

# What Do We Do?

The Aleph Institute provides welcome relief for incarcerated Jewish men and women, their families, and those re-entering society from prisons.

Jewish prisoners and their families have traditionally been forgotten by society at large and especially neglected by the Jewish community where the number of incarcerated is significantly smaller than the jailed portion of the main-stream population.

The Aleph Institute advocates for the imprisoned Jewish population, believing that they too are an integral part of the Jewish community.

Aleph provides a holistic approach to caring for men and women during and post incarceration and working with their families.

## Mission Statement

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

## Jewish Burial

“The Jew wants burial. No matter how Jewishly aware or active a person was during their lifetime, choosing a traditional Jewish burial declares, “I may not have been a perfect Jew, but I’m a proud one. And I want to be buried as Jews have been for thousands of years. I owe it my ancestors. I owe it to my descendants. I owe it to my body—and I owe it to my soul.”

## THE ALEPH INSTITUTE

**Hyman & Martha Rogal Center**

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**ALEPH  
INSTITUTE**  
No One Alone,  
No One Forgotten.

# Jewish Burial in Prison

[www.alephne.org](http://www.alephne.org)

# Arrangements for Burial

The Aleph Institute, in cooperation with other local Jewish agencies, will pick up the deceased from the prison and make the necessary arrangements for burial in accordance with Jewish law. These arrangements are made with no financial burden to the grieving family and all arrangements are made with utmost respect and dignity. In order for the niftar (deceased) to be released to Aleph Institute, we must be notified of the passing of the inmate.

Therefore, an amendment has to be made on the 'Advance Directives' form each inmate makes at the institution. Please note that once the amendment has been made, it must once again be notarized. Once the amendment has been made, please notify next of kin of the change and please notify The Aleph Institute via mail.



**Add the following to the “Advance Directives” form on file in the prison.**  
**NOTIFICATION INSTRUCTIONS**  
**UPON DEATH**

1. Get a legal pronouncement of death.
2. I would like The Aleph Institute to be notified at 412.421.0111 (if there is no answer, please call 412-860-0927) to be picked up for ritual religious burial.

\_\_\_\_\_ AGREE \_\_\_\_\_ DISAGREE

3. Notify next of kin as listed in this document of this request  
NAME OF NEXT OF KIN:  
ADDRESS:

## Importance of Jewish Burial

The next stage in the continuing saga of a human life is that the body should return to the earth, the source of all physical life, and be reunited with it, just as the soul returns to its divine root.

As it is stated:

"Earth you are, and to earth you will return," were G-d's words to Adam, the first human being (Genesis 3:19). In the words of King Solomon, "And the earth returns to the land as it was, and the spirit returns to G-d, who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

Indeed, these two "returns" are coupled. The earth is the source of physical life because G-d's essence resides within it in a deeply hidden but profoundly real way. The natural decomposition of the body into the earth allows the expeditious return of the soul to its source.

It is therefore of utmost importance to preserve the integrity of the body, and to allow the burial to occur as soon as possible.

The in-between state is most difficult for the soul, as it has no body with which to relate to our world, and neither is it free of its tenuous bonds to our world to see things from the purely spiritual perspective. The body's "returning to the earth" is directly commensurate with the soul's ability to return to the supernal Source from which it is drawn.

Interment in the earth is also integral to the process of the techiat ha-meitim, the future resurrection of the dead. As the first human being was initially formed from the earth, so, too, when the dead are brought back to life in the World to Come, their bodies will be reformed from the earth in which they have been interred.