

Death, burial and mourning

For Bnei Noach

Sources

- **There are not “too many”**
 - The laws of Bnei Noach are not in the Code of Jewish Law - *Shulchan Aruch* (Likutei Sichot vol. 26, p. 141)
 - The Rebbe spent hours talking about the general ideas for Bnei Noach.
 - Two sources regarding general application of rational concepts in Torah to Bnei Noach and general issue of Death for Bnei Noach.
 - 20th of Av, 1986 (Hitvaaduiot 5746, Part 4, p. 254-255)
 - 2nd day of Shavuot, 1987 (Hitvaaduiot 5747, Part 3, p. 428-429)
 - The Divine code by Rabbi Weiner
 - I haven't seen laws of burial and mourning...

General frame of mind

- **Learn from the creation**

- “Teach us from the beasts of the earth” (Job 35:11)
- Rabbi Yochanan said: Even if the Torah had not been given, we would nonetheless have learned modesty from the cat, which covers its excrement, and that stealing is objectionable from the ant etc. (Talmud Eiruvim 100b)

- **What do we care?**

- If, after all, Torah was given, why is the Talmud talking about what would have happen if it had not been given?
- Bnei Noach.

- **Death in the world**

- If “Beloved is Man for he was created in the image of G-d” – how could G-d cause an action that is opposing to man’s creation (i.e., death)? Especially since the whole issue of death started as a result of the sin of the Tree of Knowledge – a sin that happened before the giving of the Torah – yet this sin caused death to all humans ... until the end of all generations ... Therefore, there must also be an answer for the B’nai Noach in the Torah of Truth. And that is that all **descents are for the purpose of an ascent.**
(20th of Av, 1986 (Hitvaaduiot 5746, Part 4, p. 254-255))

Visiting the sick

- **Emulate G-d (Devarim 13:5)**

- G-d visited Avraham after circumcision (Talmud Sotah 14a).
- Prophet Ishaia visited king Chizkyahu (Kings 2, 20:1).
- Act of Kindness (Rambam, Laws of mourning, 14:1).

- **Jews visit the sick of non Jews**

- Because of peaceful ways (Talmud Gittin 61a).
- The essence of the mitzvah to visit the sick, is to determine the needs of the patient to see what has to be done for him, and to make him comfortable with his friends. You must also bear in mind to pray for mercy on his behalf. If you visited him and did not pray for his recovery, you have not fulfilled the mitzvah. (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, 193:3).
- Pray for him (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, 193:4).
- The visitors must speak to him with wisdom and intelligence. They should tell him that words do not determine life, nor do words determine death. They should tell him to give thought to his affairs and state whether he has loaned to others or deposited anything with others, or others with him. You should explain to him that imparting this information is no reason to fear death (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, 193:5).
- If the visitors notice that the patient is near death, they should tactfully turn the conversation and say to him, "Make confession but don't be disturbed about it, for many have confessed and have recovered, and are alive, and many who did not confess have died... If he cannot confess by word of mouth, he should confess with his heart. If he is able to speak only a few words, he should be told to say, "May my death be an atonement for all my sins." He should also be told to ask the forgiveness of all he had wronged, whether in money matters or with words (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, 193:13).

- **Euthanasia**

- Forbidden! It's murder...

Burial - General

- **Jews bury the dead of non Jews**

- Talmud Gittin 61a, Rambam, Laws of Mourning, 14:12.

- **Sources for Bury**

- When David was in Edom, Joab the army commander went up to **bury the slain**, and he killed every male in Edom (Kings 1, 11:15).
 - Rashi: For they buried the slain of Edom, this is what is stated in the Book of Shmuel, “And David made [for himself] a name when he returned from slaying [those of] Edom,” for all were praising him as **a pious person for he buries his slain**. And similarly it states concerning the wars of Gog and Magog, “And they will bury all the people of the land, and it will bring them fame. (Yechezkel 39:13)”.
 - However, [Targum] Yonoson rendered לקבר את החללים, “to strip the slain,” [i.e.,] to remove their clothing.

- **However**

- Many authorities hold that there’s no **obligation** on non Jews to bury their dead (Yarchon HaOtzar, vol. 15, p. 285).
 - Tzofnas Paneach (Ruzin), 256.
 - Tzitz Eliezer, 10, 25:9.
 - Iabia Omer, Iore Dea 3, 22:20.

