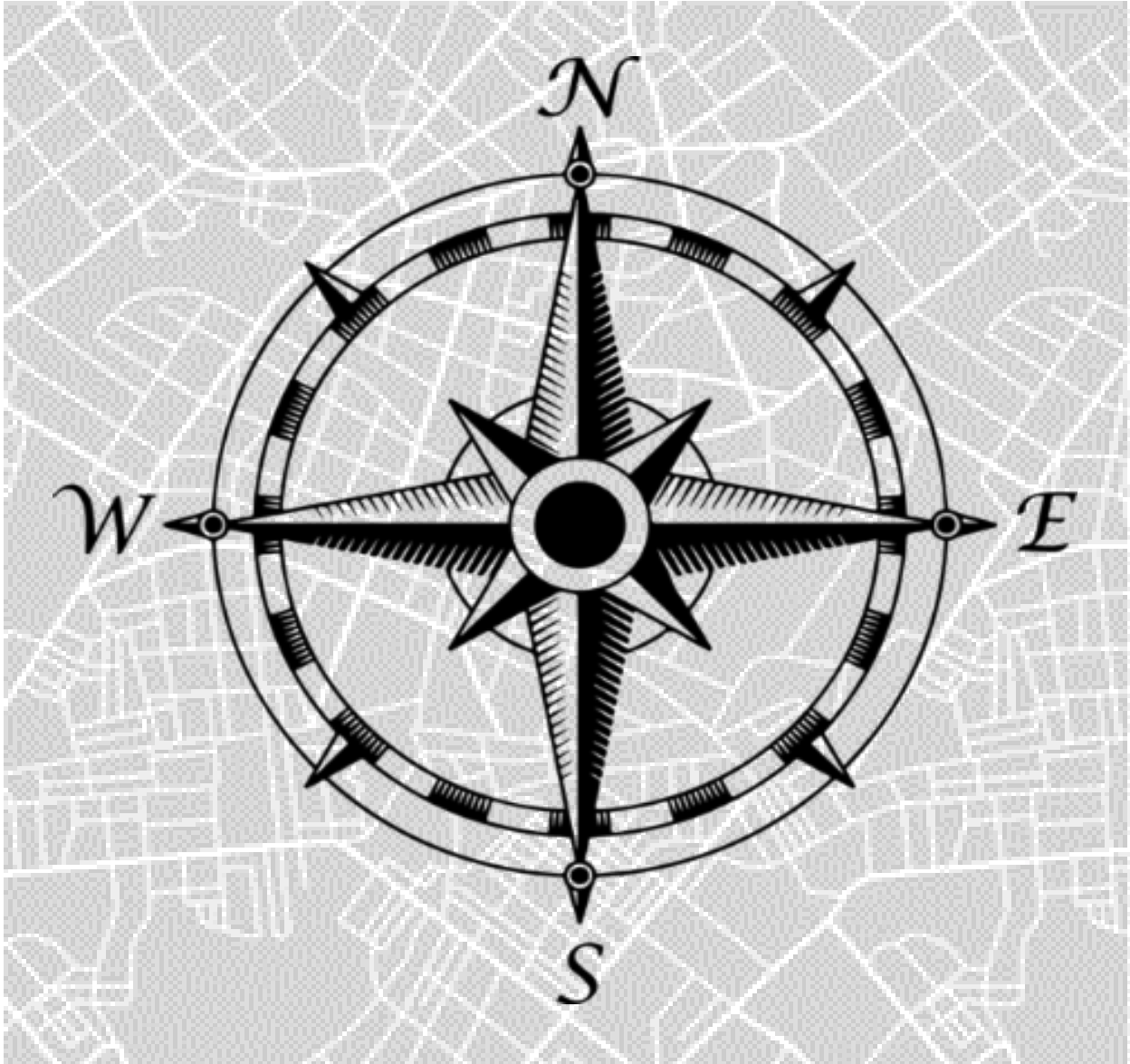


My Compass



About the Course:

This course was designed as part of a yearlong fellowship through the Shomer Collective, a non-profit Jewish organization, which focuses on normalizing Jewish conversations on death and dying.

About Chava:

This course was designed by Chava Vidal, BSN, RN, CHPN. Chava works as both a bedside hospice nurse & Youth and Family Program Director for a Conservative Synagogue in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Gratitude and Acknowledgements

Thank you for showing up for this course and being willing to confront the unknown. Being here is step one - Yasher Koach.

Thank you to my hospice patients and their families who freely invite me into their lives with the assumption that I will teach them how to die. Yet the lessons they share are the true gift of how-to live.

Special thank you to the person who taught me to savor the moments.

The logo for the Shomer Collective Educator Fellowship. It features the text "Shomer Collective" in a light green font at the top. Below it, the word "Educator" is written in a large, bold, purple font. To the right of "Educator" is a stylized graphic of an open book with two pages, colored in shades of blue and yellow. Below "Educator", the word "Fellowship" is written in a large, bold, purple font.

Shomer Collective Educator Fellowship



This resource was created as part of the Educator Fellowship, which was generously supported by The Covenant Foundation.

The Death Compass

Navigating your way through the valley of the shadow of death

We use our GPS to plot out our course when embarking on a road trip. What if we could navigate the end of life with the same confidence and certainty?

What if instead of feeling helpless, fearful, and unwilling to even confront the inevitable, we could identify road markers along the way and learn what we should expect?

What if we could navigate our way through the valley of the shadow of death?



This is an interactive series on the Jewish how-to of death, dying, and living. Upon completion of this series participants will have created a personalized road map in the form of this interactive workbook.

This course is designed to help participants confront tough questions, solidify their desires, and be a living document that can be shared with HCPA and family members to help navigate end of life choices.

Lao Tzu said "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." This course is that single step. It is designed to spark the conversation and start the work associated with living a life of purpose in order to have a death of dignity and a legacy of fulfillment.

The Plotted Course

Session One - North: The Journey

- **The Road Trip**

What type of course have we laid out for ourselves? What guides our journey, priorities... identifying what it is that gives each of us “quality of life”. How does Judaism define a life of purpose?

- **The Compass**

A compass is a device used to plot direction; it points towards a constant. What is “true north” in your life? What does it look like if you reorient your compass and make God true north?



Session Two - East: What to Pack

- **Healthcare Preparedness**

HPOA, Living will, Code status and ways to prepare from a legal vantage point

- **Judaic Preparedness**

Exploring biblical deaths to figure out what matters in Judaism, Ethical wills, arrangements and what really matters.



Session Three - South: The Road Ahead

- **The Scenic Overlooks**

What is the Grand Canyon in your life? What moments will stand out? What is it that you'd like future generations to cherish? Legacy, meaning, and continuity. What will be here long after you've passed?

- **The Mile Markers**

What to expect during decline and death. There are signs along the way that mark our journey; utilizing hospice experience to map out these realities. Incorporating Psalms and the Vidui as road signs.



