

Hebra
Kadisha

November 19, 1969

Dear Rabbi Jung:

I am writing this concerning my experience last Sunday at the Miller funeral when I went along to the cemetery.

You had mentioned to me that although the family has a mausoleum, the interment would proceed according to the Halakhah because there would be

However, what actually occurred was somewhat disconcerting. When we came to the cemetery, we were informed that the casket could be lowered to the concrete-lined pit and that we could throw a few shovels-full of dirt on the casket but only for symbolic value. The reason for this is that according to State law the casket must first be sealed in a zinc-lined wooden container and then buried in earth. However, it takes some time for such zinc enclosures to be prepared and sealed. Thus, the coffin had to remain unattended and unburied in the mausoleum for some 24-48 hours, or perhaps even more, and then removed, placed in another box, sealed, and only after all this buried.

Therefore, my recommendation is that if such a problem ever arises again, we must arrange for the funeral to take place at such a time when the zinc-lined box will have been prepared in advance so that if there is a delay, at least the deceased will have the benefit of a shomer in the funeral parlor rather than being abandoned at the cemetery. Furthermore, even then we must arrange for a shomer or some other pious man to stay at the cemetery after the family leaves to supervise the burial of the double casket after the zinc-lined outer box will have been sealed.

Frankly, this is only a second best solution, and I therefore feel strongly that we must totally discourage the whole system of mausoleums henceforth. To the best of my knowledge, the new cemetery grounds, which the Center has recently acquired, do not permit this anyway.