

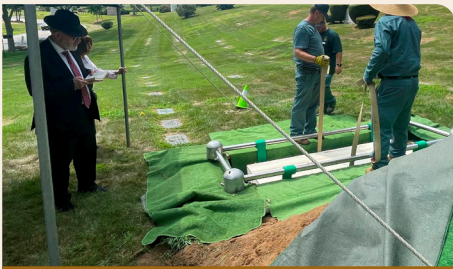
How do we show lovingkindness?

A phone call sets off our investigation of an unknown woman

Sad to say, many funerals we handle start with the death of a person without a strong social network. In most cases, we have a name, but not much else. Before we can perform a traditional Jewish burial, we need some information. How do we go from knowing very little to reconstructing the identity for somebody who once had a life in this world?

Late Monday afternoon in July — the call comes in

Rhonda Stein, HFBA's senior funeral arrangement manager, gets a phone call from Toby Einsidler, the administrator at Park East Synagogue in Manhattan. Einsidler has just learned about the death of a congregant named Rose Katz, a 98-year-old woman who had lived for decades on East 64th Street, first with her husband and two sons, and then alone. She was one of Park East's Holocaust survivors and, indeed, was listed in the synagogue's International Holocaust Remembrance virtual



Rose Katz was buried between her two sons.

service booklet in January 2022. Rose had outlived all her family members, and possibly her brother in France. HFBA has to piece together an identity from friends, acquaintances and city records to find out when Rose Katz died and where her body is now.

Looking through eVital, the database for NYC's death registry and other vital statistics, for every day in June and July, Andrew Parver, HFBA's director of operations and a licensed funeral director, discovers that Rose's body was found on June 15. It's helpful that her Medical Examiner case number is listed on her death certificate as well.

Tuesday — who was Rose Katz?

Parver calls the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) to see if Rose's body is ready for release — and,

if so, from where. He is surprised to learn that, despite having a Manhattan OCME number, the body is in the Brooklyn office.

Yelena Kleban, one of HFBA's funeral coordinators, begins an online search and comes across Rose's naturalization certificate, dated January 3, 1950 — further confirmation that Rose had not been born in the U.S. Various people-search databases show that hundreds of people are associated with dozens of Rose Katzes. Kleban matches names with phone numbers, but none of these individuals turn out to be related to "our Rose."



Kleban hits pay dirt — at least a handful of it — when she homes in on a "Jerry L. Katz." Jerry, AKA "Yaakov", had once resided at Rose's address. An online search indicates that he had married a "Rose Mager" in 1947, two and a half months after she emigrated from Nice, France. Another search points to an "Arnold Mager," who had once resided at Rose's 64th Street address. He was born in July 1944 and died in April 2020, and was likely Rose's first-born son.

With further searching, Kleban ascertains that Jerry and Rose Katz were raising two children together until they divorced. Jerry was living in California when he died in 2004.

Wednesday — where should Rose be buried?

Park East's Einsidler calls to say that Rose's sons are both buried in the same Westchester cemetery. It's possible that the family had reserved a plot for Rose too.

Through Einsidler, Kleban contacts one of Rose's French-speaking friends. They speak about Rose's brother in Deauville, but to date he has not been located.

Kleban learns further that somebody in the Katz family indeed had secured gravesites in the Westchester cemetery. One had been set aside for Rose.

"While non-Mount Richmond Cemetery burials are not within our purview, we knew that the fastest way to get Rose Katz buried in her plot was for us to handle the case," says Amy Koplow, HFBA executive director.

In an act of lovingkindness for their *shul* member, Park East Synagogue assumes all funeral expenses.

continued on page 2

HFBA's long history of chesed

A simple stone tells the story of a life savagely interrupted

Jura Soyfer was born in Kharkiv, Ukraine in 1912 to upper middle class Jewish parents. He spoke Russian with his family, French with his nursemaid, and German with a tutor so he could learn the language of the arts and sciences. In 1920, three years after the Russian Revolution and a series of foreign occupiers in Kharkiv, Jura and his family fled to Vienna. Austria's capital was in the throes of its own political conflicts, with state and paramilitary groups vying for power, but Jura came of age there as a satirist and, ironically, a staunch Marxist.

Soyfer was gaining a reputation as a writer in Vienna's theaters, cabarets, and press when he was mistaken in 1937 for the leader of the Austrian Communist Party and arrested. He was freed, rearrested at the Swiss border, and transported by the Nazi regime to the Dachau concentration camp. Despite the "biting frost and drenching rain," Soyfer continued to flourish artistically: he and composer Herbert Zipper wrote *Dachaulied*, a tongue-in-cheek paean to "*arbeit macht frei*," the infamous motto of the Nazi death camps that cynically told the enslaved Jewish internees, "Work makes you free."