Session Four - West: The Destination

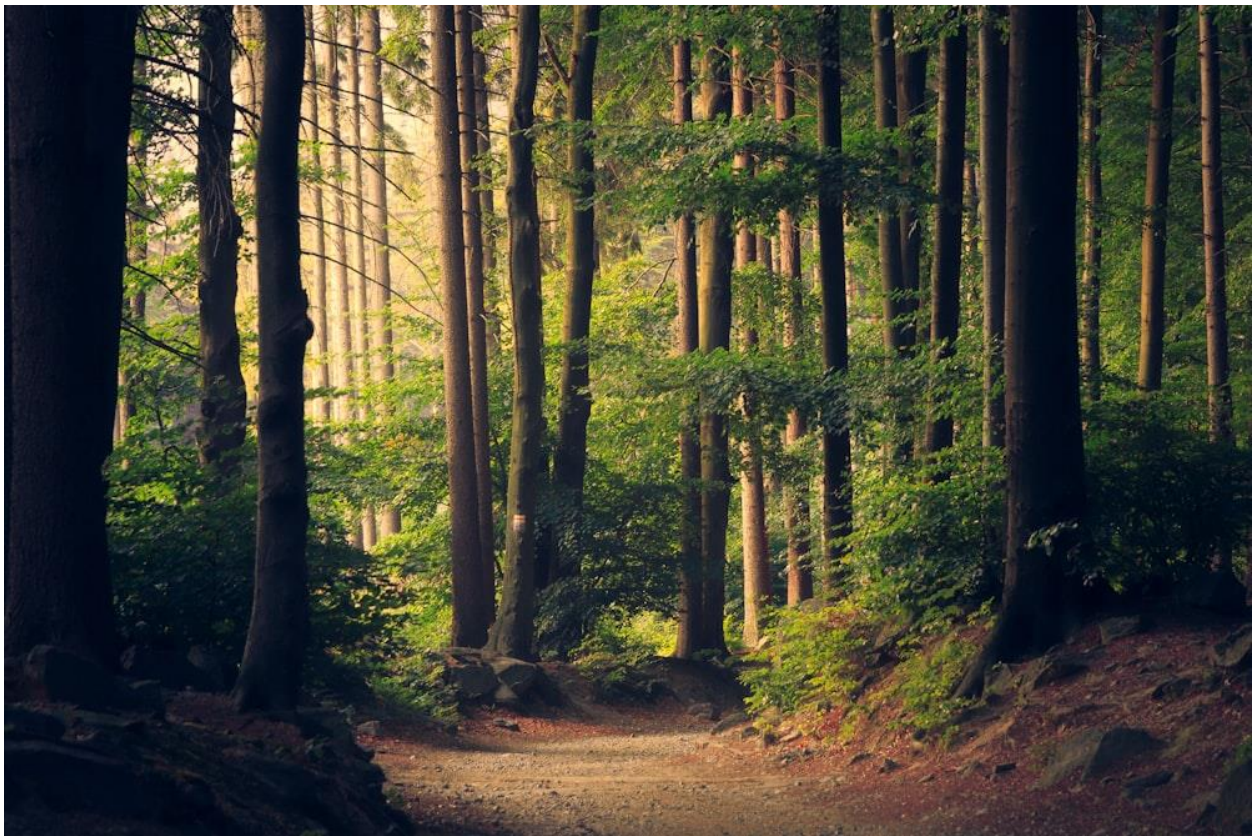
- **Stopping for Directions**

Inevitably we will make a wrong turn or take the wrong exit; locating the gas station where we can stop and ask for direction – hospice, clergy, grief counselors and God.

- **The Destination**

You have arrived. Pearly Gates? Fire and Brimstone? The Garden of Eden? Darkness? Sheol? And what happens to those we leave behind? Jewish answers to our final resting place.





North: The Journey

Text Study

מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד יְהוָה מִי־יִגְוֹר בְּאַהֲלֶיךָ מִי־יִשְׁפֹּן בְּהַר קְדוֹשְׁךָ:
הוֹלֵךְ תַּמִּים וּפְעֵל צְדָק וְדָבַר אֱמֶת בְּלִבָּבוֹ:
לֹא־דָגַל | עַל־לִשְׁוֹנוֹ לֹא־עָשָׂה לְרַעְהוּ רָעָה וְחִרְפָּה לֹא־נָשָׂא עַל־קִרְבּוֹ:
נִבְוָה | בְּעֵינָיו נִמְאָס וְאֶת־יְרֵאֵי יְהוָה יִכְבֵּד נִשְׁבַּע לְהִרְעוֹ וְלֹא יִמַר:
כִּסְפוֹ | לֹא־נָתַן בְּנִשְׁוֹף וְשָׁחַד עַל־נַפְקֵי לֹא לָקַח עֲשֵׂה־אֱלֹהֵהָ לֹא יִמוּט
לְעוֹלָם: (פ)

A Psalm of David –

Do we deserve to enter God’s sanctuary?

Can we merit a place in the presence of God?

Live with integrity, do what is right,

Speak the truth without deceit.

Have no slander upon your tongue,

do no evil to others,

Do not mistreat your neighbor.

Spurn a contemptible person,

But honor those who revere Adonai.

Never retract a promise once made,

Though it may bring you harm.

Lend no money at unfair rates,

Accept no bribe against the innocent.

Make these deeds your own;

Then shall you stand firm forever.

Q: Does anything included in the list surprise you?

Q: Does anything omitted from the list surprise you?

Q: What does it mean to “stand firm?”

Celebrating a Special Birthday

May God who blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, bless _____ who has come for a *aliyah* with reverence for God and respect for the Torah

and this (Shabbat/Yom Tov),

grateful to God for the gift of life which (he/she) has enjoyed until this day. May the *Kadosh Baruch* continue to bless _____ with length of years, good health, the pleasures of Torah study, and the profound satisfaction that comes from a life of *ma’asim tovim*, good deeds. In celebrating this and other birthdays, may _____’s example remind us that people may count the days of their life, but a person of wisdom makes every day count.

And let us say: Amen.

The Road Trip

identifying what it is that gives each of us "quality of life".

- ___ Feeling Self-Worth - _____
- ___ Having Structure - _____
- ___ Sense of Belonging - _____
- ___ Socially Engaged - _____
- ___ Feeling Safe - _____
- ___ Physical Health - _____
- ___ Meaningful Activities - _____
- ___ Inner Contentment - _____
- ___ Financially Stable - _____
- ___ Emotional Wellbeing - _____



So teach us to number our days, so that we shall acquire a heart of wisdom.

יב למנות ימינו כן הודע ונבא ללב חכמה:

EACH OF US HAS A NAME

Each of us has a name
given by God
and given by our parents

Each of us has a name
given by our stature and our smile
and given by what we wear

Each of us has a name
given by the mountains
and given by our walls

Each of us has a name
given by the stars
and given by our neighbors

Each of us has a name
given by our sins
and given by our longing

Each of us has a name
given by our enemies
and given by our love

Each of us has a name
given by our celebrations
and given by our work

Each of us has a name
given by the seasons
and given by our blindness

Each of us has a name
given by the sea
and given by
our death.



Zelda

(Ukraine, 1914 - 1984)

A spiritual poet who attracted secular readers too, Zelda was born in 1914 in Chernigoff, the Ukraine, and died at the age of 70 in Jerusalem.

© Translation: 2004, Marcia Lee Falk
From: The Spectacular Difference
Publisher: Hebrew Union College,
Cincinnati, 2004

What is my name?

What does my name mean?

What does my name stand for?

Once, the Hassidic rabbi Zusya came to his followers with tears in his eyes. They asked him:

Zusya, what's the matter?

And he told them about his vision;

I learned the question that the angels will one day ask me about my life.

