

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.

אגודת אחים חסיד של אמת
The Hebrew
Free Burial
ASSOCIATION

Chesed

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THE HEBREW FREE BURIAL ASSOCIATION

was formed in 1888 on Manhattan's Lower East Side by a group of philanthropic and community-minded Jews who were committed to burying their indigent dead according to Jewish tradition, rather than having them buried in a mass grave in Potter's Field. Since its inception HFBA has interred nearly 60,000 Jews in its two cemeteries. HFBA is also committed to retrieving the identities of those interred and is attempting to provide a gravestone for each unmarked grave.

For more information about how you can help please see page 6.

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UJA Federation
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THE JEWISH CEMETERY

Jewish burial practices have evolved over the centuries, beginning with the first recorded death of a Jew, the matriarch Sarah, wife of Abraham. The Book of Genesis describes Abraham's purchase of a gravesite, the "*mearat hamachpelah*," (Cave of the Patriarchs) as a family tomb. He, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah are also buried in this tomb as well as, according to tradition, Adam and Eve. Over the centuries, bodies were left to decompose in caves and the remains were then buried in the earth. By Talmudic times (middle of the first century C.E.) the custom of burying Jews directly in the ground, in cemeteries designated for that purpose, developed.

Although the cemetery is not considered sacred ground, one's conduct should be consistent with being in a holy place. Any behavior which might be considered undignified to the dead is strictly prohibited. This would include eating and drinking, joking and stepping on or over a grave. At the conclusion of a cemetery visit, it is customary to rinse one's hands to symbolically remove the "impurity" of death.

Traditionally, graves are visited at various times during the year. These occasions include the anniversary of a death (*yahrzeit*) as well as prior to the High Holy Days. At these visits, psalms and special prayers are recited. The visitor may "ask" the deceased to act as an advocate (*melitz yosher*) on their behalf before the Holy Throne. However, they may not, in any way, petition the deceased himself so as not to imply or ascribe divinity or supernatural powers.

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THOUGHTS FOR THE NEW YEAR

The holiday prayer book for the High Holy Days is called the “*machzor*,” literally translated as “return” or “cycle.” The Hebrew phrase for repentance is “*lachzor b’tshuvah*” which translates as “to go back in repentance,” or, more literally, “to go back in return.”

This word theme suggests a truth and a belief. The first is that life is a cycle, the days, weeks, months and years following each other, seemingly more quickly as we get older, like a wheel turning ever faster. The baby daughter who cooed and laughed now has her own child in her arms. The son who stood straight and strong reading the Torah at his bar mitzvah now looks on proudly at his own son as he continues the tradition. The *machzor* we hold this holiday is the same as last year’s and, if we are blessed, will be the one we hold next year as well.

The second implication is that “doing wrong” is a straying from the right path rather than a commitment to an evil goal. The process of repentance involves remorse, renunciation and a *return* to doing “good.”

As we contemplate the cycle of life, as we ponder its rapidity and fragility, let each of us look inside ourselves for own particular path “back” to the good and to G-d.



Q&A

Q: Is **cremation** permitted according to Jewish law? It is less costly than burial, takes up less space and seems more “environmentally-friendly.”

A: Cremation is *absolutely prohibited* according to Jewish law and custom. The biblical injunction against intentional mutilation of the human body finds full expression in the prohibition of cremation. Whereas the natural process of decomposition can occur when a body is buried, burning a

body is the ultimate desecration of the sacred vessel which once housed the eternally holy soul.

The historical association of cremation with pagan societies argued against this practice for the ancient Hebrews. As Jewish philosophy developed over the centuries, cremation became a strong taboo and burial became the only acceptable Jewish method

for the disposal of remains. In modern times, cremation is indelibly linked to the Holocaust and Nazi designs of complete obliteration and annihilation.

Although cremation is less expensive than burial, it is actually less “eco-friendly” because environmentalists believe that the heat and carbon released through the process of burning contributes to global warming. In fact, Jewish funerals have been “green” for thousands of years.*

Many people find comfort and solace when they visit the graves of ancestors which also give a tangible link to past generations. Moreover, the concept of *kavod hamet* mandates the treatment of the body with dignity, respect and reverence. According to Jewish law and tradition, this can be fulfilled only through burial in the earth. “*From dust you were taken, for dust you are and to dust you shall return* (Genesis 3:19).”

* For more, visit HFBA’s blog, <http://tinyurl.com/hfbagreen>.



HFBA HELPS

Sadly, HFBA is often called upon to bury members of two generations of family members.

