

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.

אבותינו חסידים של צדקה
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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ALL JEWS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WELL-BEING OF EACH OTHER IN LIFE AND IN DEATH

In the late 19th century, a large number of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe joined Sephardic Jews and German Jews who had already settled in the New York metropolitan area. This critical mass required the creation of an extensive network of "cradle to grave" social services. Hebrew Free Burial was part of that pioneering effort.

Intended to foster economic self-sufficiency, the United Hebrew Charities (founded, 1874, now defunct) provided vocational training, established an employment bureau and issued loans to small businesses. The UHC medical department sent medical attendants for home births and provided care for consumptives. Jewish hospitals were established, and by 1916, the Mt. Sinai Hospital had a 523 bed capacity for in-patients. Reflecting the harsh reality of life in New York, two Jewish orphanages were also established, the larger of which was the Hebrew Orphan Asylum with room for 1250 children.

In 1888, Barnett Freedman took the lead in meeting a crucial need of the community by establishing the Hebrew Free Burial Association to provide burials for impoverished Jews.

No longer would Jews be buried in mass graves in Potter's Field because of the inability of remaining family members to pay for a funeral and grave.

From birth, through death, the Jewish community heeded the rabbinical prescription *kol Yisrael araivim zeh lazeh* (all Jews are responsible for the well-being of each other.) To this day, the Jewish community takes that responsibility seriously.



HFBA HELPS

Manya S.* and her developmentally disabled daughter Rosalia lived together in a small apartment, subsisting on SSI benefits while her son, who had a history of severe psychosis, lived nearby. Manya's health suddenly began to fail rapidly and Rosalia became ill with cancer. When Manya died, a niece arranged for her burial and reserved graves for Manya's children to eventually rest beside her.

Brothers Saul and Emanuel A. were, respectively, professors of mathematics and physics in Russia and continued to live together in New York as they previously had in Moscow. When Emanuel died at the age of 94, Saul, aged 90, made arrangements with HFBA for his brother's burial as well as for his own eventual interment at the side of his sibling. Although HFBA tracked down two affluent nephews abroad, they refused to contribute to the cost of their uncles' burials.

A rabbi from a Manhattan Jewish social service agency, referred the case of Larisa , a 48-year old woman who had become ill with familial depression in her last year of college. Despite treatment, Larisa was the third generation of her family to commit suicide by jumping from an apartment window. She was buried in HFBA's Mount Richmond Cemetery where she had arranged for her father's burial 15 years before. *(Although victims of suicide were traditionally denied burial in a Jewish cemetery, rabbinic authorities now rule more leniently, recognizing that suicide is a result of mental illness.)*

Roberta F. became ill with cancer but continued to work as much as she could. Her co-workers were so fond of her that they donated their sick days to her so she would not lose her salary. Sadly, she lost her battle with cancer and was buried in a grave reserved for her when HFBA had buried her father the previous year. Her co-workers made certain that *kaddish* (the Mourner's Prayer) would be said for her through HFBA's Kaddish program.

**Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.*

HFBA KADDISH PROGRAM

If you would like to receive a free *yahrzeit* reminder notice for your loved ones, please send their names, and the complete date when they passed away, to our office.

- For a \$360 donation, HFBA will ensure that *kaddish* is recited daily during the first year following a loved one's death.
- For a \$180 donation, HFBA will ensure the annual *yahrzeit* recitation of *kaddish*.

For more information, please call the HFBA office.



DONATE YOUR VEHICLE



**Perform the
GREATEST MITZVAH!**
Provide Burial for a Poor Jew
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FREE TOWING

Phone: (212) 239-1662
Email: info@hebrewfreeburial.org
Web: www.hebrewfreeburial.org

Q&A

Q: At Jewish funerals, the mourners tear their shirts or other upper garment. What is this custom?

A: The custom of tearing one's shirt after the funeral officiant makes a small cut is called "kriah" and is done immediately upon the entry of the mourners into the room in which the funeral will be held. This rending of the garment, one worn near the heart, symbolizes the feeling of pain and loss and the "ripping" away of a beloved. The cut is made on the left side for deceased parents and on the right side for other relatives. It is the first "official" act in the process of the Jewish mourning ritual.

"WAS I MYSELF?"

The following story, told in the name of the Chafetz Chaim (Rabbi Israel Meir Kagan) is excerpted from Jewish Meditations on the Meaning of Death by Chaim Rozeaski (Jason Aronson Publishing, 1994). Others ascribe the incident to various other sages.

