

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.

התאגדות אבות 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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JEWISH MOURNING PRACTICES

Biblical references to mourning include stories about Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Rachel and Joseph as well as Aaron the Priest who, as a sign of grief over the deaths of his sons, refrains from eating from the sacrificial offering.

Jewish mourning practices include having the immediate family of the deceased "*sit shiva*"- **sit on low stools** or on the ground as visitors offer solace. This practice derives from the *Book of Job*, whose main character, while enduring a series of disastrous events, is comforted by friends as they sat "close to the earth." The length of the *shiva* (literally "seven") is derived from a lament in the *Book of Amos* which says, "and I will turn your feasts into mourning." From this we learn that in the same way certain festivals are observed for seven days, mourning is to last for one week as well.

Following the burial, upon arriving at the house of *shiva*, a **meal of condolence** is eaten by the mourners. This meal, consisting of bread (a staple of most meals) and a hard boiled egg (symbolizing the cycle of life) is usually provided by members of the synagogue or by neighbors or friends. A **lit candle** is kept burning for the week, symbolic of the human soul. **Mirrors are covered**, suggesting that this is not a time to indulge in vanity. Leather shoes are not worn and the clothing torn at the funeral to symbolize grief is worn throughout the week.

No mourning is mandated for adopted relatives, divorced spouses, relatives of a convert to Judaism, or for one who converted from the Jewish faith. Since cremation is prohibited according to Jewish law, one whose remains are disposed of in this manner is not formally mourned.

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RESTING IN PEACE

Mount Richmond Cemetery holds the remains of 22 of the 146 fatal victims of the largest industrial disaster in New York City history, the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire.

On March 25, 1911, a fire of unknown origin started among the scraps of flammable textile and paper patterns strewn about the top three floors of a factory building at the intersection of Greene Street and Washington Place in lower Manhattan. The 500 workers, mostly young immigrant women, scrambled to escape but found one stairwell filled

with smoke, the other locked, the elevator broken and the outside fire escape collapsing from the weight of those who were running for their lives. As the gathering crowd watched in horror, many workers jumped to their deaths. The fire engines were useless as their ladders could not reach the fire.

Although the owners of the building were acquitted of all criminal charges, a subsequent civil suit resulted in an order requiring the payment of \$75 for each fatality.

The tragedy spurred the growth of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union as well as legislation requiring improved fire safety standards.

In 1991, the building in which this terrible event occurred was designated a national historic landmark. It exists now as the New York University Brown Building of Science.



FIGHTING THE FIRE AT THE ASCH BUILDING, NEW YORK, MARCH 25, 1911. PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN

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MOUNT RICHMOND CEMETERY

MOURNING CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The process of mourning, as expressed by ancient Jewish wisdom, has several stages with different mourning practices attached. The hours immediately following death until after the burial is known as *aninut* during which one is exempt from all positive *mitzvot* (commandments). The week of *shiva* is known as the period of *availut*, followed by

the *shloshim* (30-day period) and the full 12-month period. Each interval is designed to gradually help the mourner negotiate the successive psychological stages of grief from the intense and acute to the full resumption of normal everyday life.

*A full treatment of this subject may be found in **The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning** by Maurice Lamm, from which most of the above article is derived.*

GENERATIONS

This past fall, the Solomon Schechter High School of Westchester participated in HFBA's Cemetery Clean-Up Project. Interested in a more spiritual experience to honor the decedents, they returned in May to make a *minyan* and help bury an indigent Jew.



SOLOMON SCHECHTER SCHOOL OF WESTCHESTER ATTENDS FUNERAL

Several days prior to their visit, HFBA received an e-mail from Mrs. Silverman, a parent of one of the students: "(My son's) great-aunt, I believe, is buried in Mount Richmond, she is my father's sister and she died when she was two years old. Would you please let me know if they are going to this cemetery, there is an interesting history behind all this."

And indeed there was quite a story.