HFBA buried Sam M.* after this 51 year old man died of cancer and his parents contacted us. We reserved the two adjoining graves for his parents which were used within the next six years when both his father and mother died. There was no one at the last funeral except for our rabbi and the gravediggers.

Rhonda Stein, the HFBA Office Manager and Funeral Coordinator, is often called upon to deal sensitively with HFBA clients. She recalls:

"A hospital social worker called me to refer Rochelle* for HFBA services. Rochelle's adult daughter Wendy* had just died, and Rochelle insisted on not telling any family members of the death. Rochelle stood at the graveside alone, still and erect like a soldier, bravely facing the grave, not shedding

a tear although the pain on her face was clearly apparent.

After the burial, Rochelle called to thank me for HFBA's help and to tell me her daughter's story. Wendy had been a difficult child and had gotten involved with a troubled crowd during adolescence. She had been in and out of rehab for drug abuse over the years and, as a single parent, had raised her daughter with Rochelle's help. She became ill with cancer and was intermittently hospitalized during the last two years of her life.

Some time later, I again heard from Rochelle who implied that she was sick but would not divulge the nature of the disease. She proudly put her granddaughter, Ricki,* on the phone to say hello.

Two months later, I received a call from Rochelle's son, Dave,* who lived in Utah. Sadly he advised me that Rochelle had suffered a series of strokes and the doctor did not think she would live. This was difficult to hear but not as hard as when Dave called three days later to tell me she had died.

Rochelle was laid to rest next to Wendy. This time the family was there."

**Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.*

THE JEWISH CEMETERY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Some people visit the graves of family members before a wedding to "invite" the souls of their ancestors.

Jewish tradition generally discourages the placement of flowers at the grave because it is considered a non-Jewish, pagan ritual custom. Often a small rock is placed on the gravestone to indicate that someone has remembered the deceased and visited. Rabbi David Wolpe describes this custom as having two origins. The first is the belief that the soul resides for a time in the grave and the stone, in effect, keeps the soul "down" where it should be, rather than returning to the world of the living. The other explanation derives from phrase often inscribed on a gravestone,

תְּחַי נִשְׁמָתוֹ תְּסוּרָרָה בְּתוֹרַת הַחַיִּים "tehay nishmato tsurura btsror hachayim" (may the soul be bound in the bonds of eternal life.) The word "tsurura" (bound) is related to the word *tsror*, a pebble kept by shepherds in their slings to keep track of the number of sheep in the herd. Similarly, we ask G-d, our shepherd, to remember each soul and keep it in His protection.

Common Hebrew names for cemeteries include *bet kvarot* (the house of graves) and *bet olam* (the house of eternity). The latter implies the Jewish belief that the soul of each person who spent time in the world of the living is embraced by, and lives still, eternally with G-d.



FROM THE MAILBAG

"My cousin Eve called in June 2009 and told me that someone contacted her claiming to be my sister. Having gone into foster care at approximately 6-9 months of age and having no memory of my mother, it was certainly plausible so I e-mailed (the caller) Iris the very next day... When Iris e-mailed her (own) photo, I was struck by the remarkable resemblance to our mother Brigitta... Iris knew of Brigitta's final resting place at Mt. Richmond Cemetery and we both visited there in July... I stood

with Iris in front of Brigitta's final resting place at Mt Richmond Cemetery. Rabbi Plafker sang the most beautiful prayer... I still can't stop the tears when I reflect on this momentous occasion.

"Our mother died alone and was given a dignified traditional burial by the Hebrew Free Burial Association for which I am indebted. I plan to fund some headstones in the near future... I... could never have envisioned the effects on my emotions. The work of the HFBA is priceless.

Sincerely, Charlie Blumstein

MOUNT RICHMOND CEMETERY JEWISH HOLIDAY SCHEDULE — FALL 2009

Please note that the cemetery will be closing early at 1:00 PM on the day prior to each festival and every Friday before Shabbat, unless indicated otherwise.

