

chesed

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HFBA Mission Statement

The **Hebrew Free Burial Association** devotes its resources to performing *chesed shel emet* (the ultimate act of loving kindness). It is the only agency in the New York metropolitan area dedicated to assuring that every Jew, regardless of financial means or religious affiliation, receives a dignified, traditional Jewish funeral and burial.

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The Hebrew Free Burial Association

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UJA Federation
of New York

As always, we welcome your comments. Please write to us at:
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(212) 239-1662 or send us email
at our **new email address:**
info@hebrewfreeburial.org

No Longer Neglected Nor Forgotten

Throughout history and across cultures, the poor, the old, the physically handicapped and mentally disabled have been marginalized by society. Their lives are considered to be of lesser value, and, too often, they live, and die, in obscurity.

Judaism values each and every life no matter how compromised. All Jews have the responsibility to care for each other and Jewish society is structured by the Torah with precise laws to protect the weak and vulnerable. Our obligation to our fellow Jews extends throughout their lives and includes the care of their remains after their death.

The mentally ill, in particular, are often isolated, hidden and forgotten, becoming discarded members of society. They are

frequently abandoned by their families and are sent to institutions which are ill-equipped to care for their special needs. Recently, in Oregon, in a locked room, almost 4000 urns filled with ashes were found. They were the remains of mental patients who had died in the state hospital which had housed them, their cremains unclaimed by any relative or friend. Most of the labels identifying the deceased had become illegible. "The fate of the unclaimed mirrors that of those who died over the last century in silence...(as do) the rows of [25,000] numbered graves without names... an especially gruesome reminder that being mentally ill often means feeling neglected" (*New York Times*, March 14, 2005, page A17).

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A Message From Our President

The Hebrew Free Burial Association is the largest organization in the New York metropolitan area with the goal of making certain that no Jew goes to his final resting place without a proper Jewish burial. Our commitment to chesed is over a century old and we are grateful for your support which endorses our commitment to those who have been forgotten and impoverished with no family to assume the last task.

The Jewish community is well known for its compassion and sense of obligation to our less fortunate members. All of us can participate in "chesed shel emet" by supporting the work of HFBA.



Fred Kornreich,
President, HFBA

HFBA Helps: From Our Files

Few people realize the extraordinary effort made by HFBA to fulfill its mission. Public agencies and governmental bureaucracies must be dealt with and long-missing, often uncooperative, family members must be found and consulted.

Police officers found Victor's friend's name in his address book after being called to his apartment upon his death. His friend, a fellow musician in a rock band in Russia, called HFBA and got a group together to help pay for the funeral. The friends were loyal to Victor, a man in his 40's with no known family in the U.S. They were concerned that he be buried according to Jewish tradition, an interest he was pursuing more and more in his musical writing and his studying. HFBA made sure that Victor received the burial he would surely have wanted.

Anticipating a lonely end, Selma called HFBA in 1989 to arrange for her own eventual funeral, having no one to rely on and little money to earmark for expenses. We kept the

information and this year, when the nursing home in which she was residing called us, we were able to bury Selma according to her wishes.

Sarah H. died in 2003 and was buried by HFBA when her only living relative, her brother Harold, was recuperating from surgery in the hospital. Harold had been grateful for HFBA's efforts and told many people about his sister's burial. Upon Harold's death, a co-worker with whom Harold had shared the story, called us to bury Harold, now laid to rest near his sister in HFBA's Mt. Richmond Cemetery.

Although Henry W., who was found dead at the age of 62 in his New Jersey apartment, was indeed indigent, he had never followed through with Medicaid and was therefore ineligible for any county services. HFBA was contacted by his only living relative, his sister-in-law. Both Henry's wife and brother had recently died and there were no funds available from the family nor from the government to pay for his funeral and burial. HFBA was able to absorb the entire cost, thanks to our supporters.



Volunteers Help HFBA

Not only do we appreciate our many volunteers who help maintain our cemeteries, but they, too, appreciate the opportunity to engage in *chesed*. As part of a Cemetery Clean-up Project, students from several New York area schools visit HFBA cemeteries to rake leaves and clear debris. In the course of one such visit, ninth and tenth grade students from the **Hebrew Academy of Nassau County (HANC)** uncovered five previously unrecorded headstones on old, hidden graves. The boys were inspired to recite Psalms in memory of the deceased.

Other school groups who visited this year included:

- **Davis Renov Stahler Yeshiva High School for Boys (DRS-HALB)**
- **Hillel Yeshiva High School (NJ)**
- **Kulanu Torah Academy**
- **Mesivta Ateres Yaakov High School**
- **Mesivta of North Jersey**
- **North Shore Hebrew Academy High School**
- **Ramaz Upper School**
- **Rambam Mesivta High School**
- **Rav Teitz Mesivta Academy/JEC High School**
- **SAR Academy High School**
- **Solomon Schechter School of Queens**
- **Torah Academy of Bergen County (TABC)**
- **Yeshiva Har Torah**
- **Yeshiva Ohr Chadash High School, and**
- **Yeshiva University High School for Girls (Central).**

The students were accompanied by their teachers and were prepared for their special task by Rabbi Ezra Berenholz, Associate for Education and Outreach for HFBA, who noted that, "This is a wonderful and powerful experience that will stay with these students for the rest of their lives." The students unanimously endorsed the program as a



"hands on" *chesed* project which they look forward to doing on a regular basis. As one young man declared, "It was a wonderful experience...(and) a touching scene."

If you would like to arrange to volunteer at our cemeteries, please call Amy Koplow at (212) 239-1662.

Upon request, a copy of our annual report may be obtained from our office, 224 W. 35th Street, Room 300, New York, NY 10001 or from the Attorney General, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271.

No Longer Neglected

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Walter R. was severely abused as a child and, perhaps as a result of the abuse, he became mentally ill. He spent his life bouncing from one institution to another, each of which unsuccessfully treated him. His extreme illness persisted even with electric shock treatment. When the state facility in which he was last treated closed, he was sent to a nursing home where he died, a tragic figure, at the age of forty-eight. Fortunately, his case was referred to the Hebrew Free Burial Association.

The Hebrew Free Burial Association exists for the express purpose of providing any Jew with a traditional Jewish funeral and burial. However rejected in life, HFBA ensures that no Jew will be forgotten in death. From the time of demise to burial, the deceased receives the dignified treatment that may have eluded him in life. Traditional Jewish funeral rites ensure that the decedent's remains are handled respectfully before and during burial. A service is conducted by a rabbi even if no other mourners are present. Further, the goal of our "Leave Your Mark" campaign is to make sure that each grave is inscribed with the name of the departed.

Because of HFBA, Walter R's remains did not end up forgotten on a dusty shelf. His body was not buried in a mass grave or anonymously in an untended cemetery. Walter R. was given the same careful burial that every Jew deserves. Neglected, isolated and victimized in life, he was nonetheless accorded the dignity in death that every human being passing through this world deserves.

End of Life Issues

Recent publicity surrounding the "Right to Die" movement has convinced many Jews of the very important task of creating a Living Will and appointing a Health Care Proxy. A Living Will (not legally binding in New York State) describes one's wishes in the case of incapacitation when one is unable to make decisions for oneself. The Health Care Proxy, a legal document, empowers a relative or friend, chosen in advance, to make such decisions. The proxy should be made very familiar with the instructions of the Living Will when one is in good physical and mental condition.

Since Jews are guided by *halacha*, it is important to create a "Halachic Living Will" which is designed to reflect one's desire that all medical decisions be made in accordance with Jewish law. The two most popular Halachic Living Wills have been produced by the Agudath Israel of America and by the Rabbinical Council of America. Both wills specify a rabbi with whom a proxy should consult. The Agudah form is fairly simple whereas the RCA form is more detailed, listing potential medical situations in which Jewish law allows some personal choice. **For more information, please contact the RCA at (212) 807-7888 and the Agudath Israel of America at (212) 797-9000.**

In the last decade, arbiters of Jewish law have increasingly addressed the issue of organ donation. Although the issue is complex, many rabbis now agree that, if organs are obtained in accordance with *halacha*, (without hastening death and with a full consensus that death has occurred) there are no barriers to organ donation. The *halachic* imperative of saving a life may be fulfilled by donating organs to someone in need. Information is available from the HODS (Halachic Organ Donation Society) website, **www.hods.org**.

РУССКИЙ ДАЙДЖЕСТ

Не забыты.

На протяжении веков, в разных странах общество зачастую не проявляло заботу о пожилых и бедных людях, а также инвалидах с физическими и психическими заболеваниями. Согласно же еврейской религиозной традиции, *каждая* жизнь, не зависимо от того, какое положение в обществе занимает человек, бесценна.

Недавно в газете *New York Times* была опубликована статья о том, что в лечебнице для душевнобольных было обнаружено 4000 урн с прахом, которые хранились в одном из закрытых помещений, причем надписи на урнах были неразборчивы настолько, что невозможно было понять, кому принадлежат останки. Кроме того, на территории были обнаружены тысячи могил без обозначения имен покойных.

Ассоциация HFBA проводит захоронения евреев на еврейском кладбище в соответствии с еврейской традицией не зависимо от того, насколько они бедны или немощны. Уоррен Г. провел всю свою жизнь в лечебнице для душевнобольных; в детстве он подвергался издевательствам, и так и не смог стать активным членом общества. Когда он скончался в возрасте 48 лет, HFBA похоронила его с достоинством, которого он был лишен при жизни и которого заслуживает любой человек в этом мире.

Помощь HFBA: из наших архивов.

Полиция обнаружила Виктора мертвым в его квартире. Им удалось найти друзей покойного, с которыми он поддерживал связь в Нью-Йорке и которых знал по инструментальному ансамблю в Москве. Друзья покойного позвонили в HFBA для организации похорон Виктора на еврейском кладбище, поскольку в последнее время он интересовался иудаизмом и хотел быть похоронен по-еврейски.