Jura Soyfer was an emerging writer when he was murdered by the Nazis. He is buried at HFBA's Mount Richmond Cemetery.

Later the same year, Soyfer was transferred to the Buchenwald concentration camp 250 miles north of Dachau. He was forced to carry infected corpses and died of typhus — one day after being granted a release.

Soyfer's parents landed in the United States on February 9, 1939, one week before their son's death. They eventually learned that Jura's body had been cremated in a Weimar crematorium, without their legal consent, and delivered to the Cemetery Office of the Jewish Community of Vienna. As with all Jewish Buchenwald victims, the crematorium demanded payment from the community.

The German-Jewish novelist, Lion Feuchtwanger, documented Buchenwald's military-bureaucratic regulations, like those affecting the Soyfers, in *The Oppermans*. He observed that the extortionate fee was meant to compensate the camp for the Jewish internee's "room and board."

Jura Soyfer's remains finally arrived in New York. Holocaust victims, and any other Jews cremated against their will, may be interred in a Jewish cemetery — Jews who choose cremation may not be — and Soyfer was buried in the Hebrew Free Burial Association's Mount Richmond Cemetery. The few words on his stone marker tell the story of a life brutally cut short: "Our beloved son and dear brother Juri Soyfer, died Feb. 16, 1939, age 26 years."



Seventh graders from Yavneh Academy, Paramus, NJ, on a chesed project at Mount Richmond Cemetery in June, experienced a teachable moment when they tended graves near the victims of the Triangle Shirtwaist fire. HFBA's Andrew Parver (not pictured) spoke to them about the 1911 catastrophe that resulted in the deaths of 146 garment workers, most of them immigrant Jewish and Italian women and girls. The Yavneh teacher on the trip assured his students that the fire — and HFBA's role in burying many of the victims — will be part of the school's eighth-grade history curriculum.

Lovingkindness continued from page 1

Thursday — HFBA performs the funeral service

After the *tahara*, or ritual preparation of the body for burial, Rose is laid to rest between her two sons. HFBA's Andrew Parver, Rabbi Harold Einsidler of Park East Synagogue, Park East administrator Toby Einsidler, and one of Rose's friends are the only attendees at the graveside service.

It has taken the better part of two days to gather up enough information about Rose Katz to bury her in her family plot. Rose is no longer an unknown entity in a morgue. She is where she belongs.

Your continued support underwrites challenging cases such as this one. Please visit <https://www.hebrewfreeburial.org/donate/>.

We gratefully acknowledge Park East Synagogue for letting us use Rose Katz's name in this story.

HFBA *Helps*

Names, details and images have been anonymized to preserve confidentiality.



Nelly B., 82, was living with her brother, sister, and autistic nephew in a Brooklyn apartment when she entered a rehab nursing home. After a month, she took ill and died at a nearby hospital. Nelly's brother Stan told us Nelly had no money, no bank account. Indeed, Nelly and her elderly siblings lived month-to-month on disability and Medicaid payments. Stan had no email address, but he was willing to sign our burial authorization form and attest that both parents had been buried in Jewish cemeteries. None of Nelly's family members were ambulatory enough to attend the funeral.

Jerry R., 62, died of cancer in Queens, six months after the death of a brother in Israel. Jerry had worked as a salesman until March 2021, when he got laid off. Recently, he had been living on unemployment benefits and an occasional \$200 gift from his 86-year-old father in Israel. We spoke to the father about HFBA, but he wept and told us that while he could authorize the burial, he could not contribute to his son's funeral costs. We gleaned few details about Jerry, originally from the U.K. and proud of being a "very private person." A rabbi in Israel helped facilitate a Zoom link so Jerry's father could virtually attend his son's funeral.

Betsy W., 57, had never married and — despite having a "fine vocabulary" — never completed college. She was staying with a friend named Joy after living seventeen years in cheap hotels, on NYC's streets, and on friends' sofas when Joy called to tell us Betsy was on a respirator and near death. We learned that Betsy had once been an executive secretary, but now had neither income nor SSI support. Betsy's only living family was a brother in California, but the two of them were estranged from each other. "She cared more about her cat than she did about herself," Joy told us. Joy had spoken to a funeral home about cremation but was told only a family member could authorize it. Two days after contacting HFBA, Betsy died. Joy could not assume any funeral costs, but was willing to act as Betsy's agent. She and a friend traveled by ferry and bus from Manhattan to attend Betsy's funeral in Mount Richmond.