Friday	September 18	Erev Rosh Hashana	9:00 AM - 1:00 PM SHARP
Saturday	September 19	Rosh Hashana	CLOSED
Sunday	September 20	Rosh Hashana	CLOSED
Sunday	September 27	Erev Yom Kippur	9:00 AM - 3:45 PM
Monday	September 28	Yom Kippur	CLOSED
Friday	October 2	Erev Sukkot	9:00 AM - 1:00 PM SHARP
Saturday	October 3	Sukkot	CLOSED
Sunday	October 4	Sukkot	CLOSED
Friday	October 9	Hoshana Rabah	9:00 AM - 1:00 PM SHARP
Saturday	October 10	Shmini Atzeret	CLOSED
Sunday	October 11	Simchat Torah	CLOSED

YIZKOR IS RECITED ON
YOM KIPPUR (9/28)
AND
SHMINI ATZERET (10/10)

THE CEMETERY ALWAYS
CLOSES AT 1:00 PM
ON FRIDAYS YEAR ROUND
AND REOPENS SUNDAYS
AT 9:00 AM

Пожалуйста, имейте в виду, что **в канун праздников**, а также **по пятницам**, кладбище закрывается **раньше чем в обычные дни - в 1:00 дня**.

***Ввиду исключения в канун Йом-Киппура в этом году кладбище будет работать до 3:45 дня**

Пятница, 18 сентября	канун Нового Года	с 9:00 утра до 1:00 дня
Суббота, 19 сентября	Новый Год	ЗАКРЫТО
Воскресенье, 20 сентября	Новый Год	ЗАКРЫТО
Воскресенье, 27 сентября	канун Йом Киппура	с 9:00 утра до 3:45 дня
Понедельник, 28 сентября	Йом Киппур	ЗАКРЫТО
Пятница, 2 октября	канун Суккота	с 9:00 утра до 1:00 дня
Суббота, 3 октября	Суккот	ЗАКРЫТО
Воскресенье, 4 октября	Суккот	ЗАКРЫТО
Пятница, 9 октября	Хошана Раба	с 9:00 утра до 1:00 дня
Суббота, 10 октября	Шмини Ацерет	ЗАКРЫТО
Воскресенье, 11 октября	Симхат Тора	ЗАКРЫТО

Поминальная молитва
ИЦКОР читается в
Йом Киппур
(28 сентября)

и на Шмини
Ацерет
(10 октября)

РУССКИЙ ДАЙДЖЕСТ

Что такое еврейское кладбище

Еврейские погребальные традиции сложились в течение веков, ведя отсчёт от первого письменного упоминания о смерти праматери Сары, жены Авраама. Книга Бытия описывает похоронку Авраамом пещеры, “хамеарат хамахпела”, для семейного склепа. Впоследствии сам Авраам, Ицхак и Ребекка, Яаков и Лея были погребены там, а также когда-то, согласно легенде, Адам и Ева. Много столетий евреи оставляли тела умерших в пещерах, а затем погребали останки в земле. К временам Талмуда (первый век новой эры) уже сформировался обычай погребать евреев непосредственно в земле, на специально отведенных для этого кладбищах.

Хотя кладбища и не считаются священным местом, поведение при посещении кладбища должно быть особенным. Всё, что может считаться оскорбительным для памяти усопших, строго запрещено. Не полагается есть и пить, шутить и смеяться, наступать или переступать через могилы. После посещения кладбища обычно омывают руки, тем самым символически удаляя “нечистоту”, связанную со смертью.

Обычно евреи посещают кладбище в определённые дни, например, в годовщину смерти близких (“йорцайт”), а также накануне основных еврейских праздников. Во время этих посещений читаются псалмы и особые молитвы. Посетитель может “попросить” усопшего о заступничестве (“мелиц йошер”) перед Вс-вышним. Однако запрещено обращаться с просьбой к самому усопшему, дабы не приписывать ему святости или особых сверхъестественных сил. Некоторые посещают могилы родственников накануне свадьбы, как бы приглашая их души на предстоящий праздник.

Еврейская традиция в основном не одобряет возложения цветов на могилы, поскольку это считается языческим обрядом. Часто на могильный камень кладут небольшой камешек, отмечающий, что усопшего помнят и посещают. У этого обычая прослеживаются два объяснения. Первое – вера в то, что душа какое-то время обретается в могиле, и что камешек удерживает её, не давая “подняться” к миру живых. Второе объяснение восходит к древнееврейской фразе “техай нишмат цурура бэзор хахайим” (да привяжется душа нитями к вечности). Слово “цурура” (нить) имеет тот же корень что и “цор” – маленькие камешки, которые пастухи использовали для учёта овец в стаде. Мы тем самым просим Вс-вышнего, нашего пастыря, помнить и хранить все души усопших.

Обычно в еврейские названия кладбищ входят слова “бет кварот” (дом могил, дом усыпальниц) или “бет олам” (дом вечности). Второе название подразумевает нашу веру в то, что душа каждого человека, прожившего на земле, потом приобщается к Вс-вышнему и к вечности.

