim, and yartzeit. This information will come from *The Jewish Way in Death and Dying*.

CLASS 6: The students will learn about ethical wills with the help of *So that your Values Live on: Ethical Wills* and how to Prepare them as well as excerpts from the Torah as found in *Chevra Kadisha Practice: An Interrelationship with the Afterlife in Judaism*.

CLASS 7: The students will begin to write their own ethical wills. They will be encouraged to read their unfinished pieces to the rest of the class, in order to receive input as to the understandability of the writings. The students will be encouraged to continue writing their ethical wills and read them to the other students.

CLASS 8: The teacher will present real-life stories of people who have participated in being a shomer and individuals who have participated in a tahara. The teacher will also talk about the logistics of how to form and be a member of a chevra kadisha. The purpose of this class will be to promote the formation of a chevra kadisha and/or the involvement of the students in a chevra kadisha.

LESSON PLAN, class one

- The objective for this class is for the students to explore their own experiences and opinions about death in order to open them up, emotionally, for how the course will ensue. The discussion that will arise will provide an opening for the students to become familiar with one another in the context of the material surrounding the course.
- The daily objectives connect to the overall course goals by means of reflection, discussion, and writing.
- The time will be spent discussing, through their creativity, the students' experiences and opinions about death. The teacher will ask the students to write, in a free-form manner, words, stories, or images that come to mind with the word 'death.' The students will then be asked to share their pieces and relate them to their experiences and opinions about the topic. If the students do not readily begin a conversation, the teacher will pose ideas prompted by the pieces in order to facilitate a conversation.
- The activities will involve the sharing of the students' writings and/or images, as well as their beliefs and perspectives about death.

LESSON PLAN, class two

- The objective for this class is for the students to learn about the origin of some of the modern Jewish perspectives about death through stories in the Torah as well as excerpts from the Sefer ha Aggadah.
- The daily objective relates to the overall course through the students investigating Jewish history and historical analyses as a means toward understanding life after death.
- The students will discuss excerpts from the Sefer Ha Aggadah, as well as Psalms in order to analyze some Jewish perspectives of life-after-death. The students will also discuss excerpts from the Torah: (Time permitting. Teacher may prioritize which quotes to discuss and hand out the quotes for the students to look at in their own time.)

Quotes from the Sefer Ha Aggadah:

- a) 3:6:7 “In the time-to-come, the Holy One will renew ten things...” [G-d wouldn’t renew anything unless there were people/beings to reap the benefits]
- b) 3:6:9 R. Simeon ben Lakish said: “In the time-to-come, there will be no Gehenna, but the Holy One will take the sun out of its sheath...” [Time-to-come may be different from common understanding of reincarnation, but still illustrates that there is, indeed, something next...]
- c) 4:2:154 R. Hama bar Hanina said: “The righteous are more powerful after death than during their life.”
- d) Ps. 88:6, “Among the dead I am free”, R. Yohanan said: Once a man is dead he is free from religious obligations. (4:2:103) [Implying the dead person is still an entity]
- e) 3:6 --all about resurrection--
- f) “Some people prepare their shrouds in their lifetime based on the verse from Amos: "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel" (4:12).

Quotes from other sources:

- a) Biblical law is clear about the requirement for immediate burial "For thou shalt surely bury him on that day" (Ki Tetzei, Devarim 12:23). From this also derives the requirement for the entire body to be brought to burial, including all internal organs, even the blood, which is associated with the soul as it carries the life-force through the body.
- b) "For dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return" (Beresheit 3:19). The body shall not remain unburied. This rule extended to the body of one who had died a natural death.
- c) Chevra kadisha is so called because a chevra kadisha looks after the needs of the 'holy ones' as it says: "For the sake of the holy ones who are interred in earth" Psalms (16:13).
- d) "As he came so shall he go" (Eccl. 5:5).
- e) Talmud discusses the obligation to bury the dead.

In the Torah, there are numerous examples that illustrate a belief in the afterlife. See Chevra Kadisha Practice: An Interrelationship with the Afterlife in Judaism By Zoe A. Van Raan

LESSON PLAN, class 3

---The teacher will use accompanying pieces about history, shmira, and bikur cholim---

- The objective for this class is to offer an overview of the chevrot kadisha, as documented in the accompanying piece and as gleaned from text sources below.
- The daily objective relates to the overall course because it offers a synopsis not only of a chevra kadisha, which we want the students to become intrigued by, but also a full picture. The goal herein is that they may seize an aspect of its history as a means to relate to the ancestral piece of the tradition, thus enabling them to connect to the tradition in a more holistic manner.
- The students will explore the history of chevrot kadisha. The teacher will take a moment or two to discuss the fact that historically, bikur cholim and nechama were included in the duties of a chevra kadisha.
- The students will also discuss and deconstruct the following text sources: (Time permitting. Teacher may prioritize which quotes to discuss and hand out the quotes for the students to look at in their own time.)
- “Some people prepare their shrouds in their lifetime based on the verse from Amos: ‘Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.’” (Sefer Ha Aggadah 4:12).
- “Chevra Kadisha is so called because they look after the needs of the holy ones as it say: ‘For the sake of the holy ones who are interred in earth.’” (Psalms 16:13)
- “When a person is born they are washed, and when they die they are washed” (Moed Katan 27b).
- The duty to bury the dead is a positive commandment, which rests on all people in the community in the absence of relatives who can do it. When there is a deceased person in town, no person in the town is allowed to work. It is forbidden for anyone in town to eat a regular meal before the deceased is buried. If the town has a Chevra Kadisha the duty of burial falls on its members and it is permissible for others to work and to eat regular meals when there is a deceased person in town.
- Our sages teach that the dead shall rise in the same garment in which they were buried. It is for this reason that in very early times relatives spent lavish amounts for the most beautiful burial garments. This put the poor in a difficult position. While they too were anxious to show their high respect for their dead, they were often unable to do so due to their financial status and were embarrassed when using cheap garments. In some cases they even deserted their dead. The shrouds thus became the barometer of a respectable funeral and the differences between the wealthy and the poor.

To rectify this, Rabban Gamliel II, the grandson of Rabbi Hillel, (second century C.E. about 50 years after the destruction of the second Temple) ordered that he be buried in simple linen garments. It was his oft-cited words that established the Jewish principles of simplicity and modesty of burial.

- FOR CLASS #3
- History of Chevrot Kadisha (not comprehensive)
- The historical development and practices of chevrot kadisha begins with biblical sources and continues through the Talmud and into the later Medieval period, most specifically the 1600s. The biblical sources (2000-500 BCE) lay the

groundwork and identify the basic elements. While the Talmudic interpretations (200-500 CE) build the communal framework, the collection of laws and customs varied among different communities.

- Biblical:
- The notion of a burial began when Avraham purchased land in Machpela and buried Sarah in a cave. (Gen. 23)
- In Genesis 50:13, Jacob's sons carry Jacob's bones to be buried in the land of Canaan.
- The mandate to bury on the same day as a death was mandated in Deuteronomy 21:23.
- The Book of Job speaks of the critical role of communal support for mourners.
- G-d comforted Jacob after the death of his father in Genesis 25:11
- Talmudic:
- Baba Batra 7b and 8a talks about how much time one must live in a town in order to be responsible for certain tasks that are undertaken by what is now called a chevra kadisha.
- Tractate Mourning, Smachot xii:5, documents practices of chevrot kadisha in terms of an individuals' delineated tasks with the family of the deceased, the mourners, and the met/metah.
- Asher ben Jehiel stated that once a person dies, the mourners should be automatically comforted.
- Middle Ages:
- The objective of a burial society in the Middle Ages was delineated in the responsa of R. Asher b. Jehiel (Responsa, Rule 13, #12).
- The first formal burial society in the Middle Ages was organized in Prague by R. Eliezer Ashkenazi, in 1564. In 1573, R. Moses Moln instituted official rules, regulations, and amendments.
- In the Rishonim period, 1040-1350 CE, there were four major developments:
 - 1) The establishment of communal Jewish cemeteries outside of Israel,
 - 2) The first responsa mentioning the chevra kadisha,
 - 3) Additional written commentary on death, burial, and mourning portions of Talmud,
 - 4) Second wave of compilations of customs and laws relating to illness, death, and mourning.
- The Ramban wrote Torat Ha-Adam, the first post-Talmudic collection of customs and laws. It specifically focused on the continuum of illness, death, and mourning. The pattern of sickness, death, burial, and mourning was used as a template for future works on the subject.
- Even with the expanding body of writing, there was no written record of a chevra kadisha until 1300s.
- By the late 1300s, the evolution of full-fledged chevrot kadisha began in earnest. This happened in concurrence with the killing, expulsion, and emigration of Spanish Jews.
- During the 1600s-1800s, there were numerous books written about the proper conduct and role of a chevra kadisha. They had broad influence on all

subsequent time periods.

- Modern Times in the U.S.:
- In the pre-1960s America, the evolution of the chevra kadisha occurred with little support of the religious establishment.
- In terms of the transition from Europe to the U.S., it is possible to say that the tradition was not dropped, but that it was transformed. Chevrot kadisha had to contend with the transition from simplicity to ostentation in the funeral home; having to deal with funeral directors and their profit-driven mind frame; Embalming, which began in the early 20th century, and much more.
- As the number of congregations grew, there arose a need for Jewish burial facilities to serve multi-denominational situations.
- The oldest chevra kadisha in the U.S. is called "Loving Kindness and Truth" and located in New York City. This burial society was established in 1802.

- • FOR CLASS #3
- The Concept of Shmira
- Many of the traditions and laws that pertain to the care and preparation of the Jewish dead are founded on two basic principles:
 - 1. The body as the container of the soul is to be treated with the utmost dignity and respect.
 - 2. Although at death the soul departs the body, it still remains present near the body and is fully aware of all that transpires in its vicinity.
- Thus the Shomer serves two purposes:
 - 1. To guard the body from becoming prey for rodents and insects. (Historical Reason)
 - 2. To give respect to the remains and consolation to the soul by not leaving the body unattended like something useless and no longer worthy.
- In addition, the reciting of Psalms (T'hillim) is comforting and soothing to the soul at a time in which it is distressed and confused. (See Aryeh Kaplan's Immortality & The Soul).

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- FOR CLASS #3
- Bikur Cholim: The beginning of the death process
- (Hebrew: ביקור חולים; "visiting the sick, refers to the mitzvah (Jewish religious commandment) to visit and extend aid to the sick.[1] It is considered an aspect of gemilut chasadim (benevolence, selflessness, loving-kindness).[2] It is traditional to recite prayers for healing, such as the Mi Shebeirach prayer in the synagogue, and Psalms (especially Psalm 119) on behalf of the sick.[3] Bikur cholim societies exist in Jewish communities around the world. The earliest Bikur cholim society on record dates back to the Middle Ages.
- The roots of Bikur cholim can be traced back to the Torah, when God visits Abraham after his circumcision (Genesis 18:1).
- Bikur cholim is mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud several times, in Tractate Nedarim 39a, 39b, and 40a. Nedarim 39a and 39b state that "[One must visit] even a hundred times a day" and that "He who visits a person who is ill takes

away a sixtieth of his pain." Nedarim 40a says that "anyone who visits the sick causes him to live and anyone who does not visit the sick causes him to die"; it also states that those who visit the sick are spared from the punishments of Gehenna (explain) and that God sustains the sick, citing the Book of Psalms Chapter 31. [5] According to the Talmud, visits should not be very early or late in the day, and one should not stay too long. Relatives and friends are urged to visit as soon as possible. It is advised that a sick person not be informed of the death of a relative or friend lest it cause more pain.[3][6]

- Visiting the sick during Shabbat, often after morning services, is a common practice; the House of Shammai opposed this but the House of Hillel viewed this as a mitzvah and the view of Hillel became part of halakha. Additionally, it is also permissible to travel on Shabbat if a close relative falls ill.[3]

LESSON PLAN, Class 4

---The teacher will use an accompanying piece about viduy---

- The objective for this class is for the students to learn about the liturgy used during shmira and tahara. The Viduy will also be discussed.

- The daily objective connects to the overall course goals by means of exploring the inferences that the liturgy exposes with regard to the afterlife.

- The time will be spent looking at the words of the liturgy in both English and Hebrew as well as understanding, as a whole, the intentionality behind the order of the liturgy. This information is in the book Chesed Shel Emet: The Truest Act of Kindness in its expanded third edition by Rabbi Stuart Kelman and Dan Fendel.

- The activities will involve listening, taking notes and analyzing.

