

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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A Biblical Paradigm: A Good Death

On *Shabbat Parshat Chayai Sarah*, the Torah and *haftorah* portions describe two very different versions of old age and death.

The patriarch Abraham, who at the time of this telling is well over one hundred years old, having eulogized, buried and mourned his wife Sarah, takes another wife and has several children with her. He gives gifts to these children but wills all his property to Isaac. He is described as “dying at a ripe old age (175 years), old and contented” and his estranged sons, Isaac and Ishmael come together to bury him next to Sarah in the tomb he had purchased years before. Abraham has an enviable old age – he is vigorous physically and acute mentally and his death is peaceful. There is a reconciliation between rival sons and “after the death of Abraham, G-d blessed his son Isaac,” assuring the continuity of the Covenant.

David’s end is pitiful. At the age of seventy, he is described as “old, advanced in years.” Despite having a young woman to “warm him,” he is physically feeble and impotent. He is unaware that his son Adoniah is planning a coup to gain the monarchy and he must be advised by the prophet Nathan and guided by his wife Batsheva to install Solomon, his son and promised heir. Prior to his death, he is able to instruct his son to follow the Lord’s commandments but his other instructions, which involve vengeance towards his enemies and benevolence toward his ally, suggest “loose ends,” regret and an inability to complete his life’s work. He “slept with his fathers and was buried in the City of David.”

IN MEMORIAM: Fred Kornreich

Hebrew Free Burial Association suffered a sudden, great loss with the recent death of Fred Kornreich, a past president and member of our Board of Directors. Fred was dedicated to HFBA and devoted much time to our organization.

Fred was born in Berlin before World War II and spent nearly seven harrowing years with his parents running and hiding from the Nazis. As a boy, Fred was a tall, fair-skinned redhead, unusual for a Jew, so he was the one who would slip out of hiding to find food for his family. At one point during the war, his father needed to be hospitalized but, to avoid the Nazis, he would only stay in the hospital from 10 p.m. until 4 a.m. It was Fred who would daily carry his father back and forth so he could get the needed care.

Fred and his family survived the war and came to the U.S. in 1948. He often mentioned the excitement and joy he felt when their ship docked within sight of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. Whenever he would pass that area on the way to the HFBA cemeteries, he would be flooded with emotion and memories.

Fred did not dwell on the terrible years during the war, but had a genuine zest for life. He had many friends and loving cousins whom he visited around the world. Fred was passionately devoted to Israel and, famous for his stories and jokes, he was always lively company.

Fred was a 'hands-on' president at HFBA – spending much time in our office and at the cemeteries. He leaves no immediate survivors but will be sorely missed by all who knew him and who benefited from his energy, devotion and good humor.

Amy Koplow, *Executive Director, HFBA*

“Repentance, Prayer and Charity Repel the Evil Decree”

These words from the liturgy of the High Holy Days remind us that we have obligations to G-d and to humanity. As we search our souls for the things we have done wrong over the past year, and resolve to do better, we use prayer to converse, and unite, with G-d. By giving charity, we are reminded of our blessings and of our responsibility to help those who are less fortunate. At the end of this very difficult year, and the beginning of a new one, we unite as a community before the one true judge and beg for a merciful decree for all Jews, for the land of Israel, and for all of humankind.

Please help us continue our unique mission of giving all Jews, no matter their affiliation, a dignified, traditional funeral and burial by generously contributing to HFBA. An envelope is enclosed.

Chesed is published by **THE HEBREW FREE BURIAL ASSOCIATION**

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A Biblical Paradigm: A Good Death

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Everyone hopes for a good, enriched, successful life, but few give a thought to its ultimate end. Clearly, a peaceful death following a life well-lived is a blessing. We all hope for an old age such as Abraham's, with physical energy and mental alertness, knowledge that our descendants are in harmony and provided for, and a feeling of "contentment."

The Hebrew Free Burial Association takes care of those for whom the end of life, and death, have been difficult. For those with few financial resources and no family member able to fulfill the responsibilities of a burial, HFBA steps in to provide a traditional, dignified burial to which all Jews, not only patriarchs and kings are entitled.