In June, 1991, a day following the marking of the first seventy five graves in HFBA's Mount Richmond Cemetery, a story about the HFBA Leave Your Mark Campaign appeared in the New York Post. Bernard Kaplan read the article which began, "Little Fannie Kaplan died more than 60 years ago but her grave—and those of 74 other poor, dead



FANNIE KAPLAN

Jewish children—was not marked with a headstone until yesterday."

Bernard stared down in disbelief. As he recounted later, "At the time Fannie passed away, I was eight years old. And she was two. There was an epidemic. And then, of course, they had to bury this child. There was no money...Didn't have five cents... An uncle of mine came along and he heard of an organization called the Hebrew Free Burial on the East Side. He contacted them. And they had come up and made all arrangements for burial and picked up the entire bill..."

Bernard had no idea where his sister was buried. Sixty years later, he found her. And eighty years following her death in 1928, her grand-nephew, Joseph Silverman and his friends stood by her grave reciting psalms, standing quietly as the *kail malay rachamim* prayer drifted among them, carried by Rabbi Plafker's (HFBA cemetery chaplain) voice.



JOSEPH SILVERMAN

(To watch Bernard Kaplan tell his story, please visit www.hebrewfreeburial.org)

STAY CONNECTED!

If you would like to sign up for **HFBA's e-Newsletter**, or if you'd like to receive a copy of our **DVD**, please send an e-mail to info@hebrewfreeburial.org.



WE THANK OUR VOLUNTEERS

We are grateful to the students from:

- **The Abraham Joshua Heschel High School** who volunteered for a third time this year,
- **SAR High School** and the **Marsha Stern Talmudical Academy (YUHSB)** who both volunteered two days, and
- **Yavneh Academy.**

All these groups gave their time and much energy to raking leaves and clearing debris at Silver Lake Cemetery this spring.

The Solomon Schechter School of Queens devoted their volunteer day to Mount Richmond Cemetery.

Thank you and yashar kochachem!

Memorial Day at Mount Richmond Cemetery

Among the needy that HFBA has been called upon to bury are many veterans of the United States Armed Forces. The graves of these soldiers are marked with military markers, provided for by The US Department of Veterans Affairs.

Every year on Memorial Day, the New York Guard and the Staten Island Guardsmen come to Mount Richmond Cemetery and place flags at these veterans' graves. It is a moving tribute to those Jewish soldiers who served to protect the United States.



SAR HIGH SCHOOL



MTA (YUHSB)



YAVNEH ACADEMY

Thank You...

to the friends and family of Martin Kirschenbaum z"l who have generously donated to HFBA in his memory.

РУССКИЙ ДАЙДЖЕСТ

Еврейская традиция, связанная с трауром

Библейские истории о наших прародителях Аврааме, Саре, Якове, Рахили содержат эпизоды, связанные с трауром. Например, первосвященник Арон, брат Моисея, в знак траура по сыну воздерживался от жертвенных подношений.

Еврейская традиция траура заключается в том, что ближайшие члены семьи покойного «сидят Шиву» - сидят на низком стуле или на полу, и посетители приходят их утешить. Эта традиция пришла из Книги Иова, где описываются ситуации, когда, несмотря на постигшие несчастья, друзья поддерживали и утешали Иова, при этом сидели «близко к земле». Продолжительность *Шивы* (буквально переводится «семь») происходит от горестного стелания в Книге Амоса, в которой сказано, «и я превращу твой праздник в траур». Отсюда мы понимаем, что как определенные праздники длятся семь дней, так и траур длится одну неделю.

После похорон, по возвращению в дом, где сидят *Шиву*, скорбящие принимают «трапезу сочувствия». Обязательно должен быть хлеб на столе и крутое яйцо (символизирующее цикличность жизни). Такая трапеза обычно готовится членами синагоги, соседями или друзьями. Зажженная свеча должна гореть неделю, символизируя душу человека. Зеркала в доме занавешивают, так как траур не подходящее время предаваться суете. Кожаную обувь не надевают и в знак печали носят всю неделю одежду, разорванную во время похорон.

