



Israel  
Religious  
Action  
Center



Israel Movement for Reform  
and Progressive Judaism  
התנועה הרפורמית והתנועה מתקדמת בישראל

Religious Freedom in Action

## Dignity in Death

### Freedom of Choice in Burial

Dignity in death is of utmost importance in Judaism. For this reason, the body of the deceased is treated with care and respect from the moment of death until burial, and family and friends are given opportunities to honor the deceased and make peace with their loss during the funeral and the subsequent period of mourning.

In Israel, burial costs are largely covered by the National Insurance Institute of Israel. The funerals themselves are under the authority of local burial societies which operate under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Services. Regardless of a family's level of religious observance, there is only one option when it comes to burial – Orthodox. While the customs and practices of a traditional burial ceremony may be a welcome comfort to many, no one has a say in how they would prefer to say goodbye to their loved ones.

In 2013, IRAC secured a directive from the Ministry of Religious Services that funerals must be conducted according to the families' wishes, but IRAC continues to encounter and take legal action against burial societies that refuse to follow this directive. For example, filing lawsuits against cemeteries that maintain gender segregation, and working with Menucha Nechona Jerusalem to build a civil cemetery in Jerusalem.