Did you know...?

It can be a bureaucratic nightmare to retrieve the body of a homeless, neglected or forgotten person. Bodies may be sent to medical facilities for autopsy or to medical schools for dissection. They may also be sent to Potter's Field for anonymous burial in a mass grave. Negotiating the New York City system to access Jewish bodies for a proper burial is an important part of HFBA's work. We are currently engaged in working with city officials to improve this process, and also working with a coalition of other faith and community groups to make sure that indigents of many backgrounds in New York City receive a dignified burial.



FROM THE Mailbox

Letters such as these remind us that every person has a story, even when the end is sad and solitary.

First I would like to express my deeply felt thanks and recognition for your very humane help with the burial of my old aunt...She was a very old, very poor lady who had no remaining relatives or close friends in the USA. As her nephew, on learning of her death, I rushed to New York from Canada. Not knowing the city, not having contacts in New York except for the people at my aunt's nursing home, I would have been helpless to arrange her burial without your help...

P.D.

Almost eleven years ago, someone...gave money to cover the cost of funeral expenses for a person in my family who passed away, as those expenses were more than I was able to afford... It made me realize what a big mitzvah it is to treat with respect those who are no longer in this world...I cannot give as much as I would like, but (the enclosed donation) is in recognition of fulfilling this important mitvah.

B.B.

Mr. and Mrs. H. wrote about their experience with fetal loss in response to the lead article in the last Chesed. They had been advised that the hospital would dispose of the fetus as a "surgical specimen," a decision they came to regret. Their letter included the following:

We have contributed regularly to HFBA...In keeping with the spirit of this letter, our contribution to you in a sense partially assuages the regret we have in not having provided a Jewish burial, even though 38 years have since gone by...But at long last we at least finally have a feeling of partial closure.

Thank You to Our Volunteers...

Groups and individuals continue to be generous with their time by helping to clear and clean our cemeteries. We would like to thank the following for their help during the past several months:

During the last week of the school year, 7th graders from the Solomon Schechter School of Queens (SSSQ) participated in the HFBA Cemetery Clean-Up Project at both Silver Lake and at Mount Richmond Cemeteries. The students raked leaves at Silver Lake and worked on a special project at Mount Richmond. HFBA congratulates SSSQ, and all of the schools who have volunteered at our cemeteries, for instilling their students with *chesed* values.

Students aren't the only ones who help out at our cemeteries. HFBA thanks Mr. Jack Goldwasser of Staten Island for volunteering this spring at Silver Lake Cemetery.



Solomon Schechter School of Queens working at Silver Lake Cemetery



Solomon Schechter School of Queens at Mount Richmond Cemetery

If you would like to volunteer in our office or are part of a group willing to work at our cemeteries, please call HFBA Executive Director Amy Koplow at (212) 239-1662.



Jack Goldwasser at Silver Lake Cemetery

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.

The Russian Digest, translated summaries of the articles appearing in this issue of Chesed, appears below.

РУССКИЙ ДАЙДЖЕСТ

Библия повествует о «доброй смерти»

В Торе, в главе *Хаей Сара*, приводятся два рассказа о старости и смерти.

Патриарх Авраам после смерти своей жены Сары берет в жены другую женщину, и у них рождается несколько детей. Его дети от обеих жен, хотя и были разобщены прежде, объединяются, когда им приходится хоронить отца; а Исаак становится преемником союза Авраама со Вс-вышним. Авраам полон сил и энергии, сохраняет светлый ум до своего последнего дня. Он мирно и тихо уходит из этой жизни.

Последние же дни царя Давида трагичны: он слаб, бессилён, не знает, что против него готовится заговор. Чтобы выполнить свое обещание и сделать Соломона своим наследником, он вынужден следовать советам пророка Натана и своей жены Батшевы. Его последние слова – слова сожаления о том, что ему не удалось завершить дело своей жизни.

