

Lasting Kindness is an effort to stem the crisis of cremation amongst American Jewry. **Close to 50% of American Jews today are being cremated upon death and this trend is projected to continue to grow exponentially.**

Experience has demonstrated that **early intervention through education** is key to successfully persuading people to choose burial instead of cremation. Lasting Kindness is a new project under the umbrella of NASCK, the National Association of Chevra Kadisha, a non-for-profit founded and directed by Rabbi Elchonon Zohn, the foremost expert in afterlife care in the American Orthodox world.

We have developed a two pronged strategy with distinct target audiences, goals and messaging.

I. Traditional Orthodox Community.

The challenge of influencing 50% of Jews to make a different choice is huge and requires a full force effort to make change. Although the Orthodox community is not choosing cremation for themselves, they are natural value-aligned partners who can be cultivated to make impact within their sphere of influence (family, business associates, friends) and provide social and financial support for this endeavor.

We are planning a media campaign to kick off by March 2021 with the goals of:

- a. Raise awareness of the crisis of cremation
- b. Educate : Explain why cremation is so problematic for both the deceased & collectively on the Jewish nation
- c. Empower laypeople and leaders to get involved with those at risk for cremation within their sphere of influence.

Messaging to include concepts such as : We have a distinct obligation to ensure every Jew is properly buried. Preventing a Cremation = Burying a Jew, Is a Chesed Shel Emes, prevents a Chillul Hashem, Effects the Eternity of Another Jew, Effects YOUR Eternity. Care Enough to Say Something. You really can make a difference.

II. Jews Outside of the Orthodox Community

This audience is most at risk for cremation. Our goal is to launch a directed campaign mostly online (web, social media, video storytelling, paid advertising) by the Fall of 2021 with the following goals:

- a. Stimulate deep thought about the choice of burial vs cremation
- b. Educate regarding the impact of this choice on the body, the soul, & the planet. Share the truths of Torah (ie.existence of an Afterlife) and facts of science. Debunk myths surrounding cremation (ie. it's gentle, eco-friendly, natural).
- c. Influence people to commit their burial choice to writing.

Riding on the three decades of relationships that NASCK has developed, Lasting Kindness will create a network of resources including Chevrei Kadisha, cemeteries, funeral homes, Rabbi's, and communal organizations to hold any hands that need to be held in the process of ensuring every Jew has the opportunity to receive a proper Jewish burial.

About Me- Yael Davidowitz

Professionally, I'm a nurse practitioner and fitness instructor but my true passion lies in bringing Jews closer to Torah observance. As a volunteer for my local chevra kadisha, I was approached to do some work about the "cremation problem". I had never heard of the phenomena of cremation amongst Jews outside of the Holocaust. After some deep research, I became passionate and committed to get involved. I created a website choosejewishburial.org, educational presentations, and met with local clergy amongst all Jewish denominations to create partners in this effort. Through these projects I consulted and received guidance from Rabbi Zohn at NASCK. It became clear that **the effort to proactively prevent cremation needed to be scaled nationally.** In line with the dictum of Pirkei Avos, *שְׂאִין אֲנָשִׁים, הַשְׂתַּדְּלֵל לְהִיּוֹת אִישׁ*, במקום שְׂאִין אֲנָשִׁים, I have taken a leap from practicing medicine, joined forces with NASCK to start and drive project Lasting Kindness. I feel incredibly grateful for the opportunity to do something significant for Klal Yisrael and in doing so, I hope to merit bringing nachas to HKB"Y for trying to take care of His children.