

TEXAS JEWISH POST

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Ritual Jewish burial is a sacred cause

Those of you who know me — either from **TJP** reading or personal contact — must already know that my two favorite Jewish “charities” are Hebrew Free Loan and Hebrew Free Burial. That’s how they were designated long ago, when those two were my dear Boubby the Philosopher’s favorites, and who — at the end of her life of giving — passed them on to me. Now here, at this time, in this place, the two have effectively joined forces: Free Loan can handle burials — if not always totally free, but with affordable payment plans on the best terms possible.

I moved to Dallas many years ago from the Chicago area, with two burial plots still in my possession in a long-established Jewish cemetery there. Only recently did I realize it was finally time to pass them on to others, since my late husband and I had purchased two plots here as soon as our own synagogue made them available, and he has long since found his final resting place in one of them. So I was able to give those others to a much younger family, members of the shul we had once belonged to, at no cost beyond the papers authorizing transfer of ownership. My dear Boubby, I’m sure, was smiling down on me then!

The importance of ritual burial in Judaism cannot be overemphasized. If you have ever had the sobering opportunity, as I have, to visit old Jewish cemeteries in European places of importance to your own families, you already understand. In Lithuania, I saw the results of Nazi defacement and destruction of headstones that have never, in all the years since, been replaced, let alone even repaired. But the stones are piled high there, mute testimony to the many who have never forgotten and who have visited the final “resting” places of their long-gone dear ones. I added my own stones when I said Kaddish there.

At the American cemetery in France, within easy walking distance of the Normandy beaches where our troops safely landed — even with so many hit by German fire from high above them as they climbed the hill that rose from the water — women of all ages, from small girls to grandmothers, stand every day today, passing out flowers for visitors to place on the many graves there. This is a sacred trust, they told me — an obligation accepted long ago by their own grandmothers, in perpetuity...

Please think about this as you make decisions on your own charitable contributions: Help those who are unable to meet even partial costs of ritual Jewish burial by contributing to those of our own community’s charitable institutions that will help them. Loans for burials are among the highest forms of our service to our own people Thank you!

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