Все мы надеемся на то, что наша жизнь будет насыщенной, полноценной и успешной; но не многие из нас задумываются о неизбежном конце жизни. Еврейское Похоронное Бюро (HFBA) помогает тем, кто сталкивается с трудностями в это тяжелое время, будь то отсутствие средств на похороны, либо отсутствие близких родственников, которые могли бы позаботиться о том, чтобы еврей(ка) был похоронен с достоинством, независимо от того, был ли этот человек простым смертным, или патриархом, или королем.

«Раскаяние, молитва и благовоительность «отводят» «плохое» постановление Вс-вышнего»

Эта цитата из литургии, которая звучит на Рош-Хашана и Йом-Кипур, напоминает нам о том, что мы имеем определенные обязательства перед Вс-вышним и человечеством. На еврейский новый год все еврейство предстает перед единственным и справедливым судьей и молит его о милосердии для всех евреев, для земли Израиля и всего человечества.

Просим Вас присылать свои пожертвования, дабы мы могли продолжать заботиться о том, чтобы евреи были похоронены с достоинством, независимо от их социального статуса (конверт прилагается).

Из нашей почты

В первую очередь я хочу выразить свою глубокую благодарность за вашу добрую помощь при похоронах моей тетушки... Она была очень старенькой, маломужей, у нее не было близких родственников, друзей в США. Узнав о ее кончине, я поспешил приехать из Канады в Нью-Йорк, где у меня нет родных и знакомых. Без вашей помощи я бы не смог организовать ее похороны...

П. Д.

Одиннадцать лет назад неизвестный мне человек пожертвовал деньги на похороны члена моей семьи, поскольку я не имел на это достаточных средств... Тогда я понял, насколько важной является *мицва* уважительного отношения к тем, кто покинул этот мир. К сожалению я не могу жертвовать столько, сколько хотелось бы; примите данное пожертвование в знак признания важности этой *мицвы*.

Б. Б.

Прочитав в прошлом выпуске нашего информационного бюллетеня Chesed статью о смерти новорожденных и недоношенных детей, мистер и миссис Г. написали нам о трагедии, произошедшей в их семье 38 лет назад, когда жена не смогла выносить плод, а сотрудники госпиталя проинформировали родителей, что они выбрасывают останки выкидышей как отходы хирургической операции. В своем письме супруги также пишут: *«Мы регулярно даем пожертвования Еврейскому Похоронному Бюро (HFBA)... Наши пожертвования в какой-то степени облегчают наше чувство сожаления о том, что мы не смогли обеспечить похороны нашему ребенку...»*

Знаете ли Вы, что...

В силу бюрократического крючкотворства приходится сталкиваться с невероятными трудностями, когда надо похоронить бездомного или того, кто не имел родственников или потерял контакт с семьей. Останки этих несчастных могут направить в медицинские учреждения для проведения вскрытия, либо в медицинские школы для учебных целей и изъятия органов. Их тела могут быть захоронены на городском кладбище в общей могиле без установки памятника, даже без указания имени покойного. В подобных случаях важной составляющей работы Еврейского Похоронного Бюро является проведение «переговоров» с городскими службами о возможности захоронения евреев на нашем кладбище. В настоящее время мы работаем с Городским Советом над упрощением этого процесса с тем, чтобы даже тот, кто был одинок и лишен достойных условий жизни, не был забыт в момент ухода в иной мир.

Более подробную информацию о нас Вы можете найти на нашем сайте www.hebrewfreeburial.org.

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:



Sherry and Paul Brandt-Rauf

Henry G. Fuchs

Herman and Anita Gaillard

Steven and Neralie Hasman

Reuven and Margaret Polis

Harriet B. Reznick

Lawrence A. Riemer

Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Wadler
Vaad Harabonim of Queens Chevra Kadisha

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

As always, we welcome your comments. Please write to us at: **224 W. 35th St., Room 300,
New York, NY 10001**, call **(212) 239-1662** or email us at: **info@hebrewfreeburial.org**.

Visit our website: **www.hebrewfreeburial.org**.

Chesed Shel Emet — How You Can Help

- **Place** HFBA *zedakah* 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 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.
- **Institute** a perpetual *Yahrzeit Kaddish* for your loved one for a donation of \$180.
- **Sponsor** perpetual grave care for an indigent’s grave for \$500.

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