Размышления о еврейском Новом Годе

Особый, отдельный молитвенник на Новый Год и Йом Кипур называется “махзор”, что буквально переводится как “возвращение”, или “круг”. С иврита понятие раскаяние (“лахзор бе-тшува”) буквально переводится как “возвращаться в

покаянии”, или совсем буквально – “вернуться к возврату”. Это выражение отражает и главный аспект нашей жизни, и в то же время наши убеждения по отношению к ней. Первое – цикличность жизни человека, в которой дни, недели, месяцы и годы сменяют друг друга, всё время чуть ускоряясь по мере того как мы стареем (как колесо, которое вращается всё быстрее). Крошечная дочурка, агукавшая в своей кроватке, уже держит своего младенца на руках... Сын, такой почти взрослый, читавший Тору на своей бар-мицве, уже гордо оглядывает своего сына, на его бар-мицве... Махзор отражает эту повторяемость – он тот же что и в прошлом году, и да удостоимся мы держать его и в следующем году.

Второй смысл “возвращения” отражает наши убеждения. Наши плохие поступки – это скорее отход от правильного пути, чем сознательное преследование дурных целей. Процесс покаяния включает сожаление о содеянном зле, отказ от него, и “возвращение” на путь добрых поступков. Когда мы оглядываемся на круговращение жизни, на её скоротечность и хрупкость, давайте заглянем внутрь себя, отыскивая наш собственный путь возвращения к добру и к Вс-вышнему.

Вопросы и ответы

Вопрос: Как еврейская традиция относится к кремации? Кремация и дешевле погребения, и экономит место, и лучше с точки зрения окружающей среды.

Ответ: Кремация абсолютно и безусловно запрещена еврейскими законом и традицией. Тора налагает запрет на преднамеренное разрушение тела человека, пусть и после его смерти. После погребения идёт естественный процесс разложения, в то время как сожжение тела является осквернением священного сосуда, который когда-то был пристанищем вечной души.

Ещё древние евреи отвергали кремацию из-за связи её с язычеством и его обрядами. С течением веков некоторые аспекты еврейской философии только укрепляли неприятие кремации, сделав погребение единственным приемлемым путём обращения с останками. А в наше время кремация вызывает омерзение ещё и в связи с Холокостом.

Хотя кремация и дешевле погребения, для окружающей среды она хуже. Согласно убеждениям защитников окружающей среды, выделяемые при кремации углекислый газ и теплота сгорания способствуют глобальному потеплению. Есть ещё и моральные доводы против кремации. Во-первых, многие находят утешение при посещении могил, где покоятся старшие поколения. Посещения этих “мест упокоения” помогает как бы перебросить мост к прошлому. Во-вторых, понятие о “кавод хамет” (достоинстве усопших) предписывает обращаться с телом человека достойно и с уважением. Согласно еврейскому закону и традиции, это достижимо только через погребение в земле. “Из праха ты был взят, поскольку прах есмь, и в прах ты возвратишься”, сказано было Адаму (книга “Бытие”, 3:19).

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

Leave Your Mark

Donor Plaque in the Weinberg Chapel
at Mount Richmond Cemetery:

DAVID HIMELBERG FOUNDATION

THOMAS H. MAUPIN

MURRAY SIMPSON

SUE AND SOL WIEDER

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



CHESED SHEL EMET—HOW YOU CAN HELP

PLACE HFBA *tzedakah* boxes in a house of *shiva* or in your home, school or local kosher establishment.

CELEBRATE a *simcha* or commemorate a loss with HFBA cards. Cards cost \$15 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 and receive a generous tax deduction.

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 to include HFBA in your will with a bequest.

CONTRIBUTE to HFBA to ensure an annual *Yahrzeit* reminder for your lost loved ones.

“LEAVE YOUR MARK” by sponsoring a grave marker for an unmarked grave for a donation of

\$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 Mount 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.

INSTITUTE a perpetual *Yahrzeit Kaddish* for your loved one for a donation of \$180.

SPONSOR perpetual grave care for an indigent’s grave for \$600.

VOLUNTEER with your friends, classmates, fellow group members, or family at our cemeteries as part of our Cemetery Clean-Up Project.

GIVE us your old *talleisim* for use as part of the dress for deceased men who HFBA will be called upon to bury.

USE your clerical skills in our midtown office as a volunteer.

GET INVOLVED as a professional with HFBA by donating your expertise and skills in an area that can help us.



Original pushka from 1909 at
HFBA's Mount Richmond Cemetery

PLEASE HELP OUT TODAY BY SENDING A DONATION IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE.