

How to Make Your Last Wishes Known

None of us like to think of our eventual death. We may have bought our plots and taken care of all arrangements. Still, it's not easy to discuss our desires with family and friends. And for those among us who are truly alone – the very elderly, those who are bereft – perhaps there isn't even anyone to tell.

Communicating our last wishes is never easy – but remaining silent can make it much more difficult for everyone. In the worst case, we may be denied the right to a Jewish burial:

***Molly** died alone, at home. She had been a very private person and had never discussed her religion – or her end-of-life plans – with anyone. It was only her last name that hinted to her Jewishness. If the Public Administrator's office had not called the Hebrew Free Burial Association, Molly would have been buried at City Cemetery.*

Here are some simple steps that you can take, to ensure that your wishes are known:

- Write your wishes down (see page 2 for a sample set of directions).
- Include the name and phone number of your rabbi and location of your burial plot. If you've already paid for your plot, attach the receipt or indicate where it can be found.
- Keep a copy of these instructions separate from your will. They should be easily accessible in your home and with your other important papers.
- Discuss your wishes with a relative or friend or with your rabbi.



When we set down our instructions, we make sure that our funerals conform to our beliefs and that we are buried near family, friends or community.

But how do we ensure this final dignity for the elderly and indigent who have been left in nursing homes? Some sink into debilitating illness and are no longer able to express themselves. Perhaps they live in a care center where no one has ever asked them about their wishes.

To ensure a Jewish burial for every Jew, HFBA reaches out to nursing homes across the city. Our task is to ask questions: *Do you have any Jewish patients? Have you marked down their religious preferences? Do you know if they already have burial plots? Have they affirmed that they don't want cremation?*

Your support of HFBA ensures that every Jew – no matter his or her circumstances – is buried according to Jewish tradition. We are so grateful for your support and wish you a long and happy life.

Name has been changed to protect confidentiality.

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.

Directions for My Funeral and Burial

Name: _____ Date: _____

I wish to be buried according to Jewish custom and tradition.

Please notify: _____ Relationship: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name of clergy: _____ Phone: _____

Name of synagogue: _____

Chevra kadisha contact (if applicable): _____

Funeral Arrangements

☐ I request that a member of the clergy of my synagogue be asked to conduct the service.

☐ I request that _____ be asked to conduct/participate in the service.

Burial Arrangements

Location of pre-payment receipts or deeds: _____

Name of cemetery: _____

Address: _____

Burial plot location: _____

Other Important Documents

Location of my will and other key documents: _____

Signed: _____

Provided as a courtesy by



If you're a social worker, please contact HFBA at 212-239-1662 for more copies of this form or to discuss how HFBA can help fulfill your clients' last wishes.

For more information on how you can help the poor and the indigent be buried according to Jewish tradition, visit www.hebrewfreeburial.org or contact Amy Koplow at akoplow@hebrewfreeburial.org or 212-239-1662.

HFBA *Helps*



Olga, an unemployed drug addict and alcoholic, died at the age of 41 after years of depending on public assistance and Medicaid. She had a non-Jewish “green card” husband who wanted nothing to do with her burial. Fortunately, HFBA found her sister who authorized the burial. With the volunteer *minyan* in attendance, Olga’s 11-year old daughter stood tearfully at her mother’s grave.

Boris was 81 years old when he died. In better times, he had been an accomplished journalist. HFBA was notified of his death by a friend two months after he passed away. The friend informed us that Boris’ brother, Igor, was ill and impoverished and could not contribute funds towards the burial. Igor, however, reached out to Boris’ estranged wife and his to his daughter, Katya. Katya, distraught over the loss of her father and adamant that he be buried as a Jew, called HFBA. She told us that she had a falling out with her father and had not seen him

for two years. As an unemployed, single mother on food stamps and Medicaid, she nonetheless worked with HFBA, authorizing and contributing to the costs of the burial. At the service, attended by family and friends, Katya tearfully shared her feelings that Boris had been a devoted father, brother and grandfather.

In September, HFBA was called by the Medical Examiner (M.E.) about 46-year old **Victor**, who had died as a result of a drug overdose. The decedent’s landlord had informed us that the decedent was a Jewish man, wearing a *kippah* and displaying a *mezuzah* at the door of his apartment. HFBA notified the Public Administrator who already knew about the case and shared with us that the decedent’s Social Security number matched two people, a woman, Sabrina and a man, Victor. At this point, our staff realized that the individual was transgender.

As a Jew, Victor was entitled to a Jewish burial which he received in our cemetery. The members of the volunteer *minyan* attended Victor’s burial so *kaddish* could be recited. There were no family members or friends at his funeral.

Names and details were changed to protect confidentiality.

Annual HFBA Staten Island Breakfast



On December 16, 2018, over 150 people turned out to hear guest speaker **Charlie Harary** address the themes of the holiday of Chanukah, connecting it to the concept and value of *chesed* (lovingkindness) and the importance of HFBA’s mission.

Yosi Shalem, who recently retired as Mount Richmond Cemetery’s superintendent, was honored for his 10 years of service. The **Staten Island chevra kadisha** and volunteer *minyan* members were also acknowledged for their hard work on behalf of HFBA.

Mount Richmond Cemetery Hours of Operation During Passover and Shavuot Holidays:

Passover

Friday, April 19 9 AM – 1 PM
Sunday, April 21 CLOSED
Thursday, April 25 9 AM – 1 PM
Friday, April 26 CLOSED

Shavuot

Sunday, June 9 CLOSED
Monday, June 10 CLOSED

Yizkor is recited on Saturday, April 27, and Monday, June 10.

Taleisim Needed!

In addition to *tachrichim* (burial shrouds), a Jewish man is buried in a *tallis*. Donated, used *taleisim* are very much needed and appreciated. **Please send used taleisim directly to: Mount Richmond Cemetery, 420 Clarke Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10306. Thank you!**

РУССКИЙ ДАЙДЖЕСТ

BELOW ARE TRANSLATED SUMMARIES OF THE ARTICLES APPEARING IN THIS ISSUE OF CHESED.

Чтобы наша последняя воля была известна

Мало кто из нас по-настоящему задумывается о неизбежной кончине. Возможно мы приобрели участок на кладбище и прошли связанные с этим формальности. Тем не менее довольно трудно обсуждать нашу последнюю волю с близкими или друзьями. А тем из нас, кто по-настоящему одинок – глубоким стариком, тем, у кого не осталось близких, – зачастую бывает просто не с кем обсудить свои пожелания по поводу похорон и погребения.

Но хотя обсуждать последнюю волю нелегко, умалчивание о ней создаёт трудности для всех. В худшем случае человек может даже лишиться права на погребение по еврейскому обряду. Вот несколько шагов, которые Вы можете сделать, чтобы ваша последняя воля была известна:

- Запишите свои пожелания.
- Впишите имя и номер телефона Вашего раввина, а также расположение Вашего участка на кладбище. Если Вы уже заплатили за участок, приложите квитанцию или укажите, где её можно легко найти.
- Держите эти пожелания отдельно от завещания. Нужно, чтобы их было легко найти среди Ваших важных бумаг.
- Обсудите Ваши пожелания с родственниками, друзьями или с Вашим раввином.

Все эти шаги помогут в выполнении наших пожеланий, чтобы погребение соответствовало нашим убеждениям, и чтобы мы покоились рядом с близкими, друзьями или членами нашей общины.

HFBA помогает

- В сентябре прошлого года в Еврейское Благотворительное Похоронное Бюро (HFBA) позвонили из городского морга по поводу некоего Виктора С*, который скончался в возрасте 46-и лет от передозировки наркотиков. Домовладелец усопшего сообщил нам, что его жилец был евреем, носил кипу, и что у него была мезуза на косяке двери. Когда HFBA связалось с офисом городского администратора, там сказали, что им известно об этом случае, и что номер социального страхования усопшего совпадает с номерами двух человек – некоей Сабрины С* и Виктора С*. Тогда наши сотрудники сообразили, что Виктор был трансгендером. Поскольку было установлено, что он был евреем, Виктор имел право на погребение по еврейскому обряду. Его похоронили на принадлежащем HFBA кладбище. Члены нашего миньяна добровольцев, пришедших на другие похороны, остались и прочитали кадиш по Виктору. Никто из друзей или родственников не присутствовал.

Нам пишут

...Каждый номер вашей газеты вызывает у меня слёзы. Так больно узнавать, что есть евреи, ведущие жалкое существование, в изоляции и одиночестве. Благодарение Вс-вышнему за то, что есть такая организация как ваша. Нет более важной мицвы, чем услужить тем, кто не сможет вернуть долг благодарности.

Пусть воздастся вам сторицей за доброту ваших сотрудников, добровольцев и дарителей.

Р. и Б. Г.

Козы и гуси

Читатели нашего журнала «Хесед» любят истории о животных, так что вот ещё одна. Как мы писали в прошлых номерах, козы были привезены на наше историческое кладбище Сильвер Лейк в 2016-м и 2017-м годах весной и летом, чтобы уничтожить заросли ядовитого плюща и других нежелательных растений. А недавно на наше действующее кладбище Маунт Ричмонд стали чаще чем обычно наведываться стаи диких гусей. Чтобы ограничить число этих нежеланных гостей, HFBA связалось с «Гусиной Полицией» – частной компанией, которая привозит специально обученных собак для отпугивания диких гусей. К счастью, этот метод оказался очень действенным для снижения неудобства от налётов диких гусей и вызываемого ими загрязнения кладбища.

