

What is Shmira?

Shmira is the ritual guarding, or watching over, of the body of the deceased person and comforting their soul from the time of death until burial. It is believed that during this time, the soul is hovering near the body.

A person who performs *shmira* is called a ***shomer***, the one who watches. *Shmira* usually takes place in the funeral home. While sitting with the deceased, the *shomer* reads *Psalms* [*Tehillim*] or other inspirational materials to provide comfort to the soul.

At KBI, *shmira* is offered upon request. It is not uncommon for family members and friends of the deceased to coordinate or participate in *shmira* for a loved one.

If you are interested in joining our Men's or Women's Chevra Kadisha, or for more information about this end-of-life mitzvah, please contact the KBI office at (804) 288-7953 or email KBI@KBIRVA.com



Donations to the **Harris & Joan Griff Chevra Kadisha Fund** are used to support our

work and to educate our members and the community.

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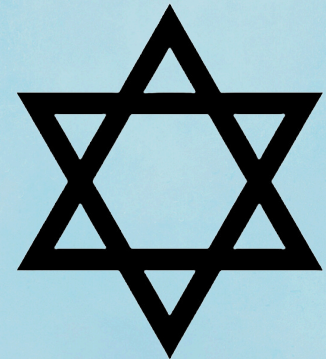
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Chevra Kadisha

***of
Sir Moses Montefiore
Cemetery***



affiliated with


**KENESETH
BETH ISRAEL**
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

The **Sir Moses Montefiore Cemetery Chevra Kadisha**, which is affiliated with Keneseth Beth Israel, is a group of dedicated and caring volunteers who have been performing this mitzvah for more than 100 years. This tradition has been passed down in the Jewish tradition for centuries.

For some at KBI, this mitzvah has been passed down from generation to generation.



“Blessed is he unto the Lord
who does not forsake
his kindness with the living
and with the dead...”
— Ruth 2:20

What is a Chevra Kadisha?

A ***Chevra Kadisha***, “Sacred Society,” is a Jewish volunteer organization composed of community and shul members that support families at the end of life. They prepare a deceased loved one for a proper Jewish burial with the utmost respect and dignity.

Historically, the *Chevra Kadisha* encompassed everything from visiting the sick (*bikur cholim*), guarding the body (*shmira*), preparing the body for burial (*tahara*), assisting with the funeral, and helping the mourners after the funeral.

Here at KBI, the Chevra Kadisha focuses on *tahara* and *shmira*. The KBI Chevra Kadisha was revitalized in the early 1970’s.

What is Tahara?

Tahara is the ritual washing when a loved one dies. At the funeral home, the Chevra Kadisha members gather to recite meaningful prayers and readings throughout the entire *tahara* process. The body of the deceased is gently washed, and the *tahara* water is poured to purify the body. The body is dressed in a white shroud (*tachrichim*) and then carefully placed in the casket (*aron*), a plain pine box.



The *tahara* is performed with the utmost respect and honor for the deceased, as the Chevra Kadisha physically prepares the body and spiritually comforts the soul.