The followers were puzzled. They replied:

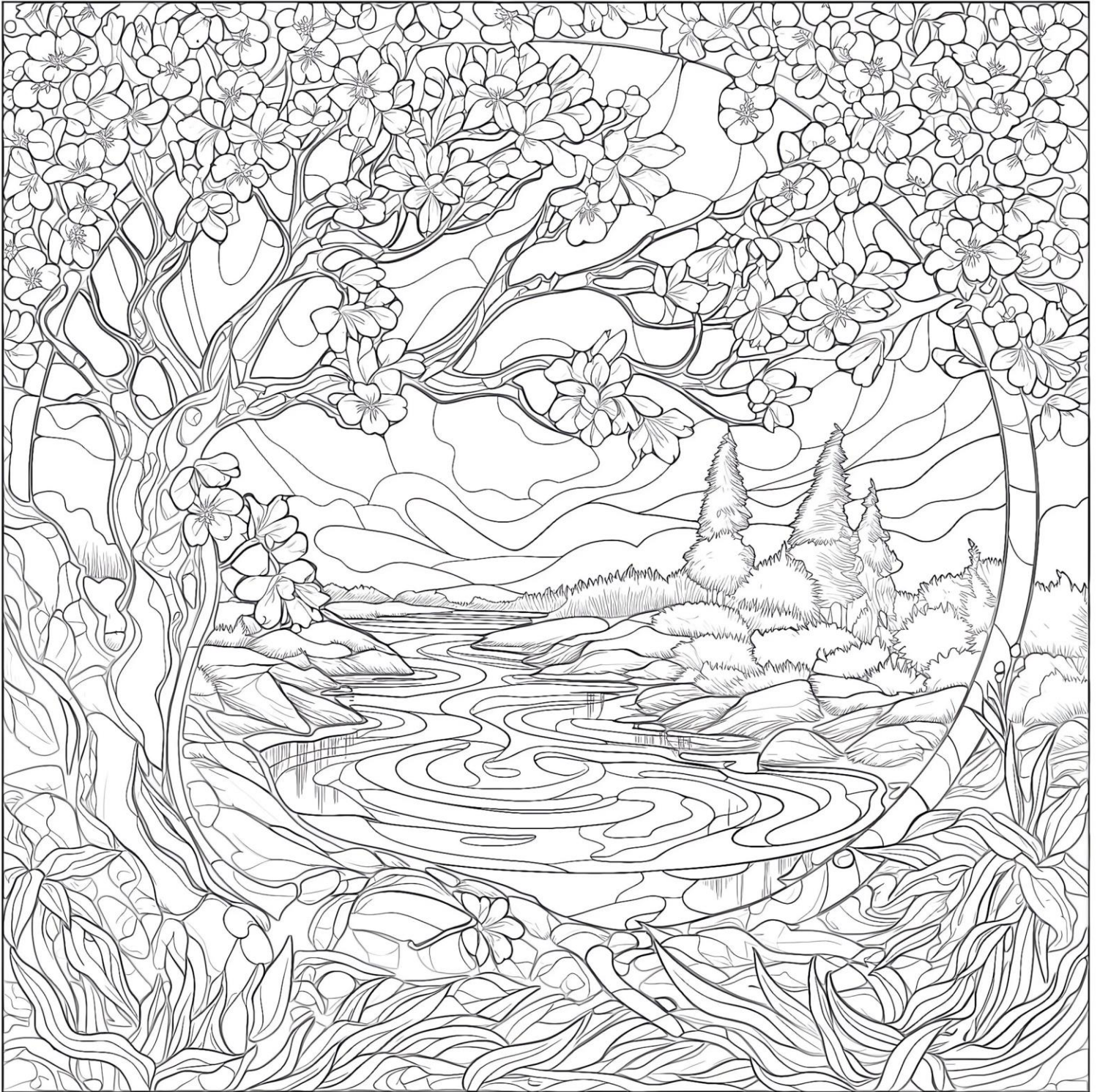
Zusya, you are pious. You are scholarly and humble. You have helped so many of us. What question about your life could be so terrifying that you would be frightened to answer it?

Zusya replied;

"I have learned that the angels will not ask me, 'Why weren't you a Moses, leading your people out of slavery?' and that the angels will not ask me, 'Why weren't you a Joshua, leading your people into the promised land?' They will say to me, 'Zusya, why weren't you more like Zusya?'"



What do you love doing that you aren't doing?



“Trust yourself. Create the kind of self that you will be happy to live with all your life. Make the most of yourself by fanning the tiny, inner sparks of possibility into flames of achievement.” – Golda Meir

What course have we laid out for ourselves? What guides your way?

What guides my choices?

Who do I try to emulate? Look up to? Admire?

When I'm unsure of what to do I...

Who do I solicit advice from and why?

What have I done in my life that makes me the proudest?

Try Finishing this Sentence

What matters to me most in life is

compass noun

a : a device for determining directions by means of a magnetic needle or group of needles turning freely on a pivot and pointing to the magnetic north

b : any of various nonmagnetic devices that indicate direction

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/compass>



A Compass - is a device used to plot direction; it points towards a constant.



Before you can decide where you would like to arrive you must decide what roads you will take to get there and what you will use to guide your way.

What if we used Judaism as a compass and Jewish values to give our lives a sense of direction?

Welcome to the Intersection of Decision Fatigue and Moral Exhaustion

What is decision fatigue? According to registered psychotherapist Natacha Duke, MA, RP, decision fatigue is a phenomenon where the more decisions a person makes over the course of a day, the more physically, mentally and emotionally depleted they become. Now magnify that fatigue over a lifetime.

What is Moral Exhaustion? According to Michael Schur, humans face so many moral challenges as we go through life that it can be exhausting to try diligently to do every single thing right. To be completely moral in our roles as family members, friends, neighbors, employees, consumers, investors, etc. can be overwhelming



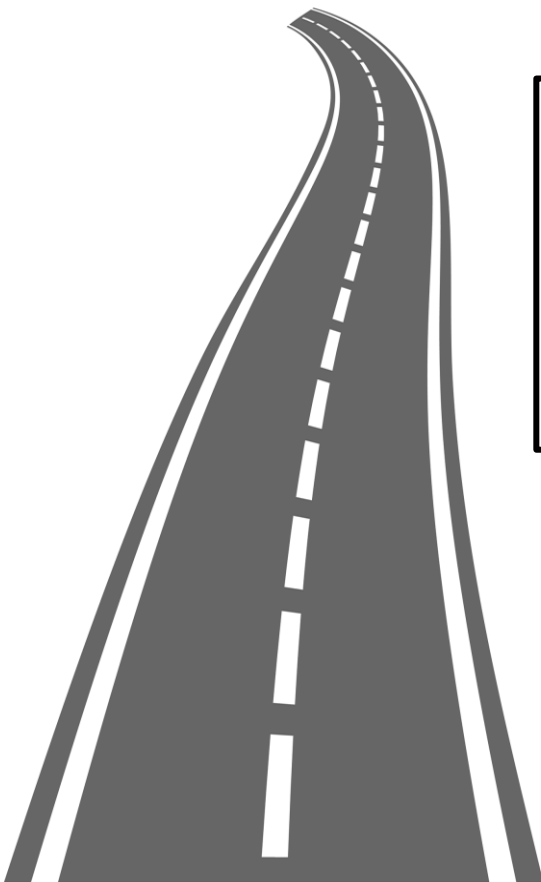
I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day: I have put before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life, so that you and your offspring may live, by loving God, heeding God's commands, and holding fast. For thereby you will have life.

Source: Devarim 30: 19-20

לְלַכֵּת בְּכָל־דְּרָכָיו. אֵילֹוּ דְרָכֵי הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, שְׁנֹאמַר:
יְהוָה יִהְיֶה אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן אָרְךָ אַפַּיִם וְרַב חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת, נוֹצֵר
חֶסֶד לְאֱלֹפִים נוֹשֵׂא עוֹן וְנִפְשַׁע וְחַטָּאָה וְנִקְחָה... מֵהַמְּקוֹם
נִקְרָא רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן, אִם אִתָּה הֲנִי רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן... מֵהַקְּדוֹשׁ
בְּרוּךְ הוּא נִקְרָא צַדִּיק, שְׁנֹאמַר, צַדִּיק יִהְיֶה בְּכָל־דְּרָכָיו, אִם
אִתָּה הֲנִי צַדִּיק. הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא נִקְרָא חָסִיד, שְׁנֹאמַר,
וְחָסִיד בְּכָל־מַעֲשָׂיו, אִם אִתָּה הֲנִי חָסִיד.