Monica D., 79, and Gary M., 78, a married couple, died within a week of each other. We learned about them

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that there are tax benefits to making charitable donations through your IRA? A qualified charitable distribution (QCD) allows those who are 70½ years old or older to donate to charities directly from a taxable IRA. At 72, the QCD can help take the place of the IRA's required minimum distributions. A QCD may lower your taxable income, avoid a higher tax bracket, and prevent phaseouts of other tax deductions.

For more information on opportunities and limitations, consult your financial planner.

SAVE THE DATE!

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY **Melave Malka**

November 5th, 2022 | 8:30 pm

Kingsway Jewish Center

2810 Nostrand Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11229

Introduction by Rabbi Shmuel Plafker

Chaplain, Hebrew Free Burial Association

Guest Speaker Ms. Sarah S. Berkovits

Author, *Gratitude With Grace*

An inspirational and practical approach to living life as a gift

Catered Dairy Meal

For more information call/text
(917) 647-2744 or (347) 893-3706

To donate please visit
www.hebrewfreeburial.org/brooklynmm

through Monica's brother, who called HFBA to say that he had repeatedly tried to contact Monica, and when he got no response, called the NYPD. He learned that both Monica and Gary had died — and neither had yet been buried. Indeed, after three months, the bodies were still at the Medical Examiner's office. No other family members stepped forward to handle funeral arrangements for Monica, who had suffered from mental illness, or for Gary, a trained chiropractor who had worked as a data entry tech for a Jewish organization and ran a small pet adoption non-profit. Monica's brother assumed the cost for both burials. Husband and wife, married for 33 years, were interred side by side. A niece attended the double funeral and filmed the service for a handful of relatives. ♦

РУССКИЙ ДАЙДЖЕСТ

Translated summaries of articles appearing in this issue of *Chesed*.

Будни HFBA - расследование

Телефонный звонок, с которого начинается поиск неизвестной женщины

Многие погребения, которые мы проводим, начинаются с того, что нам известно лишь имя усопшего. Но до того как начать подготовку к традиционным еврейским похоронам, мы обязаны собрать больше информации. Каков он, этот переход от почти незнания к воссозданию истории жизни человека, ступавшего недавно по этой земле?

РАННИЙ ВЕЧЕР ИЮЛЬСКОГО ПОНЕДЕЛЬНИКА: Нам звонят

Ронда Стайн, старший менеджер HFBA по организации похорон, отвечает на звонок Тоби Айнсидлера, администратора синагоги Парк Ист в Манхэттене. Г-н Айнсидлер сообщает, что узнал о кончине 98-летней женщины из своей общины. Её звали Роуз Кац, она пережила Холокост и проживала несколько десятков лет на Ист 64-й улице, сначала с мужем и двумя сыновьями, а затем одна.

Эндрю Парвер, директор оперативного отдела HFBA и лицензированный директор по похоронам, просматривает eVital, нью-йоркскую базу данных о смерти жителей за июнь и июль. Результаты его поиска: тело Роуз было обнаружено 15-го июня, и в её свидетельстве о смерти есть номер дела, заведённого городским судмедэкспертом.

ВТОРНИК: Кем была Роуз Кац?

Эндрю Парвер связывается с офисом городского судмедэксперта (ОСМЕ) чтобы выяснить, готово ли тело Роуз для выдачи, и если да, то где.

Елена Клебан, помощник координатора похорон в HFBA, начинает поиск в интернете, найдя свидетельство о натурализации Роуз за 3-е января 1950 года, что подтверждает, что Роуз родилась за пределами США.

Елена Клебан также находит сведения о некоем Джерри Л. Каце, который проживал по тому же адресу, что и Роуз. Он женился на ней в 1947 году через два с половиной месяца после того, как Роуз эмигрировала из Ниццы (Франция). Позднее супруги развелись, и Джерри жил в Калифорнии, где и скончался в 2004-м году.

СРЕДА: Где Роуз должна быть похоронена?

Г-н Айнсидлер из синагоги Парк Ист звонит сообщить, что оба сына Роуз покоятся на кладбище в Вестчестере. Быть может семья зарезервировала место и для Роуз?

Елена Клебан устанавливает, что кто-то из семьи Кац действительно договорился о погребении на кладбище в Вестчестере, и одно место было записано на Роуз.

Синагога Парк Ист, совершая доброе дело, берёт на себя все расходы по её погребению.

ЧЕТВЕРГ: HFBA проводит похоронную службу

После обряда тахара (подготовка тела к погребению) Роуз хоронят в могиле между её сыновьями. На похоронах присутствуют только директор HFBA Эндрю Парвер, раввин синагоги Парк Ист Харольд Айнсидлер, администратор этой синагоги Тоби Айнсидлер и один из друзей Роуз.