- **And what about the verses about the king of Moab?**

- It was about a king.
- There are other explanations (second explanation of Rashi).
- It was only because of a “pious” behavior, but not obligated.

Burial - Ceremony

- **There is nothing fixed in Judaism (customs)**
- **Ideas**
 - Psalm 49 (Meditation on life)
 - May G-d remember the soul of [mention the deceased person's given names], son/daughter of [mention the given names of his/her father] who has gone on to his/her world. By virtue of my praying on his/her behalf, and – without making a vow – my intent to donate to charity on his/her behalf, may his/her soul be bound in the Bond of Life together with the souls of the righteous, and let us say: Amen. (Asknoah.org)
 - Accepting the divine judgment
 - The Rock – His working is perfect, for all His paths are justice; a G-d of faithfulness and without iniquity, He is righteous and fair! (Deuteronomy 32:4)
 - We know, G-d, that Your judgment is righteous; You are righteous when You speak and pure when You judge. There is naught to murmur about the way of Your judgment. You are righteous, G-d, and Your judgments are fair.
 - G-d gave, and G-d took; blessed be the Name of G-d!
 - There is no prohibition of reciting Kadish for a non Jew. (Responsa Mare HaBazak, 6, 74) (www.sefaria.org/B'Mareh_HaBazak_Volume_VI.74)

Mourning

- **Stories in Torah**

- Noach and Metushelach (Talmud Sanhedrin 108b).
- Yosef and Yaakov (Bereshit 50:10).
- Comfort mourners (Job and his fiends).
- Hashem visited Yitzchak to comfort him (Talmud Sota 14a).

- **Ideas**

- Sefer HaChinuch 264 (Sefer Mitzvot Hashem p. 497, applies to Bnei Noach).
 - Man is acted upon according to his actions that he does... Hence when a punishment of an incident of death of one of his relatives — about which it is natural for him to love them — comes to him, the Torah obligates him to do acts with himself that arouse him to focus his thoughts on the anguish that has come to him. And then he will know and contemplate to himself that **his iniquities** caused it to him, that this anguish came upon him. As G-d, may He be blessed, "does not afflict man from His heart, nor cause woe to the sons of man," except from the angle of sins... And when a man puts this matter into his heart with the act of mourning, he will move his mind to **repent** and improve his deeds, according to his ability. And behold, we have found with this a great benefit for people in the commandment of mourning.
- Rambam, Laws of mourning, 13:11-12.
 - A person should not become **excessively** broken hearted because of a person's death, as Jeremiah 22:10 states: "Do not weep for a dead man and do not shake your head because of him." That means not to weep excessively. For death is the pattern of the world. And a person who causes himself grief because of the pattern of the world is a fool. What should one do? **Weep for three days, eulogize for seven, and observe the restrictions on cutting one's hair and the other five matters for 30 days.**
 - Whoever does not mourn over his dead in the manner which our Sages commanded is cruel. Instead, one should be fearful, worry, examine **his deeds and repent**. If one member of a group dies, the entire group should worry. For the first three days, one should see himself as if a sword is drawn over his neck. From the third day until the seventh, he should consider it as if it is in the corner. From that time onward, as if it is passing before him in the market place. All of this is so that a person should prepare himself and repent and awake from his sleep. Behold it is written Jeremiah 5:3: "You have stricken them, but they have not trembled." Implied is that one should awake and tremble.
- Honor the dead - *Tzelem Elokim* – G-d's image (Ramba"n Devarim 14:1).

Cremation

- **It is allowed for Bnei Noach**
- **However...**
 - In the Times of Yehoram son of Ahab king of Israel at war with the Meisha king of Moab (Kings 2, 3:27).
 - “So he took his first-born son, who was to succeed him as king, and offered him up on the wall as a burnt offering”.
 - This was considered a sin. There’s an opinion that the child was offered to G-d (others say to a pagan god)! (Talmud Sanhedrin 39b).
 - “Because he (King of Moab) burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime”
 - Rashi and Ibn Ezra: the king of Edom fell at the hands of the king of Moab, and his bones were burned and ground, which was disrespectful.
- **Resurrection of the dead**
 - If body is burned, no resurrection.
 - Midrash, commentary Iefe Toar (Bereshit Raba 13:6).
 - Not only Israel, but the “pious among the gentiles” also have a portion in the World to Come and the Resurrection of death”.