"To walk in all His ways" (Deuteronomy 11:22). These are the ways of the Holy One: "gracious and compassionate, patient, abounding in kindness and faithfulness, assuring love for a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and granting pardon. . . ." (Exodus 34:6). This means that just as God is gracious and compassionate, you too must be gracious and compassionate. "The Lord is faithful in all His ways and loving in all His deeds" (Psalm 145:17). As the Holy One is faithful, you too must be faithful. As the Holy One is loving, you too must be loving.

SIFRE DEUTERONOMY, EKEV





"Ben Zoma said: Who is rich? Those who are happy with their portion."
(Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 32a also found in *Pirkei Avot* 4:1)

What does it look like if you reorient your compass and make God true north?

Does faith have a role in your life? If yes, what does that role look like?

Some ideas: nature, organized religion/rituals, prayer personal or liturgical

What do you think of when you picture a divine presence/force?

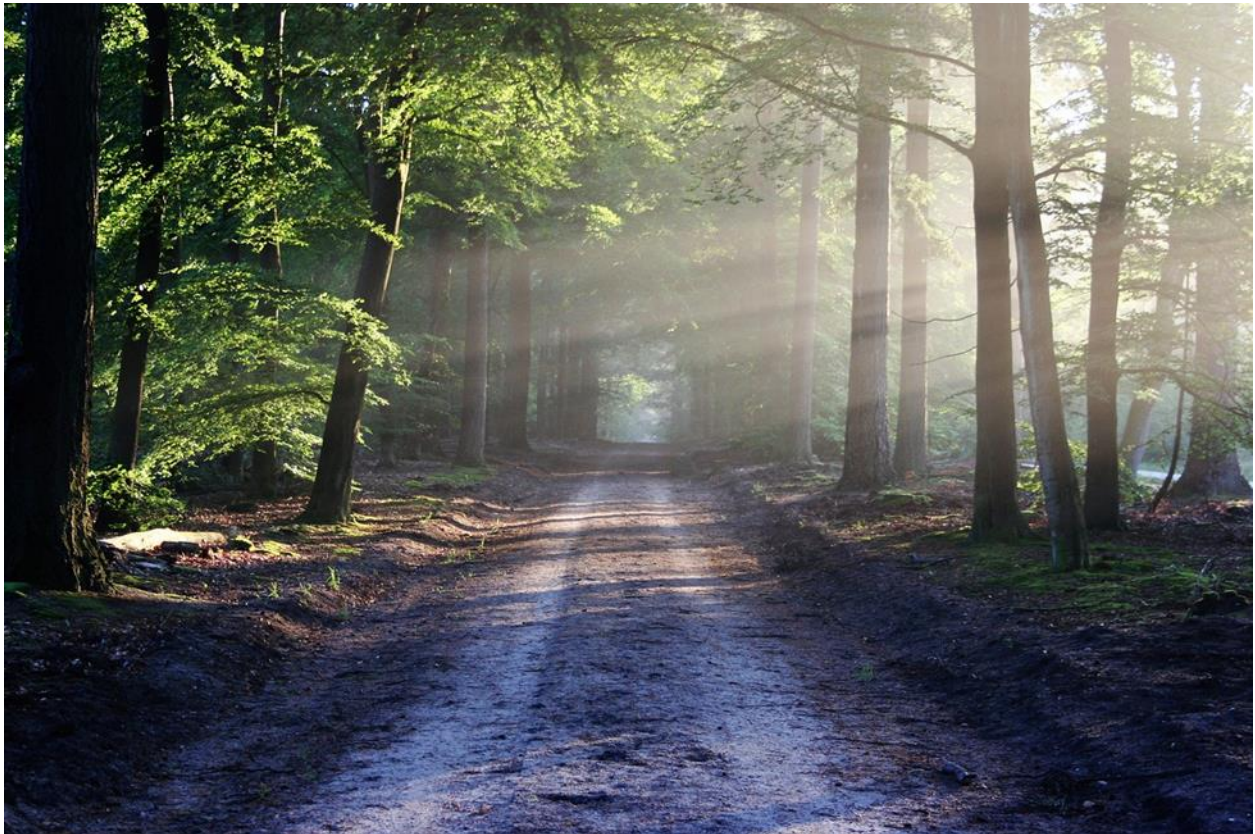
Some ideas: a parent, a puppeteer, wind, energy, omnipotent, removed

Does that divine force interact with you? If yes, how? When?

Try Finishing this Sentence

I remember a time I felt a force greater than me... and it felt like...

What would it feel like to know for certain that there was something greater than you helping you through life? Would you do anything different?



East: What to Pack

Text Study

Cemeteries are referred to in several different ways in Hebrew, including *beit kevarot* (house of sepulchers), *beit almin* (eternal home) *beit olam [haba]*, (house of afterlife), *beit chayyim* (house of the living) and *beit shalom* (house of peace).

Q: Does one name speak to you more than another?

Establishing a cemetery is one of the first priorities for a new Jewish community. It should be set up before one builds the Yeshiva, the Beit Haknesset (the Synagogue) and even before the Kosher butcher is established. A Jewish cemetery is generally purchased and supported with communal funds.

Q: What does this teach us? Why is this so?

Shabbat 153a:5

Rabbi Eliezer says: Repent one day before your death. Rabbi Eliezer's students asked him: But does a person know the day on which he will die? He said to them: All the more so this is a good piece of advice, and one should repent today lest he die tomorrow; and by following this advice one will spend his entire life in a state of repentance.

Healthcare Preparedness

- **Advance care planning** starts with expressing wishes, clarifying values, identifying health care preferences and selecting an agent to communicate healthcare decisions if you are unable to speak for yourself.
- Begin by **having a conversation** with those closest to you. Take the time to consider “what matters to you” at the end of life. “Advance Directives” are legal documents (Living Will and Healthcare Power of Attorney) that allow you to plan and make your own end-of-life wishes known if you are unable to communicate.




Information derived and/or adapted from “Conversations of a Lifetime”

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the **conversation** project

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What Is Advance Care Planning?

- A series of conversations to discuss and understand wishes for end-of-life care
- A way to document your medical wishes so those you love know what matters most to you
- A guide for doctors and your care team to follow if you become too sick to make decisions for yourself

What Do I Want?

If you are like most people, you want your medical care to respect the way you want to live, your goals and your values. End of life is a very personal experience with a lot of medical needs. Think about what's important to you. What gives your life meaning?

How Do I Make Sure I Get What I Want?

We don't lose our voice in choosing the care we want because we're unable to speak. We lose our voice when we haven't told someone what we want. Once you have decided what you want at the end of your life, you need to choose someone to speak for you if you are unable to speak for yourself. The person you name is called a Health Care Power of Attorney, or sometimes called an Agent, Surrogate or Proxy.

What do I write down and how do I share it?

