



## Beit HaShamayim



### בית השמים

*Beit HaShamayim* is the name of the Big Island's Jewish Cemetery. Located within Homelani Memorial Park in Hilo on the eastern side of the Big Island of Hawaii, *Beit HaShamayim* is the only Jewish cemetery on the island. It is open to all Jewish families and persons in need, whether Jewish by birth, choice or family relationship.

*Beit HaShamayim*, in Hebrew, and *Homelani*, in Hawaiian, both mean "Heavenly Home."

### What Makes a Jewish Cemetery Jewish?

- ✧ A Jewish cemetery has physical boundaries that set the cemetery off from its surroundings, making it sacred for Jews.
- ✧ A Jewish cemetery is considered consecrated ground where Jewish burial practices and customs are observed.
- ✧ A Jewish cemetery is owned by the Jewish community. Its rules and regulations are established by a duly authorized Board of Directors for Jewish cemetery purposes.
- ✧ Only Jewish symbols are permitted in a Jewish cemetery.
- ✧ Only Jewish clergy or lay people may officiate at a burial service or any other religious service at a Jewish cemetery.
- ✧ Perpetual care funds are managed by and for the care of the Jewish cemetery, or suitable arrangements are otherwise established.
- ✧ The cemetery is open to be visited on all days, but burials are not performed on Shabbat and major Jewish holidays.

Just as synagogues preserve Jewish continuity in life, so do Jewish cemeteries preserve Jewish continuity after life has ended.

Congregation Kona Beth Shalom (KBS) has purchased the plots that comprise this section with the intention of reselling the plots in advance or as they are needed. Advance sale is highly recommended as this removes much of the concern and stress that arises with the passing of a loved one, and it is less costly.

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

Who may be buried in *Beit HaShamayim*?

- ✧ Jews by birth, whether of patrilineal or matrilineal descent
- ✧ Jews by choice, whether converted by Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist or Renewal rabbis
- ✧ Individuals who are married to, or who are life partners of, or who are children of Jews as defined above
- ✧ If there are questions, the congregation's Board of Directors will rely on the Cemetery's Rules & Regulations to decide

Who may perform graveside services?

- ✧ Burial services may be conducted by any Jewish person who is a member of KBS or who has the permission of the KBS Board. A non-Jewish person may participate in any graveside service only with permission of the Jewish person officiating and the Board.

What kind of grave markers are used at *Beit HaShamayim*?

- ✧ All markers shall be flat or flush, include only Jewish symbols. These markers must be put in place within one year of burial of the deceased.

## **Chevra Kadisha**

Jewish tradition encourages burial within 24 hours of passing. This is not always possible here in Hawaii – but our goal is to enable prompt burial. Cremation or embalming is discouraged, but burial of cremated remains or individuals who have been embalmed is not forbidden in *Beit HaShamayim*.

Traditional preparation for Jewish burial includes the participation of a *Chevra Kadisha*. This is a group of Jewish men or women volunteers who assemble to prepare the deceased for burial. This includes *Taharah*, the ritual washing of the body; *Tahrachim*, dressing the body in a simple shroud; and *Shomer*, the ritual guard who stays with the body until burial. Kona Beth Shalom does not have a formal *Chevra Kadisha*, but does call together such a group when requested and needed.

Kona Beth Shalom strongly recommends that the casket you choose be simple and plain (the traditional pine box constructed without nails, using wooden pegs). You will need to specify your choice with the mortuary you choose. Other kinds of caskets are also permitted in *Beit HaShamayim*.

## **Purchase of Burial Rights**

Homelani Memorial Park sells the right to use the land, not the land itself. Thus there is no deed to the land.

The advance purchase of a burial plot does not guarantee that a specific location in the KBS Cemetery (*Beit HaShamayim*) is reserved for that person, although all reasonable care and effort will be taken to facilitate that intention. The location of the specific plot to be used for burial may change if the passage of time has led to other burials using other sites. All efforts will be made to assure that pairs or groups of plots purchased to be contiguous will remain so.

The price for a burial plot is determined as follows:

For individuals or families who have been KBS members in good standing for at least one year prior to the passing, the purchase price will be the same as the amount KBS paid for the plot (\$1,596). This also applies to the family members of those KBS members (parent, sibling, spouse, life partner or child).

For all others qualified for burial in the KBS Cemetery, the price will be equivalent to the current price of plots elsewhere in Homelani Memorial Park.

Any owner of an unused plot in the KBS Cemetery who is leaving Hawaii permanently and wishes to relinquish ownership may donate the plot back to KBS to be used for charitable purpose, or may request repurchase of the unused plot from KBS at the original purchase price.

There are additional costs for funeral services and supplies that come from Homelani Memorial Park as well as from the Funeral Home or Mortuary you choose, such as opening and closing the grave, purchase of the casket, rental of the hearse and purchase of the marker/monument. Please contact them for those details. Homelani Memorial Park and all Funeral Homes offer discounts for financial arrangements made in advance.

Please call us for further details.

### **Contact Information:**

KBS President: Dr. Barry Blum, [bonedoc.bb@gmail.com](mailto:bonedoc.bb@gmail.com)

KBS Treasurer: Mike Bernstone, [mbernstone@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:mbernstone@hawaii.rr.com)

(808) 883-3809

*Beit HaShamayim* Committee Chair: Dr. Barry Blum,

[bonedoc.bb@gmail.com](mailto:bonedoc.bb@gmail.com) (808) 326-4192

Homelani Memorial Park: 388 Ponahawai Street, Hilo,

(808) 961-6051

Big Island Mortuaries:

Dodo Mortuary, Kona: 322-9592; Hilo, 935-5751

Ballard Family Mortuary (formerly Ā Hui Hou Mortuary),

Kona: 329-5137; Hilo: 935-8445

When you do contact any of the mortuaries, remember to explain that you want them to follow Jewish tradition and ritual, so that they and we can coordinate our activities.