Соблюдать траур не обязательно по приемным родителям; разведенным супругам; родственникам, перешедшим в иудаизм; или по тем, кто перешел из иудаизма в другую религию. Поскольку кремация запрещена еврейским законом, по тем, кто кремирован, траур тоже не соблюдают.

Мудрая еврейская традиция разделяет траур на несколько стадий. Первая стадия - *анинум (онен)* начинается сразу после смерти родственника (по которому человек обязан соблюдать траур) и заканчивается его похоронами. На этой стадии близкие родственники освобождены от выполнения всех позитивных *мицвот*. Вторая стадия - *авелум* наступает после похорон. Начинается она с Шивы и продолжается семь дней, в некоторых случаях 30 дней - *шлошим*, а в случае смерти родителей - 12 месяцев. Каждый интервал способствует постепенному преодолению человеком последующей психологической ступени печали - от глубокой и сильной скорби до полного возвращения к нормальной повседневной жизни.

Вечный покой

На кладбище HFBA Моунт Ричмонт захоронены 22 из 146 жертв пожара на Triangle Shirtwaist фабрике - крупнейшей катастрофы в истории индустрии Нью-Йорка.

25 марта 1911 года, на швейной фабрике, расположенной на перекрестке улицы Грин и Вашингтон Плайс в Манхэттене, между рулонами легко воспламеняющегося текстиля и бумажными выкройками внезапно вспыхнул пожар. 500 работников, в основном молодые иммигрантки, оказались в западне. Один лестничный проход был объят пламенем, другой заперт на ключ, а лифт сломан. Выбраться наружу было практически невозможно. Собравшаяся толпа с ужасом наблюдала за происходящим. Многие работницы предпочли разбиться, выпрыгнув из окна, чем сгореть заживо. Огнетушители оказались бесполезными, так как приставная лестница не достигала пламени.

Владельцы фабрики избежали уголовной ответственности, а последующий гражданский суд вынес решение о возмещении ущерба в размере 75 долларов за каждого пострадавшего.

Эта трагедия породила образование и рост Международного Союза Работников Женской Одежды, а также принятие новых законов, устанавливающих более высокие стандарты по технике противопожарной безопасности на предприятиях.

В 1991 году здание, в котором произошло это несчастье, было внесено в список национальных исторических памятников. Сегодня оно называется Brown Building of Science и является частью Нью - Йоркского Университета.

Помощь HFBA

«В то время, когда Фаня умерла, мне было 8 лет. Фане было два года. Свирипствовала эпидемия. Родители не могли похоронить ребенка, так как в семье не было денег, даже 5 центов не было. Пришел мой дядя, который где-то слышал об организации Hebrew Free Burial, расположенной в Восточной части города. Дядя связался с организацией. Они организовали похороны и оплатили все расходы. Я часто спрашивал у мамы, - «Мам, где похоронена Фаня?» Мама отвечала на идише, - « Не знаю, где-то в Статен Айланде».

Как-то я увидел заголовок статьи в газете Нью-Йорк Пост «Трагедия Детей Незабываема». Я начал читать статью и увидел рядом фотографию памятника с надписью «Фаня Каплан». Свершилось чудо! 60 лет я искал место, где похоронена моя сестра и не мог найти. Для меня это было настоящим чудом! Я нашел мою сестру через 60 лет» (Бернард Каплан).

Фаня Каплан была похоронена на кладбище Моунт Ричмонт 6 декабря 1928 года. Ее брат, Бернард, умер несколько лет назад. Недавно их могилы навесил внучатый племянник Джозеф Сильверман вместе со своими одноклассниками из Школы имени Соломона Шехтера, расположенной в Вестчестере.

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:



MEL BROOKS

MADELINE GREENBERG

MAJOR EDWARD GUREWITZ

THOMAS H. MAUPIN

HOWARD AND MINA MILLENDORF

SUSAN S. RUTTNER

ERICA ZUCKER

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 \$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 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.