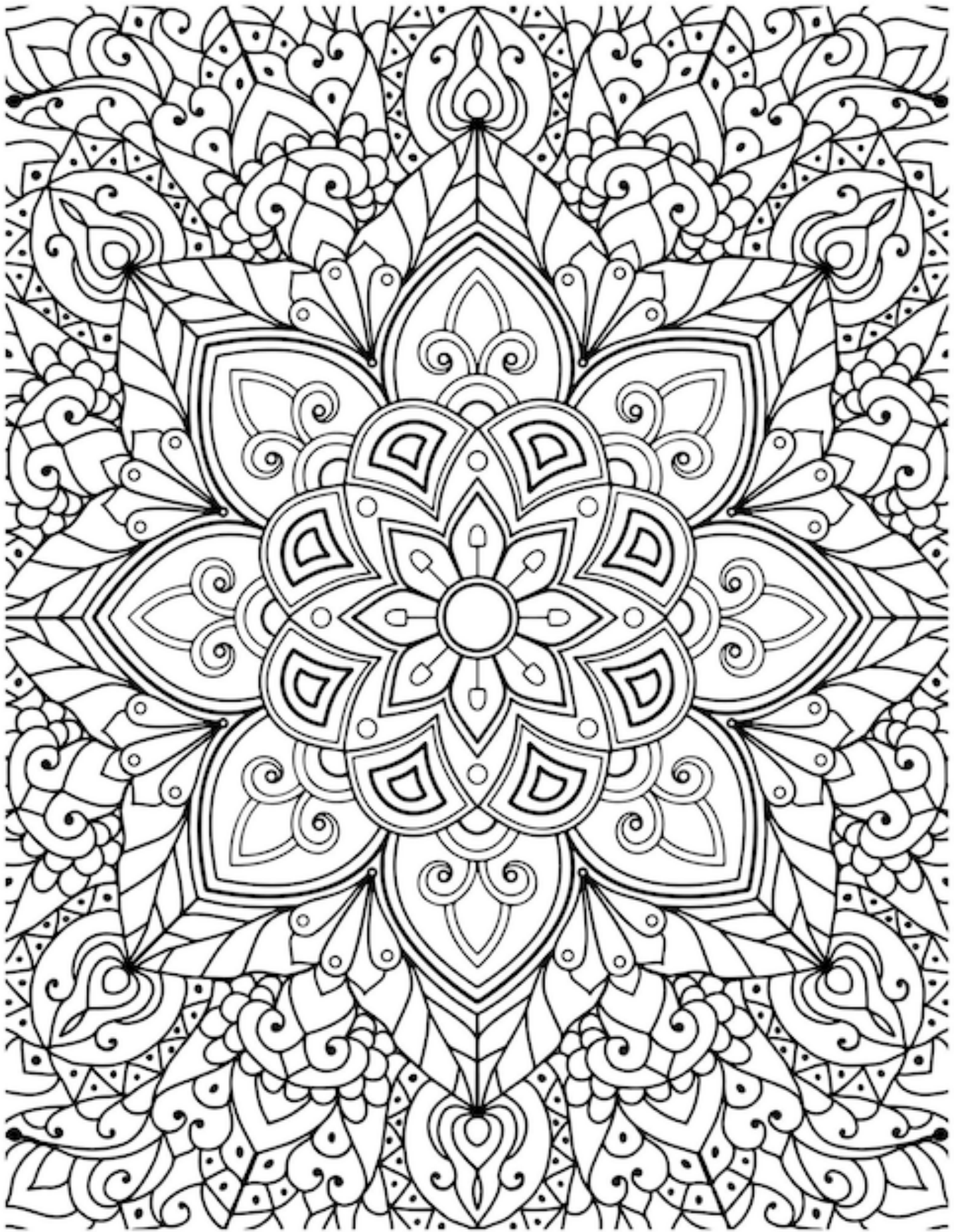
Once you have decided what you want and who will speak for you, write it down and share it with the people who will be responsible for making decisions for you. Each state has its own rules and forms that you can download from the internet and complete yourself.



Before you can have a conversation with another about your end of life wishes, you must first talk to yourself.

What type of course have we laid out for ourselves? What guides our journey, priorities...

Identify what it is that gives us "quality of life"



“To achieve great things, two things are needed;
a plan, and not quite enough time.” – Leonard Bernstein

Think About What Matters to YOU.

What does a good day look like for me?

Some ideas: Is it time with family or friends? Enjoying everyday activities like: _____

What really makes me happy in life? What do I derive joy from?

Some ideas: reading, walking outside, birdfeeder, music, etc

Some of the movies, books, music, TV channels I enjoy include:

What or who supports me during difficult times?

Some ideas: your faith, culture, family, friends, pets

Try Finishing this Sentence

What matters to me through the end of my life is.....

Some ideas: Being able to recognize my children, being independent, being able to spend time with the ones I love.

For each statement below, mark the place on the line that is closest to what you think or believe about each statement now. There are no "right" or "wrong" choices — your answers are about what works for you.

➤ As a patient, I'd like to know...



Only the basics about my condition and my treatment

All the details about my condition and my treatment

➤ When there is a medical decision to be made, I would like...



My health care team to do what they think is best

To have a say in every health care decision

➤ What are your concerns about medical treatments?



I worry that I won't get enough care

I worry that I'll get too much care

➤ If I am diagnosed with a serious illness that could shorten my life, I would prefer to...



Not know how quickly it is progressing or my doctor's best estimation for how long I have to live

Understand how quickly it is progressing and my doctor's best estimation for how long I have to live

➤ If you were seriously ill or near the end of your life, how much medical treatment would you feel was right for you?



I would want to try every available treatment to extend my life, even if it's uncomfortable

I would not want to try treatments that impact my quality of life in order to extend my life

➤ Where do you prefer to be toward the end of life?



I strongly prefer to spend my last days in a health care facility (hospital, assisted living, or nursing facility)

I strongly prefer to spend my last days at home

Most people would prefer to die in their own bed, but only a quarter of deaths occur in the home. What would this look like to you? Do other people live in your home? Who is taking care of you in that situation? What does dying at home really look like?

> If you weren't able to speak for yourself, would you want people to follow all your wishes or do what they think is best in the moment?



I want the people I trust to do exactly what I've said, even if it makes them uncomfortable

I want the people I trust to do what brings them peace, even if it's different from what I've said

> When it comes to sharing information about my health with others...



I don't want those close to me to know all the details about my health

I am comfortable with those close to me knowing all the details about my health

> When I die...



I want to be alone

I want to be with other people

Look at your previous answers. What are the most important things for your friends, family, and health care team to understand about what matters most to you through the end of life?

For more information and helpful resources please visit:
www.ConversationsofALifetime.org



Guiding you through advanced illness and end of life.

SCAN ME



Who needs to know what matters to you in your health care?

Check all that apply:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Parent(s) | <input type="radio"/> Trusted friend(s) |
| <input type="radio"/> Spouse/partner(s) | <input type="radio"/> Doctor(s) |
| <input type="radio"/> Chosen family member(s) | <input type="radio"/> Nurse practitioner/nurse(s) |
| <input type="radio"/> Adult child/children | <input type="radio"/> Social worker |
| <input type="radio"/> Faith leader (minister, priest, rabbi, imam, etc.) | <input type="radio"/> Other: _____ |

Where would you feel comfortable talking?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> At the kitchen table | <input type="radio"/> Video chat or phone call |
| <input type="radio"/> At a favorite restaurant | <input type="radio"/> At my place of worship |
| <input type="radio"/> In the car | <input type="radio"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> On a walk | |

Who Do You Want to Include In the Conversation...

How to start the Conversation. Ideas on what to Include...

This list doesn't cover everything, but here are some things you can say to start talking.