Будучи одиноким человеком, Селма позвонила в HFBA в 1989 г., озабоченная тем, кто ее похоронит и кто оплатит похороны, поскольку Селма не имела средств на погребение. Она скончалась в этом году. Ассоциация HFBA имела всю необходимую информацию и похоронила Селму в соответствии с ее пожеланием.

Тело Генри Р. было обнаружено в его квартире в Нью-Джерси. Ему было 62 года. Хотя он был неимущим, он никогда не обращался за Медикейдом, поэтому графство не выделило никаких средств на его погребение. Мы смогли покрыть наши расходы на похороны благодаря пожертвованиям спонсоров.

Волонтеры помогают HFBA.

Мы благодарны многим волонтерам, которые помогают ухаживать за кладбищем. Но и наши волонтеры ценят возможность участвовать в добрых делах (*chesed*). На кладбище приезжают учащиеся из различных школ совместно со своими учителями. Их готовит к помощи на кладбище сотрудник HFBA по работе с общиной рабби Эзра Беренхольц. Недавно группа учащихся из Hebrew Academy, расположенной в графстве Нассау, помогая убирать кладбище, обнаружила 5 надгробий на старых могилах, не обозначенных в архиве кладбища. Юноши с волнением прочитали псалмы в память об усопших.

Послание нашего Президента.

Ассоциация HFBA является крупнейшей организацией Большого Нью-Йорка, цель которой в том, чтобы каждый еврей был похоронен в соответствии с еврейской религиозной традицией. Широко известно, что еврейская община с заботой и ответственностью относится к своим менее успешным членам. Мы все можем принять участие в деяниях истинной доброты (*chesed shel emet*), жертвуя определенные средства HFBA.

Фред Конрайх, Президент, HFBA

Некоторые юридические аспекты последних дней жизни человека.

В связи с тем, что в последнее время широко обсуждается вопрос «права на смерть», многие осознают важность назначения «Доверенного лица для принятия медицинских решений» и оформления Завещания на случай, если в последние дни жизни человек не в состоянии принять или сформулировать свое решение. Поскольку евреи соблюдают правила еврейского закона «галахи» (*halacha*), важно оформить «Галахическое Завещание», которое бы обозначило пожелание завещателя/доверителя относительно принятия всех медицинских решений в соответствии с галахой. Для получения дополнительной информации по этому вопросу, Вы можете позвонить в еврейскую организацию Agudath Israel of America по телефону (212) 797-9000, или в Американский Совет Раввинов (Rabbinical Council of America) по телефону (212) 807-7888.

В последнее десятилетие авторитетные специалисты в области еврейских законов обращаются к вопросу о пожертвовании органов для хронических больных, и многие считают что это один из аспектов важнейшего «правил сохранения жизни». Информацию на эту тему можно найти на сайте Галахического Общества по Вопросам Пожертвования Органов (HODS) (www.hods.org).

Chesed Shel Emet — How You Can Help

- **Place** HFBA *tzedakah* boxes in a house of *shiva* or in your home, school or local kosher restaurant.
- **Celebrate** a *simcha* or commemorate a loss with HFBA cards. Cards cost \$10 and can include a personalized message.
- **Enroll** a Bar/Bat Mitzvah in our “Mitzvah Circle” by suggesting a gift to HFBA to your guests. The generous child who shares his/her *simcha* in this way receives a framed certificate.
- **Donate** your property, used vehicle or boat to HFBA.
- **Establish** an HFBA Forever Gift Annuity or Charitable Trust Plan. In addition to the guaranteed income and tax benefits, these plans ensure that HFBA’s promise of a Jewish burial to future generations of indigent Jews will be fulfilled.
- **Remember** HFBA in your will with a bequest.
- **A donation** sent with the appropriate information will ensure that HFBA will send out a *Yahrzeit* reminder letter.
- **“Leave Your Mark”** by sponsoring a grave marker for an unmarked grave for \$150 and you will receive a framed certificate. Sponsor four markers and a plaque with your name will be added to our roster at the Weinberg Chapel at Mt. Richmond Cemetery.
- **Arrange** for *kaddish* to be said for the eleven month mourning period following a death of a relative or friend for a donation of \$360.
- **Establish** a Perpetual *Yahrzeit Kaddish* for your loved one for a \$180 donation.
- **Sponsor** Perpetual Grave Care for an indigent’s grave for \$500.
- **Help out today by sending a donation in the enclosed envelope.**

We are pleased to
announce that the
following names have
been added to our

Leave Your Mark

Donor Plaque in the
Weinberg Chapel at
Mt. Richmond Cemetery:



CYRIL DWEK

IRIS G. FEIN

GEORGE FLIEGEL

PETER F. AND EVA KELLNER

RABBI EZRA LABATON AND
CONGREGATION MAGEN DAVID OF WEST DEAL

MRS. ANN ROSENBERG
MARCUS AND ANN ROSENBERG FOUNDATION

PHILIP SCHATTEN

BERNARD AND LINDA WEINER

RAFI AND SARAH WEISS

*Please consider adding your name by sponsoring
four grave markers for unmarked graves for \$600.*