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- FOR CLASS #4

- VIDUY

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- Translation:

- "How does one confess? [He or she] says: 'Please God! I have intentionally sinned, I have sinned out of lust and emotion, and I have sinned unintentionally. I have done [such-and-such] and I regret it, and I am ashamed of my deeds, and I shall never return to such a deed.' That is the essence of confession, and all who are frequent in confessing and take great value in this matter, indeed is praiseworthy." (Mishneh Torah: Hil. Teshuvah Chapter 1, Law 2).

- The returning of one's soul to G-d at the end of its journey in this world is probably the most profound moment in a person's life. It is for this purpose that our sages prepared a special set of prayers called Viduy, "Confession," to be recited before one departs from this world. These prayers evoke G-d's mercy, and bring great atonement upon the person.

- Viduy reminds us that what really matters is our relationship with G-d and with our fellows, and not material possessions or accomplishments. It is a truly powerful message for everyone.

- Preparing for the Viduy

- One should not delay reciting Viduy out of fear that it may be a bad omen. Many people have recited the Viduy and gone on to live many long years. In fact, saying the Viduy is helpful for one's recovery, as sincere repentance brings merit to the person and can nullify a severe decree from Heaven.
- It is best for Viduy to be recited with a clear mind. Therefore, one should say it before one becomes too weak. If one cannot speak, he/she may say the Viduy in his/her heart.

LESSON PLAN, class 5

- The objective of this class is for the students to delve into the structure and order of the processes that immediately follow a death, and to track this process through the first year after a death.
- The objective relates to the overall goal of the course by connecting the aspects of funerals, shiva, shloshim and yartzeit to the afterlife. The halakhot and minhagim illustrate much in the way of there being an afterlife because these traditions are primarily centered around encouraging the soul to move forward.
- The information includes readings found in the specified chapters, listed in the table of contents, of *The Jewish Way in Death and Dying*.
- The teacher will utilize the information documented above in a lecture-style format.
- The activities will include listening, questioning and taking notes.

LESSON PLAN, class 6

---The teacher will use an accompanying piece about ethical wills---

- The objectives for this class are for the students to understand ethical wills in the context of one's memory living on after death, as taken from various examples in the Torah. This information is accessible via Chevra Kadisha Practice: An Interrelationship with the Afterlife in Judaism
- The students will learn about ethical wills.
- This connects to the course goals by having the students think further about the Torah's teachings about the afterlife through the concept of memory and passing down these memories from one generation to the next.
- The class will open by posing the question of what life has taught them and what, out of this, they want to impart to their family members. This will include guiding questions such as what their values are, what the primary lessons are that they have learned thus far and how they learned them, as well as how they believe one should live on both macro and micro levels.
- The teacher will then read excerpts from excerpts from Chevra Kadisha Practice: An Interrelationship with the Afterlife in Judaism.
- The teacher will then read their own selected sections from the book So that Your Values Live On.
- The activities will include the investigation of specific characters' deaths in the Torah and the language and descriptions surrounding their deaths, and listening to the explanations of what the purpose and intentions are behind writing ethical wills from the book.
- If there is time, the students will write an outline of their own ethical will in preparation for the following class.

FOR CLASS #6

Ethical Wills

Ethical wills are a way to share your values, blessings, life's lessons, hopes and dreams for the future, love, and forgiveness with your family, friends, and community.

Ethical wills are not new. The Hebrew Bible first described ethical wills 3000 years ago (Genesis Ch. 49). References to this tradition are also found in the Christian Bible (John Ch. 15-18) and in other cultures. Initially, ethical wills were transmitted orally. Over time, they evolved into written documents. 'Ethical wills' are not considered legal documents as compared to 'living wills' and your 'last will and testament' which are legal documents.

Today, ethical wills are being written by people at turning points and transitions in their lives and when facing challenging life situations. They are usually shared with family and community while the writer is still alive.

Ethical wills may be one of the most cherished and meaningful gifts you can leave to your family and community.

There is a lovely Jewish custom, one that is unfortunately not sufficiently known in our time, of writing what is called an ethical will. Parents would write a letter to their children in which they would try to sum up all that they had learned in life, and in which they would try to express what they wanted most for and from their children. They would leave these letters behind because they believed that the wisdom they had acquired was just as much a part of the legacy they

wanted to leave their children as were all the material possessions.

