

# STILLBIRTH AND DEATH OF YOUNG BABIES



## A Guide for Parents

A stillbirth or death of a very young baby represents the disappointing outcome of a pregnancy that was entered into with love and hope. It causes sadness and mourning to at least as great an extent as any other death.

In tradition, such an infant was buried without ceremony and no official mourning was observed, but most people now recognise the loss and the need to mark it in a way that has meaning.

Our Rabbis will therefore help you to arrange the funeral, either a burial or a cremation, when you will have the support of family and friends, of the community and of the mourning rituals.

You may also like to have memorial prayers said in your home, so that everyone can come together and share your sadness. All these details can be discussed with your family and with your Rabbi.

Following a burial, when you feel ready, a tombstone can be erected to mark the grave, and after a cremation there are other ways of creating a memorial. The *yahrzeit* can be marked on the anniversary.

There is a special section in the JJBS area of the Western Cemetery at Cheshunt where babies and very young children are buried.

You may want to know that if the baby is a boy who has not yet been circumcised, our undertakers have been asked not to perform this operation during *tahara* (ritual washing) unless the parents specifically ask for it.

Special memorial services have been held on an occasional basis at a Reform or Liberal synagogue. They are advertised in the Jewish press.