Роуз теперь не просто неучтённое тело в городском морге. Она покоится там, где её место.

HFBA помогает

Фэй С* было 81, когда друзья нашли её в квартире мёртвой. Фэй

жила на пенсию социального страхования и на сбережения, которые она отложила работая косметологом. У HFBA уже были сведения о Фэй, поскольку семь лет назад она звонила нам организовать похороны своего брата Питера. Тот сначала был водителем кар-сервиса, а затем был постоянным пациентом бруклинской наркоклиники. Ни у Питера, ни у Фэй детей не было, и когда Питер умер в возрасте 69-и лет, Фэй осталась в этом мире одна. Она зарезервировала могилу для себя на кладбище HFBA Маунт Ричмонд, где и была похоронена в апреле. На похороны никто из знавших её не пришел.

Джерри Р умер от рака в 62 года в Квинсе, через шесть месяцев после того, как скончался его брат в Израиле. Джерри работал продавцом до марта 2021 года, когда его сократили. В последние месяцы он перебивался на пособие по безработице и на небольшие суммы (\$200), которые время от времени посылал из Израиля его 86-летний отец. Мы поговорили с отцом Джерри об организации похорон, но тот сказал, сквозь рыдания, что даёт разрешение, но не может участвовать в расходах на погребение. Мы также узнали несколько необходимых деталей о Джерри, который был родом из Англии и гордился тем, что он довольно «закрытый человек». Раввин в Израиле наладил видео-связь, и отец Джерри смог удалённо наблюдать похороны сына.

Одно из известных погребений HFBA: Юра Сойфер.

Надгробный камень говорит о жизни, грубо прерванной

Юра Сойфер родился в Харькове в 1912 году в обеспеченной еврейской семье. В 1920-м, через три года после большевистской революции и после частой смены власти в Харькове, семья Юры бежала в Вену. В столице Австрии тоже бурлили политические страсти, правительственные силы боролись с многочисленными военизированными формированиями. В этих условиях Юра вырос и сложился как писатель-сатирик и, как ни странно, убеждённый марксист.

Сойфер становился всё более известным писателем, сочинявшим как для прессы, так и для венских театров и кабаре. В 1937 году его ошибочно приняли за лидера австрийской компартии (Франца Марека) и арестовали. Его ненадолго выпустили, затем снова арестовали за попытку пересечь швейцарскую границу и увезли в нацистский концлагерь Дахау. В том же году его перевели в Бухенвальд, в 400 километрах от Дахау. В лагере он умер от тифа, на следующий день после того как вышел приказ его выпустить.

Родители Юры добрались до Америки 9-го февраля 1939 года. Через какое-то время они узнали, что тело Юры было кремировано в одном из немецких крематориев, и останки были доставлены в кладбищенский офис еврейской общины Вены.

После долгого времени останки Юры Сойфера были пересланы в Нью-Йорк и погребены на принадлежащем HFBA кладбище Маунт Ричмонд (останки жертв Холокоста и любых других евреев, кремированных против их воли, могут быть преданы земле на еврейском кладбище. Но не останки тех, кто сознательно выбрал кремацию). На надгробном камне всего несколько слов, повествующих о жизни, так рано и грубо оборванной: «Нашему любимому сыну и брату. Юра Сойфер, умер 16 февраля 1939 года, в 26 лет».

Послание на Новый год и Йом Кипур

Еврейский Новый год и Йом Кипур – их ещё называют днями трепета – дают нам возможность задаться вопросом: как мы можем улучшить отношения с нашей еврейской общиной? С Вс-вышним? Мы ищем ответа в трёх основополагающих действиях, особенно важных в эти дни: тшува (раскаяние), тефила (молитва) и цедака (благотворительность).

Мы желаем вам в наступающем году доброго здоровья и неослабевающей приверженности тем ценностям, которые мы принимаем как евреи. От всего сердца спасибо за то, что вы – часть большой семьи HFBA.

Meet Samuel Ross

HFBA board member

"What we do honors the lives of our forebears"

My first experience with indigent burials came in college when a local *chebra kadisha* asked some students to help make up a *min-yan* for the funeral of a Holocaust survivor. I remember standing in the middle of a Chicago winter with a couple of friends and feeling so moved to see this gentleman get buried with reverence. My grandmother is an Auschwitz survivor, and that funeral was all the more meaningful to me.

After we were married, my wife and I moved to Staten Island. Once our children were a little older and I got myself established in a finance career, I could start volunteering again. I felt I had more to give. I sat down with Rabbi Yaakov Lehrfield of Young Israel of Staten Island, and after speaking with him, I decided Hebrew Free Burial Association would be a good match.