- "I need your help with something."
- "Can you and I have a conversation about _____?"
- "I was thinking about what happened to _____, and it made me realize _____."
- "Even though I'm OK right now, I'm worried that _____, and I want to be prepared. Can we talk about some things that matter to me?"
- "Will you help me think about my future?"
- "I heard about the Conversation Project and answered some of their questions about things that matter to me when it comes to my care through the end of life. I'd like to talk to you about it."
- "When _____ died, do you think their wishes and priorities were respected toward the end of their life?"

Here is a list of some other things you may want to cover when you talk.

- Do you have any worries about your health?
- What do you need to address to feel more prepared (examples: finances, property, legal documents, relationships, health care situations)?
- Do you have any fears, concerns, or mistrust about where or how you receive health care?
- Who do you want (or not want) to be involved in your health care?
- When you look ahead to the future, are there important events or dates you hope you're there for?
- Are there kinds of treatment you would want or not want (examples: resuscitation attempts, ventilation, feeding tube)?
- If your health condition changed, when would it be OK with you to shift from trying to cure an illness to trying to enjoy the end of life as much as possible?

What do I do now to make it all official?



Once you have determined your wishes and made them known either by writing them down or having a conversation, it's time to select a healthcare proxy and create a living will. These are the legal ways to ensure that what matters to you is enacted.

Your Health Care Proxy

This is the part of the advance directive where you name the person you have chosen to make health care decisions on your behalf, if needed, as well as an alternate if your first choice is unavailable.

Step One: Pick a person (Note: this may not be an obvious choice)

Step Two: Have a conversation with this person

Step Three: Add this person's information to official documents.

To find the guide to choosing a healthcare proxy visit:
<https://theconversationproject.org/get-started#Your-Conversation-Starter-Guide>

A health care proxy may also be called: health care agent, power of attorney for health care, or surrogate decision-maker.

The legal document that allows a proxy to speak for someone else may be called a health care proxy form or an advance directive. The advance directive document includes both a health care proxy form and a living will, where specific medical treatments a person would or would not want can be listed.

On a personal note
To you my HCPOA...

Your Living Will

This is the part of the advance directive where you describe your preferences and wishes for your health care if you cannot speak for yourself. These are many of the same things that you have thought about and discussed throughout this guide. Every state and most countries have their own advance directive forms. In the United States, the NHPCO (National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization) can help you find the right forms in your state (nhpco.org/advancedirective)

Step One: Document for the state of Ohio will be passed out in class

Step Two: Fill this out either on paper or electronically.

Step Three: Once completed, save and print the form, or store it digitally. If using paper, you should scan the form and save it everywhere you can – including your phone – and distribute them to your inner circle, your physician, and anyone else you think should have it.



Check List

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

**PREPARING
FOR DEATH**

IS ONE OF THE MOST
EMPOWERING THINGS
YOU CAN DO.

**THINKING ABOUT DEATH
CLARIFIES YOUR LIFE.**

Judaic Preparedness

For individuals beginning the planning process

God, I ask that you keep your Presence with me during this important conversation.

Help bring to surface the values that are most important to me. Grant me clarity about my true wishes.

Endow in me strength in voice. Guide me in my important decision-making.

Enable me to work through any difficulties these conversations bring up,

navigating the relationships of those around me.

Comfort me if these conversations bring up pain. Be with me, God, along the way.

Allow me to use this opportunity to bring blessing into my life and the lives of

those I cherish most. Be a constant reminder that my life is sacred and infused with you, the Divine.

By Rabbi Sarit Horowitz, written for B'nai Jeshurun facilitators for What Matters: Caring Conversations about End of Life



Judaism is a religion that focuses on preparation. We count down annually between Passover and Shavuot to re-receive the Torah, and we start engaging in “accountings of the soul” at least a month before the High Holidays. Preparing is in our Jewish DNA.

Sarah's Death

Genesis 23, 1-4

- 1 Sarah's lifetime—the span of Sarah's life—came to one hundred and twenty-seven years.
- 2 Sarah died in Kiriath-arba—now Hebron—in the land of Canaan; and Abraham proceeded to mourn for Sarah and to bewail her.
- 3 Then Abraham rose from beside his dead, and spoke to the Hittites, saying,
- 4 “I am a resident alien among you; sell me a burial site among you, that I may remove my dead for burial.”
- וַיְהִי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה מֵאָה שָׁנָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וְשִׁבְעֵי שָׁנִים שָׁנֵי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה:
- וַתָּמָת שָׂרָה בְּקִרְיַת אַרְבַּע הוּא חֶבְרוֹן בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיְבֹא אַבְרָהָם לְסַפֵּד לְשָׂרָה וּלְבַכְתָּהּ:
- וַיָּקָם אַבְרָהָם מֵעַל פָּנָיו מֵתּוֹ וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי־חֵת לֵאמֹר:
- גֵּר־וְתוֹשָׁב אֲנֹכִי עִמָּכֶם תָּנוּ לִי אֶחְזֹת־קֶבֶר עִמָּכֶם וְאֶקְבְּרָה מֵתִי מִלְפָּנָי:

Abraham's Death

Genesis 25, 7-10

- 7 This was the total span of Abraham's life: one hundred and seventy-five years.
- 8 And Abraham breathed his last, dying at a good ripe age, old and contented; and he was gathered to his kin.*
- 9 His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite, facing Mamre,
- 10 the field that Abraham had bought from the Hittites; there Abraham was buried, and Sarah his wife.
- וְאֵלֶּה יְמֵי שְׁנֵי־חַיֵּי אַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר־חַי מֵאָת שָׁנָה וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה וְחָמֵשׁ שָׁנִים:
- וַיִּגָּע וַיָּמָת אַבְרָהָם בְּשִׁיבָה טוֹבָה זָקֵן וְשִׁבְעֵי וַיֵּאֱסֹף אֶל־עַמּוּיוֹ:
- וַיִּקְבְּרוּ אֹתוֹ יִצְחָק וְיִשְׁמָעֵאל בְּנוֹי אֶל־מְעָרַת הַמַּכְפֵּלָה אֶל־שְׂדֵה עֶפְרָן בֶּן־צִחֹר הַחִתִּי אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי מַמְרֵא:
- הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר־קָנָה אַבְרָהָם מֵאֵת בְּנֵי־חֵת שָׁמָּה קָבַר אַבְרָהָם וְשָׂרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ:

Jacob's Death

Genesis 47, 28-30

וַיְחִי יַעֲקֹב בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שִׁבְעַת עָשָׂר וְשָׁנָה וַיְהִי יְמֵי יַעֲקֹב שְׁנַיִם חִיָּו שְׁבַע שָׁנִים וְאַרְבָּעֵים וּמֵאֵת שָׁנָה: 28 Jacob lived seventeen years in the land of Egypt, so that the span of Jacob's life came to one hundred and forty-seven years.

וַיִּקְרָבוּ יְמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמוֹת וַיִּקְרָא לְבָנָו לְיוֹסֵף וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אִם-נָא מְצֵאתִי חַן בְּעֵינֶיךָ שִׁים-נָא יָדְךָ תַּחַת יְרֵכִי וְעָשִׂיתָ עִמָּדִי חֶסֶד וְאַמַּת אֶל-נָא תִקְבְּרֵנִי בְּמִצְרַיִם: 29 And when the time approached for Israel to die, he summoned his son Joseph and said to him, "Do me this favor, place your hand under my thigh as a pledge of your steadfast loyalty: please do not bury me in Egypt.

