

**Concurring Opinion on Rabbi Jeremy Kalmanofsky's, "Alternative Kevurah Methods"**  
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We approve of the research and analysis of Rabbi Kalmanofsky's responsum on Jewish methods of burial, and strongly support his major conclusions reaffirming the Jewish preference and even obligation to bury our dead in the earth. We also agree with his advocacy for environmentally friendly alternatives to the use of wood caskets, the prohibition on using the dead as compost for commercial benefit, and the permission of multiple depth burial plots as a valid Jewish response to the shortage of land available for cemetery plots. Finally, we agree that if a family fails to follow the Jewish tradition of in-ground burial of the complete body, they nevertheless should be encouraged to bury whatever remains in a proper Jewish cemetery.

Although Rabbi Kalmanofsky has demonstrated that there are some halakhic authorities who would attenuate the pervasive rabbinic objections to cremation and other non-traditional treatments of Jewish bodies, we find it impossible to dismiss concerns of *nivul* or *bizayon*—showing disrespect for human remains. This is especially so for the still largely-theoretical process of Alkaline Hydrolysis (AH), which strikes us as a severe dishonor of the dead in that it leads to the flushing of the majority of human remains into the sewage system. As members of Jewish burial societies (*hevra kaddisha*) know, enormous care is taken to bury even bloody garments with the deceased (tucked discretely in the bottom of the casket). All human remains, including blood and other fluids, are buried in the earth, not only the bones.

The precedent cited by Rabbi Kalmanofsky from the Rashba, *et al*, to permit the placement of lime in the earth to accelerate decomposition does not, in our humble opinion, support the practice of AH. The Rashba's practice resulted in the decomposition of all remains into the earth, not their flushing into a sewage drain. We see no reason to give support, even begrudging, to a disrespectful practice of disposing human remains, which is not even in current practice. Cremation is not much better—it also leads to the evaporation and combustion of most of the body, though it at least does not flush human remains into the sewer.

Because the body and halakhic conclusions of this paper (*piskei din*) confirm the traditional practice of in-ground burial, and list the traditional objections to the alternatives, we have voted in favor of this scholarly and well-articulated responsum.