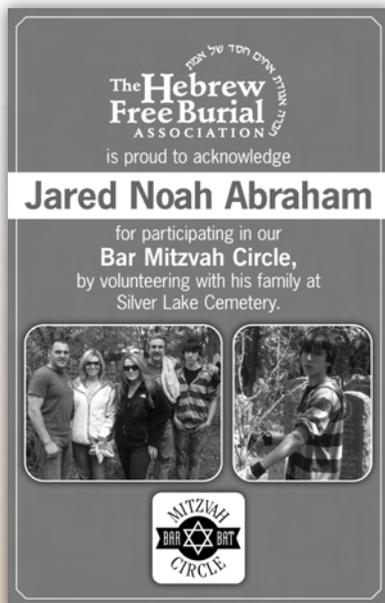


"When the time comes and I depart this world and will be brought before the heavenly throne for judgment, I will be asked, as everyone else is, many questions....(A)ny question I will be asked I will be able to answer one way or another. However, there is only one question I am afraid of. That question is, "Rabbi Meir, why weren't you Rabbi Meir?" In other words, why wasn't I myself? Why didn't I live to my own fullest capabilities? Why didn't I give the soul that was entrusted to me on this earth its full and complete realization and fulfillment? Why didn't I live to my full potential?

"...If at the time we depart this world and answer the question all of us must be asked or should be asking ourselves—'Am I myself?'—with the answer, 'Yes indeed I was myself; I did my best, I lived to the fullest of my abilities,' ...then destiny in heaven is assured."

BAR/BAT MITVAH CIRCLE

Many young people becoming bar or bat mitzvah include a *mitzvah* project as part of their celebration of this milestone. We encourage them to join us in the *mitzvah* of *chesed shel emet* (loving kindness) by volunteering to help clean and clear the graves in our Silver Lake Cemetery. We will gratefully provide a certificate acknowledging their generosity.



To join the HFBA Bar/Bat Mitzvah Circle, please call the HFBA office.

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.

To become a fan of HFBA on Facebook, please visit www.facebook.com/hebrewfreeburial.

To follow us on twitter, please visit www.twitter.com/hfba.



WE THANK OUR VOLUNTEERS

On Sunday, April 18th more than two dozen volunteers arrived at Silver Lake Cemetery for HFBA's annual Community Chesed Day to clear and clean leaves and debris from the winter and the various heavy spring storms. Many thanks to these hard working volunteers!

WE ALSO THANK THE GROUPS FROM:

- Rambam Mesivta (Lawrence, NY)
- Oheb Shalom Congregation Men's Club (South Orange, NJ)
- The Abraham Joshua Heschel High School (New York, NY) for their volunteering during the last few months
- Yavneh Academy (Paramus, NJ).

Please consider giving some of your valuable time for this *mitzvah* of maintaining the dignity of the departed members of the Jewish community. (For more information please call the HFBA office 212-239-1662).



Rambam Mesivta



Oheb Shalom Congregation Men's Club

ALL JEWS ARE RESPONSIBLE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

In 2009, HFBA buried 329 Jews—the highest number in a decade.

According to an article in the New York Times (1/30/10), citing a report commissioned by the UJA-Federation of New York, "55,000 survivors of the Nazi regime live in the New York area... Over the last two decades, the area has received an influx of survivors of Nazi rule from the former Soviet Union. These households are more likely than other Jewish households in New York to be poor."

Over the last decades since the fall of the former Soviet Union and the exodus of Jews to the United

States, about one-third of HFBA's clients have been Russian. HFBA has cared for this population as it has for others—with respect, dignity and attention to cultural expectations and nuance.

Russian immigrants are often unfamiliar with the Jewish prohibition against cremation and believe it to be easier and less expensive than burial. The HFBA staff sensitively educates the Russian community about the Jewish laws of death, providing a funeral and interment in our Mount Richmond Cemetery and, if necessary, subsidizing the costs with the generous contributions of our supporters.

РУССКИЙ ДАЙДЖЕСТ

HFBA И РУССКОЯЗЫЧНЫЕ ЕВРЕИ

В статье «Нью-Йорк Таймс» от 30-го января 2010 года приводятся данные отчета, сделанного по заказу UJA-Federation of New York (Нью-Йоркская Федерация Еврейских Филантропов). Согласно этому отчёту, «в районе Большого Нью-Йорка проживают 55 000 людей, переживших нацистский режим. За последние двадцать лет многие из этих людей приехали сюда из республик бывшего Советского Союза. По сравнению с местными еврейскими семьями, среди семей этих новоприбывших намного выше уровень бедности.»