וְשָׁכַבְתִּי עִם-אֲבוֹתַי וּנְשָׂאתֵנִי מִמִּצְרַיִם וַיִּקְבְּרֵנִי בְּקִבְרֹתָם וַיֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי אֲעֲשֶׂה כְּדַבְּרֶךָ: 30 When I lie down with my ancestors,* take me up from Egypt and bury me in their burial-place." He replied, "I will do as you have spoken."

Joseph's Death

Genesis 50, 22-26

וַיֹּשֶׁב יוֹסֵף בְּמִצְרַיִם הוּא וּבֵית אָבִיו וַיְחִי יוֹסֵף מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנִים: 22 So Joseph and his father's household remained in Egypt. Joseph lived one hundred and ten years.

וַיֵּרָא יוֹסֵף לְאֶפְרַיִם בְּנֵי שְׁלֹשִׁים גַּם בְּנֵי מַכִּיר בֶּן-מְנַשֶּׁה וְלָדוּ עַל-בְּרָכָיו יוֹסֵף: 23 Joseph lived to see children of the third generation of Ephraim; the children of Machir son of Manasseh were likewise born upon Joseph's knees.

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל-אֶחָיו אָנֹכִי מָת וְאַל-הִיִּם פֶּקֶד יִפְקֹד אֶתְכֶם וְהֵעִלָּה אֶתְכֶם מִן-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב: 24 At length, Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die. God will surely take notice of you and bring you up from this land to the land promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."

וַיִּשְׁבַּע יוֹסֵף אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר פֶּקֶד יִפְקֹד אֱלֹהִים אֶתְכֶם וְהֵעִלְתֶם אֶת-עַצְמוֹתַי מִזֶּה: 25 So Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "When God has taken notice of you, you shall carry up my bones from here."

וַיָּמָת יוֹסֵף בֶּן-מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנִים וַיַּחְנְטוּ אֹתוֹ וַיִּשֶׂם בְּאֲרוֹן בְּמִצְרַיִם: 26 Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years; and he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.

Miriam's Death

Numbers 20, 1-2

1 וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּל־הָעֵדָה מִדְּבַר־צִן
 בְּחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן וַיָּשֶׁב הָעָם בְּקִדְשׁ
 וַתָּמֹת שָׁם מִרְיָם וַתִּקָּבֵר שָׁם:

The Israelites arrived in a body at the wilderness of Zin on the first new moon,* and the people stayed at Kadesh. Miriam died there and was buried there.

2 וְלֹא־הָיָה מַיִם לָעֵדָה וַיִּקְהָלוּ עַל־מֹשֶׁה
 וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן:

The community was without water, and they joined against Moses and Aaron.

Aaron's Death

Numbers 20, 24-29

24 יִאָסֶף אַהֲרֹן אֶל־עַמּוּיוֹ כִּי לֹא יָבֹא
 אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 עַל אֲשֶׁר־מָרִיתֶם אֶת־פִּי לְמִי מִרִיבָה:

24 "Let Aaron be gathered to his kin: he is not to enter the land that I have assigned to the Israelite people, because you disobeyed My command about the Waters of Meribah.

25 קַח אֶת־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶת־אֶלְעָזָר בְּנֹו וְהַעֲלֵם
 אֹתָם הָר הַהֵר:

25 Take Aaron and his son Eleazar and bring them up on Mount Hor.

26 וְהִפְשַׁט אֶת־אַהֲרֹן אֶת־בְּגָדָיו
 וְהִלְבַּשְׁתָּם אֶת־אֶלְעָזָר בְּנֹו וְאַהֲרֹן
 יִאָסֶף וּמָת שָׁם:

26 Strip Aaron of his vestments and put them on his son Eleazar. There Aaron shall be gathered unto the dead."

27 וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה וַיַּעֲלוּ
 אֶל־הָר הַהֵר לְעֵינֵי כָל־הָעֵדָה:

27 Moses did as יהוה had commanded. They ascended Mount Hor in the sight of the whole community.

28 וַיִּפְשַׁט מֹשֶׁה אֶת־אַהֲרֹן אֶת־בְּגָדָיו
 וַיִּלְבַּשׁ אֹתָם אֶת־אֶלְעָזָר בְּנֹו וּמָת
 אַהֲרֹן שָׁם בְּרֹאשׁ הַהֵר וַיֵּרַד מֹשֶׁה
 וְאֶלְעָזָר מִן־הָהָר:

28 Moses stripped Aaron of his vestments and put them on his son Eleazar, and Aaron died there on the summit of the mountain. When Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain,

29 וַיֵּרְאוּ כָל־הָעֵדָה כִּי גִוַע אַהֲרֹן וַיִּבְכּוּ
 אֶת־אַהֲרֹן שְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם כָּל בַּיִת
 יִשְׂרָאֵל: (ס)

29 the whole community knew that Aaron had breathed his last. All the house of Israel bewailed Aaron thirty days.

49 עֲלֵה אֶל־הָר הָעֵבְרָיִם הַזֶּה הַר־נֶבֹו
 אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי יְרִיחוֹ
 וּרְאֵה אֶת־אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן
 לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאֶחְזָה:

"Ascend through this mountain range to Mount Nebo, which is at the land of Moab facing Jericho, and observe the land of Canaan which I give to the Children of Israel for a possession.

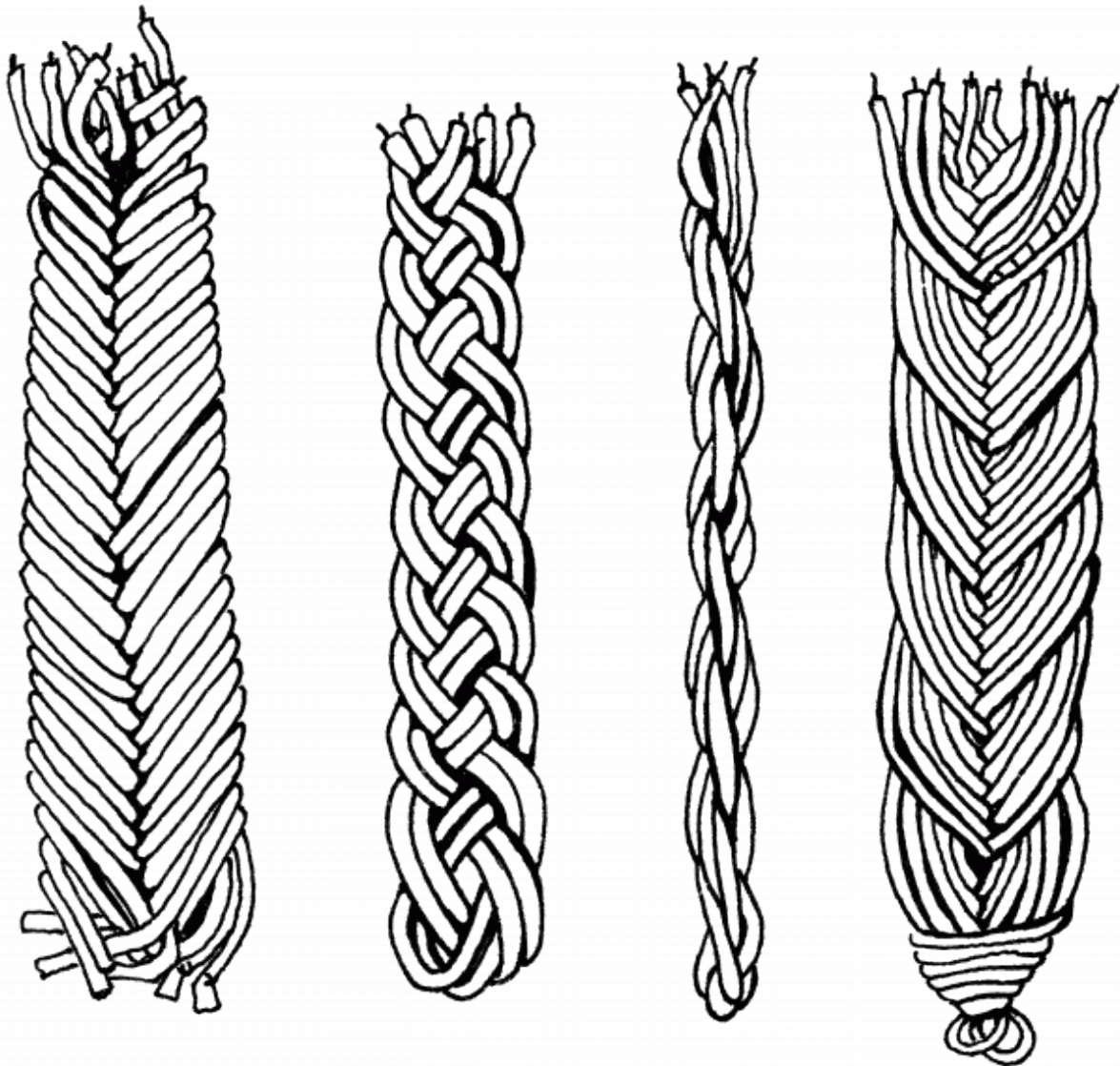
50 וּמָת בְּהָר אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹלֶה שָׁמָּה
 וְהָאָסֶף אֶל־עַמּוּיֶךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר־מָת אַהֲרֹן
 אַחִיד בְּהָר הַהֵר וַיִּאָסֶף אֶל־עַמּוּיוֹ:

