



Burial

Tishrie 5768

Informational

Important:

- Please advise your family member—next of kin—of your desire to be buried according to Jewish law
- The Aleph Institute will pay for all cost associated with the burial
- You are a Jew and you deserve to be laid to rest with your people

“Cremation has always been looked upon with horror by every sector of Jewish thought. The body is sacred, because it is the “temple of the soul” and because it is the medium by which we do goodness in this world”

ALEPH INSTITUTE

Letter

Greetings and blessings,

Forgive me for addressing a most depressing subject, but I feel compelled to do so.

Just a few months ago a Jewish man passed away in prison. He left as next of kin, his attorney, who upon hearing of her clients passing away and fearful of the costs of a traditional funeral decided to request cremation. By the time we at Aleph were notified it was too late – the body had been cremated, and we then performed a funeral for the remains.

Jewish law decries cremation, throughout history there was much sacrifice for one to be interred in a Jewish cemetery and every community had

Life

Death is inevitable. Yet it doesn't mean it is final. True, the physical connection between the person and friends and relatives has been sun-dered. However, Judaism teaches that the life of the soul has not ended. The sages explain the concept with the parable of a bucket that is lowered into a stream. At the time of its descent, the bucket is empty. When it is raised again, it is filled with life-giving water. Similarly, the

provisions for those who could not afford burial.

Here in Pittsburgh, in collaboration with the Jewish burial Society, we are able to assure that every individual in prison or a hospital/group home institution will be cared for and buried with the utmost respect if G-d forbid the needs arises. However, we can only do so if we are have the permission to do so.

I therefore request you to sign a will, giving us the power to retrieve your remains if G-d forbid you pass away in prison. The Aleph Institute needs to receive the original will while a copy should be left within the institution according to their required protocol.

individual enters this world devoid of good thoughts, pleasant words, and noble deeds. However, when the person returns to his/her heavenly abode, a life full of good thoughts, pleasant words, and kind acts goes along.

At the same time, we too who have been left behind can honor the departed by following in his/her ways; and by following the laws and customs

Once again I apologize for discussing such a sorrowful subject, may we merit the coming of Moshiach when we will be reunited with our loved ones.

With blessings,

Rabbi Moishe Mayir Vogel



decreed by the Bible and our sages. These laws and customs include the following:

*** Under Jewish law, the deceased may not be embalmed or cremated, even if that is the person's direct wish.**

*** Post-mortem examinations (autopsies) are forbidden,** except where a reasonable likelihood exists that such an examination will contribute to saving the life of

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"No Jew Alone
No Jew Forgotten"

Mission Statement

The Aleph Institute is a not-for profit Jewish religious, educational, humanitarian organization, serving the Jewish community. We offer a multitude of services to Jewish men and women confined and their families, focused on the premise that "no Jew is forgotten" and that "no Jew is alone."

We are on the web at:

www.alephne.org

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another patient at hand, or where an autopsy is required by civil law (e.g., where death resulted from foul play). **Competent Rabbinic authorities should *always* be consulted in the case of a "required" autopsy.**

*** Burial should take place as soon as possible after death, and must include all body parts, as well as all materials containing blood of the deceased (e.g., cloths, bandages, sheets, etc.).**

In cases, where there is no relative, the Aleph Institute will provide a free burial plot. The Aleph Institute will also make proper arrangements for the descendent to be

buried according to Jewish law.

Further Information

Every Jewish community has a "Chevra Kadisha" (Jewish Burial Society). These G-d fearing Jewish men and women tend to the needs of the dead with the respect and sensitivity that one cares for a baby. Their activities include "watching over" the body until burial (the "Sh'mira"); physically cleansing the body, purifying it by immersing it in a *mikvah* (ritual bath) or water flow ("Tahara"), dressing the body in shrouds, and arranging for the burial itself (the "K'vurah").

Belief in the resurrection of the dead is counted by Maimonides as the thirteenth of the Thirteen Principles of the Faith. There is no rabbinic authority who does not consider this to be a fundamental belief. The Mishnah declares denial of this principle to be heresy. The reason is quite apparent: As Jews, we believe there is purpose to life, purpose to this world, purpose to the act of Creation. Therefore, anything that is used towards that purpose has a permanence -- and a sanctity.

Six million of our people were denied proper burial, most of them cremated. Should we willfully continue that which our enemies began?