За два десятилетия, прошедших с распада Советского Союза, произошёл массовый исход советских евреев в Америку. Это отразилось и на нашей работе – примерно треть клиентов Еврейского Благотворительного Похоронного Бюро (HFBA) за это время были русскоязычными. HFBA заботилось о них наравне со всеми – с уважением, достоинством, и пониманием культурных особенностей. Так например, многие выходцы из России не знают, что еврейская традиция запрещает кремацию, и считают, что это самый удобный и дешёвый способ погребения. Поэтому они часто выбирают именно кремацию для себя или близких. Сотрудники HFBA решают эту проблему с деликатностью, объясняя и рассказывая о еврейских законах, связанных с погребением, организуя похороны на еврейском кладбище, и при необходимости – покрывая часть расходов из благотворительных фондов, которые существуют благодаря щедрой поддержке наших доноров.

В 2009 году HFBA организовало похороны 329-х евреев – наибольшее количество за последние 10 лет.

HFBA ПОМОГАЕТ

- Братья Саул и Иммануил А* в России были один – профессором математики, другой – профессором физики. Приехав в Нью-Йорк, они поселились вместе, как жили и в Москве. Когда Иммануил скончался в возрасте 94-х лет, Саул, которому уже было 90, организовал через HFBA похороны брата, а заодно договорился и о своём будущем погребении рядом с братом. HFBA отыскала за границей двух состоятельных родственников братьев, но те отказались внести свою лепту в

оплату похорон, и HFBA пришлось об этом позаботиться.

- Рут* заболела раком, но продолжала работать, пока могла. Её коллеги «отдавали» ей свои больничные дни, чтобы она не потеряла работу. Когда болезнь всё же победила, Рут была похоронена в заранее зарезервированной могиле рядом со своим отцом, умершим годом ранее. Коллеги Рут заказали через HFBA ежегодное чтение *кадиша* по ней.

HFBA организует чтение *кадиша* по близким в течение года после кончины за пожертвование в \$360 долларов. За взнос в \$180 долларов, мы организуем ежегодное чтение *кадиша* в годовщину смерти (*йорцайт*) ваших близких.

- Раввин одного из манхэттенских агентств социальных услуг направил к нам дело Ларисы*, 48-летней женщины, у которой ещё на последнем курсе института началась наследственная депрессия. Несмотря на лечение, Лариса покончила с собой, как и два поколения в её семье до неё. Она была похоронена на принадлежащем HFBA кладбище Маунт Ричмонд, где за 15 лет до этого Лариса участвовала в организации похорон своего отца. (*Хотя жертвам самоубийства традиционно отказывали в погребении на еврейском кладбище, в последнее время раввины признают, что самоубийство может быть результатом психического заболевания.*)

* имена изменены

ВОПРОСЫ И ОТВЕТЫ

Во время еврейских похорон, скорбящие разрывают рубашку или иную одежду. Что это за обычай?

Согласно еврейскому обычаю *криа* («надрез» на иврите), проводящий похороны делает небольшой надрез на одежде скорбящих, когда те входят в помещение, где проводится погребальная служба. Затем скорбящие разрывают одежду вдоль этого надреза. Этот разрыв одежды символизирует боль и потерю, «отрыв» от близкого человека. Надрез делается слева когда хоронят родителей, и справа во всех остальных случаях. Это – первое действие еврейского похоронного ритуала.

SPECIAL WAYS TO HELP...

...collect *tzedakah* (charity) at a house of mourning for HFBA. It is customary to have visitors give *tzedakah* when they come to a *shiva* house. A particularly appropriate donation at this time would be towards the funeral and burial of an indigent Jew. HFBA can provide *tzedakah* boxes for this purpose.

...donate your used *tallit* (prayer shawl). After the *chevra kadisha* (burial society) cleanses and shrouds a male decedent, the body is wrapped in a *tallit* prior to finally resting in a plain pine casket.

Please call the HFBA office at (212) 239-1662.

*HFBA acknowledges
with appreciation
recent bequests from
the estates of:*

**MARVIN MARGULIES
JUNE MOSCOVITZ
MARION MILLER
ELIE NAIM
NATHAN SAVALOVITZ
BERNARD SCHWARTZ
BERNARD STERN**

*They have ensured that their legacies
of good deeds continue after their
departure from this world.
May their memories be for a blessing.*

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:

STUART BENSON
STEPHANIE KAPLAN COHEN
JANINE M. EPSTEIN
BENTLEY AND LOTTIE FREDANE
SHIRLEY KASSORLA
LEE KERN
BENJAMIN AND DEBBY LANG
MICHAEL R. STOLER
AARON STRASSBURGER

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



Remember HFBA in Your Will

Please consider speaking to your attorney about including a bequest to HFBA.

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