Счастливого праздника Песах

В начале пасхального седера мы произносим следующее: «всяк, кто голоден, пусть войдёт и насытится, всяк, кто нуждается, пусть садится с нами и участвует в праздновании Песаха». Этот посыл – заботится о тех, кто лишён основных человеческих благ, включая благо общения с другими – важен в течение всего года. С вашей помощью Еврейское Благотворительное Похоронное Бюро простирает эту заботу о бедных и одиноких евреях и после смерти.

Наилучших вам пожеланий и счастливого Песаха, и огромное спасибо за вашу постоянную поддержку.

Расписание работы кладбища Mount Richmond на время еврейских праздников – весна 2019 г.

ПЕСАХ

Пятница, 19 апреля 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Воскресенье, 21 апреля ЗАКРЫТО
Четверг, 25 апреля 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Пятница, 26 апреля ЗАКРЫТО

Поминальная молитва ИЗКОР читается в последний день праздника, в субботу 27 апреля

ШАВУОТ

Воскресенье, 9 июня ЗАКРЫТО
Понедельник, 10 июня ЗАКРЫТО

Поминальная молитва ИЗКОР читается в последний день праздника, в понедельник 10 июня



In the Mail

Letters below have been edited for clarity and to protect confidentiality.

Your newsletter always leaves me in tears. It is so painful to know that fellow Jews are living such marginal lives, isolated and alone. Thank G-d for your organization. There is no higher mitzvah than serving those who cannot reciprocate.

May the kindness of your staff, volunteers and supporters be returned many times over.

R. and B. G.

Enclosed is a donation in appreciation of the wonderful service you provided for me by burying my aunt. She was buried in a very respectful manner and Rabbi Plafker was kind enough to be on the phone with me so I could hear the entire funeral as he prayed and explained what was going on. I felt I was there even though I could not be there physically.

Thanks again for your caring and service. It was so good that you were there when I needed it.

R.O.

One of the biggest mitzvahs one can do is to attend to the dead — the other is to donate to HFBA whose dedicated staff bury the dead. It's a real mitzvah.

I.B.

Thank you so much for your help in planning this funeral. My husband was a wonderful man and the loss is agonizing. The funeral was simple and beautiful. Rabbi Plafker was superb.

W.L.



Before and after pictures of Silver Lake Cemetery, seen from the back corner.

UPDATE

Silver Lake Cemetery Preservation Project

HFBA's historic Silver Lake Cemetery, which was founded in 1892, and is the beneficiary of a New York State Historic Preservation Grant, is currently undergoing the challenging process of conservation and repair. Over one hundred wild trees which were damaging the site have been removed. The original stone walls enclosing the cemetery are being stabilized. And low-lying areas in the cemetery, which has a sloping topography causing rain water to collect at a central point, are being filled. In addition, a new drainage system is being installed to channel excess water outside the cemetery.

We expect this first phase of the preservation work to be finished by early summer.

Geese Police

Chesed readers seem to enjoy stories about animals and now we have another to report! As described in previous editions of this newsletter, goats were welcomed to Silver Lake Cemetery in the spring and summer of 2016 and 2017 to eat poison ivy and other unwanted vegetation.

We are now being visited by flocks of wild geese in Mount Richmond Cemetery. To control these unwanted guests,

HFBA has contracted with the Geese Police, who bring trained dogs to the cemetery to chase away the geese. Happily, this method has been very effective in reducing the number of geese and their waste in the cemetery.



At the beginning of the *seder*, we invite “all who are hungry, come and eat” and “all who are needy, come and participate in the Passover ritual.” The message of caring for those whose basic needs are not being met, including that of companionship, is relevant throughout the year. With your help, HFBA extends that *chesed* to poor and isolated Jews upon their deaths as well.

Best wishes for a happy Passover and thank you for your continued support.



Chesed Shel Emet – How You Can Help

REMEMBER to include HFBA in your will with a bequest.

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.

COMMEMORATE a loss or an honor with HFBA cards. Cards cost \$18 and can include a personalized message.

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

INSTITUTE a perpetual *yahrzeit* *kaddish* for your loved one for a donation of \$180.

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.

DONATE unused graves. If the graves are not part of a burial society or family plot and are located in New York or New Jersey, please consider donating them to HFBA and receiving a tax deduction for your gift.

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

ENROLL a Bar/Bat Mitzvah in our “Mitzvah Circle” by suggesting a gift to HFBA to your guests.

VOLUNTEER with your friends, classmates, fellow group members, or family at Silver Lake Cemetery Chesed Days.

PARTICIPATE as a professional by donating your expertise and skills in an area that can help us.

DONATE your property, used vehicle or boat and receive a generous tax donation.



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

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 city cemetery. Since its inception HFBA has interred over 65,000 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.



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