The first ethical wills are found in the Bible. Jacob gathers his children around his bedside and tries to tell them the way in which they should live after he is gone. And Moses makes a farewell address, chastising, prophesying, and instructing his people before he dies. David prepares Solomon before he goes to his eternal rest by warning him whom to be wary of when he becomes king, and by asking him to complete the task he had begun and was unable to complete. The Apocrypha, the Talmud, medieval and modern Hebrew literature all contain examples of ethical wills parents left their children.

Many years ago Israel Abrahams published a splendid collection of these medieval wills entitled *Hebrew Ethical Wills*.

An ethical will is not an easy thing to write. In doing so, one confronts oneself. One must look inward to see what are the essential truths one has learned in a lifetime, face up to one's failures, and consider what are the things that really count. Thus an individual learns a great deal about himself or herself when writing an ethical will. If you had time to write just one letter, to whom would it be addressed? What would it say? What would you leave out? Would you chastise and rebuke? Would you thank, forgive, or seek to instruct?

An ethical will is not an easy thing to read. There is a sense of being a voyeur, of eavesdropping on an intimate conversation, of reading a love letter from the beyond. Those who read these documents should do so with reverence and with gratitude. We tread carefully here, and we read with a sense of privilege.

An ethical will is not an easy thing to receive. There is the temptation, an almost irresistible one, for parents to try to persuade after death what they were unable to persuade during life. There is the temptation to repeat once more, to plead once more, and to impose a burden of guilt from the grave.

The famous and much-quoted letter of Ibn Tibbon is an example of such a castrating and guilt-producing will. Over and over again in his will he berates his child and reminds him how much he has done for him, and then he ends with the instruction that the child should read this will regularly. One can only shudder to think of how much harm such a will can do. One must be able to accept a will as well meant, even if its instructions are sometimes burdensome. One must be able to take it as words that come from the heart and that hopefully enter the heart. One must be able to accept it as an adult receiving instruction from an adult, or else the ties that bind become ties that choke and cripple.

The wills of our time come from many countries and from many kinds of people. Some were written by scholars, some by simple men and women. Some were written in freedom and safety, from the comfort of a desk, and some were written in trenches and bunkers. Some were written in English, some in Hebrew, Yiddish, or German. All are precious spiritual documents--windows into the souls of those who wrote them.

LESSON PLAN, class 7

- The objective for this class is for the students to begin writing their own ethical wills and for their fellow students to offer feedback as to the understandability of the writing.
- This connects to the course goals by further elucidating the information, but in an experiential and on a more personal level.
- The teacher will spend 20 minutes reading selected ethical wills as found in *So That Your Values Live On*.
- The students will then write their own ethical wills.
- During the final 30 minutes the students will read their ethical wills to the rest of the class, receiving input.

LESSON PLAN, Class 8

- The objective of this class is to encourage the students to either form their own chevra kadisha or to join one.

- The objective relates directly to one of the goals of this course, which is to recruit the involvement of synagogue members and other local Jews.

- The information on beginning a chevra kadisha can be found on Myjewishlearning.com, How To Form A New Chevra Kadisha: Rebutting objections to forming or joining a burial society--and practical steps on how to do so, by Rabbi Abner Weiss. Specific instructions such as what materials are needed can be found, by the student, on the Kavod V'Nichum website (<http://jewish-funerals.org>).

- Information about joining a chevra kadisha will come through the students' questions about the topic. The teacher will facilitate a discussion regarding anyone's doubts or issues about being involved.

- Part of the potential motivation for joining a chevra kadisha will be brought forth through the reading of others' stories regarding their involvement. Numerous stories can be found on <http://jewish-funerals.org/tahara-stories>.

- The teacher will reemphasize the fact that not all of what comprises a chevra kadisha was covered in the course. Historically, nechama (comfort) was also offered to those in mourning by members of a chevra kadisha. Prior to death, bikur cholim was also a task taken on by a chevra.

The class will open with words from Rabbi Stuart Kelman's book *Chesed Shel Emet: The Truest Act of Kindness*:

"Laws of tahara have deep historical roots. Beginning in Mishnaic times, specific procedures and customs evolved in a variety of locations and through many generations. As a result, numerous traditions exist today...(they) are links in the great chain of our Jewish tradition" (xvii).

"Existentially, we are preparing a body for burial. Nominally, we are doing tahara as a way of showing honor and respect to the deceased. It might be helpful to imagine the body which we are manipulating is a living person, keeping in mind that one day, it will be us..."(xix).