I met with Amy Koplow, HFBA's executive director, in November 2019. When I saw that the organization's mission dovetailed with mine, she invited me to connect with the board as an observer. I officially joined the board a year later.

"What a strange time to start working with HFBA."

What a strange time to start working with HFBA: December 2020 was the heart of COVID-19. On the one hand, I saw the organization at a time many people would consider abnormal. On the other hand, I got involved when HFBA was not doing "business as usual." We faced challenges, particularly with the great number of burials every week, and, I say with humility, the whole team met them nobly.

My own commitment intensified when several board members and I spent a day exploring HFBA's Silver Lake and Mount Richmond cemeteries. I had driven past them hundreds of times, but only when I got up close did I learn their history, and the history of the Russian and Eastern European Jews who struggled so hard as American immigrants. It's heartbreaking to think about them, but also so rewarding to know that what we do honors the lives they led.



Donor Spotlight

A cousin shows her gratitude with a gift for HFBA

We received this email in July 2022 from a donor. She thanked us for having buried her cousin. We are profoundly grateful for her act of lovingkindness.

Dear Ms. Koplow:

In 2017 my cousin, who was like a brother to me, passed away in New York. I live in Europe and was visiting my elderly mother on Long Island at the time. Only after failing to reach my cousin by phone did we call the NYPD, who informed us, after much insistence on our part, that he was unidentified in the City Morgue.

We couldn't afford all the costs related to a private burial, so we contacted Hebrew Free Burial Association. With financial help from my mother, you buried him in your cemetery on Staten Island.

I think that the work you do is very important and I am now able to make a one-time donation of \$5,000.

Sincerely yours,

Name withheld upon donor's request

Rosh Hashana/ Yom Kippur Message



Elul on the Jewish calendar is a transitional time. We look back and ahead. We calculate our gains and losses. Are we who we want to be as human beings and Jews?

The Days of Awe — Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur — give us time and space to ask, "How can we improve our relationships with our community? With G-d?" We look for answers in the season's three guideposts: *teshuvah* (repentance), *tefillah* (prayer) and *tzedakah* (charity).

We wish you a year of good health and renewed commitment to the values we embrace as Jews. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for being part of the HFBA family. ♦

**We need your help now
more than ever!**



Donate online at
www.hebrewfreeburial.org/donate

Giving on our secure website is easy
and efficient!

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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Fall Holiday Cemetery Schedule

It is traditional to visit *kever avot* (the graves of our ancestors and loved ones) during the High Holy Day period. Please see the schedule below.

Mount Richmond Cemetery

**ROSH
HASHANA**

Sunday, September 25 9 AM – 3:45 PM
Monday, September 26 CLOSED
Tuesday, September 27 CLOSED

**YOM
KIPPUR**

Tuesday, October 4 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Wednesday, October 5 CLOSED

SUKKOT

Sunday, October 9 9:00 AM – 3:45 PM
Monday, October 10 CLOSED
Tuesday, October 11 CLOSED

**SHMINI
ATZERET
& SIMCHAT
TORAH**

Sunday, October 16 9:00 AM – 3:45 PM
Monday, October 17 CLOSED
Tuesday, October 18 CLOSED

*Yizkor is recited on Yom Kippur, October 5 and
Shmini Atzeret, October 17.*

Silver Lake Cemetery

Open on Sunday, October 2 9:00 AM – 3:45 PM

Расписание работы кладбища в осенние еврейские праздники:

Согласно еврейской традиции принято посещать могилы близких (кевер авот) во время торжественных осенних праздников. Пожалуйста, ознакомьтесь с приведенным ниже расписанием.

Кладбище Маунт Ричмонд – расписание

РОШ ХАШАНА: Воскр. 25 сентября 9:00-15:45
Пон. 26 сентября ЗАКРЫТО
Втор. 27 сентября ЗАКРЫТО

ЙОМ КИПУР: Втор. 4 октября 9:00-13:00
Среда 5 октября ЗАКРЫТО

СУККОТ: Воскр. 9 октября 9:00-15:45
Пон. 10 октября ЗАКРЫТО
Втор. 11 октября ЗАКРЫТО

**ШМИНИ
АЦЕРЕТ и
СИМХАТ ТОРА:** Воскр. 16 октября 9:00-15:45
Пон. 17 октября ЗАКРЫТО
Втор. 18 октября ЗАКРЫТО

*Поминальную молитву Изкор будут читать на Йом
Кипур, 5 октября, и в праздник Шмини Ацерет, 17-го
октября.*