50 Prepare yourself to die on the mountain whither you ascend. And your soul will be joined with the souls of your people who have preceded you, and yours will be the same peaceful death as that of your brother Aaron, even as his soul joined the souls of his people.

Moshe's

Death

Devarim 32, 49-50



Havdalah is a separation ritual designed to mark a distinction in time and space. What would crafting our own end of life Havdalah ritual look like?

Think About What Matters to YOU, Judaically.

What positive memory comes to mind related to Judaism?

Some ideas: holiday celebration? Milestone? Event? (it's ok if there isn't one)

What makes you proud to be Jewish?

When do you feel most connected to Judaism?

My Judaism is based on?

Try Finishing this Sentence

I hope that my family keeps this one tradition...*

*** If you don't have children finish the sentence instead: **No matter what happens in my life – I hold tight to this concept in Judaism:****

Annual Life Review from the Shomer Collective; a ritual for preparing for the end of life

Annual Life Review Task 1: Acknowledging Relationships.

Think about the people who have figured prominently in your life in the last year. What are their names?

Annual Life Review Task 2: Remembering Key Moments.

Recall meaningful moments in your life that occurred in the last year. Can you describe them?

Annual Life Review Task 3: Asking for Forgiveness.

Write the names of the people who you may have hurt in the last year. Use this opportunity to consider how and when you may ask for their forgiveness.

Annual Life Review Task 4: Forgiving Others or Moving Through the Hurt.

Write the names of the people who have hurt you in the last year. Consider how and when to forgive or move through the hurt.

Annual Life Review Task 5: Saying "Thank You."

Write the names of the people in your life you wish to thank based on your life over the last year. Use this opportunity to identify what they did for you, why you are thankful, and how and when you want to express your gratitude.

Annual Life Review Task 6: Saying "I Love You."

Write the names of the people in your life for who you have felt love in the last year. How and when might you express this love to them ahead of the new year?

Annual Life Review Task 7: Saying "Goodbye."

What or who do you want to say goodbye to based on your life in the last year? Consider what or who you would like to let go from the past year.

I did the legal paperwork but how will my values live on?



Have you ever heard of the Judaic book “Pirkei Avot” or “Ethics of our Fathers?” It is the only tractate of the Mishnah dealing solely with ethical and moral principles; there is relatively little halakha (laws). While the rules might make the rituals, the ethics give our religion the tam (flavor/taste).

For centuries, Jewish parents have passed down wisdom and values to their children by crafting end-of-life documents called *tzava'ot* or “ethical wills.” Much as a legal will enables one to dole out assets and possessions to one’s heirs, an ethical will gives the writer an opportunity to share their wealth of wisdom: lessons they’ve learned over a lifetime, where they found meaning in their lives, and what they may want for their loved ones going forward.

Traditionally, Jewish ethical wills contained a number of items, including burial instructions, debts and obligations to be paid, requests that family members carry on specific religious traditions, and blessings over the family. But modern ethical wills are less about accounting and instruction and more about imparting wisdom or wishes or simply reviewing one’s life. They are often written in the form of a letter and addressed to one’s children, but they can take many forms. There is no (Jewish law) template or script they must follow. The next several pages can be used as a jumping off point for writing your ethical will.

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/jewish-ethical-wills-tzavaot/>

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/writing-an-ethical-will-how-to-get-started/>

Ethical Will Prompts

Reflect on courageous choices you have made over a lifetime.

1) What are three core values in your life?

2) Identify three courageous choices you made that were driven by your values in your personal, work, and communal life.

3) Recall an experience when your values were challenged and you fought to uphold them.

4) Think about private ways you remain connected to your past.

5) Identify a past and present moral dilemma in your life and chart the impacts of making a courageous decision versus a convenient decision.

Reflections on how you prioritize your life.

1) What gives my life meaning?

2) If I had my life to live over again, what would I do with it?

3) What ideals, if any, would I be willing to die for?

3) Craft a family genealogy chart. The process may reveal stories, connections and a sense of generational transcendence.



Explore inspired storytelling.

1) Describe an out-of-the-ordinary event in your life. What led to it?

2) Describe an experience when initial disappointment was transformed into gratitude. How did your understanding of the event change? Why?

3) Identify three significant events in your life and trace their path to fruition. Were the events by chance or design?

4) Identify three people who have made a difference in your life. How did you meet them? By chance or design?

5) Share an experience in which you saw God's hand in your life.



South: The Road Ahead

Text Study

Source: *Babylonian Talmud, Taanit 23a verse 15*

יֹמָא חַד הָוָה אָזַל בְּאוֹרְחָא, חֲזַיִיה
לְהֵוּא גְבֵרָא דְהָוָה נִטְע חֲרוּבָא,
אָמַר לֵיהּ: הָאִי, עַד כַּמָּה שָׁנִין טָעִין?
אָמַר לֵיהּ: עַד שְׁבַעִין שָׁנִין. אָמַר
לֵיהּ: פְּשִׁיטָא לָךְ דְּחַיִּית שְׁבַעִין שָׁנִין?
אָמַר לֵיהּ הָאִי גְבֵרָא: עָלְמָא בְּחֲרוּבָא
אֲשַׁכְחֵתִיהּ. כִּי הֵיכִי דְשָׁתְלוּ לִי
אֲבָהָתִי — שְׁתְּלִי נָמִי לְבָרָאִי.

15 **One day, he was walking along the road when he saw a certain man planting a carob tree. Honi said to him: This tree, after how many years will it bear fruit? The man said to him: It will not produce fruit until seventy years have passed. Honi said to him: Is it obvious to you that you will live seventy years, that you expect to benefit from this tree? He said to him: That man himself found a world full of carob trees. Just as my ancestors planted for me, I too am planting for my descendants.**

One day King Solomon decided to humble Benaiah Ben Yehoyada, his most trusted minister. He said to him, "Benaiah, there is a certain ring that I want you to bring to me. I wish to wear it for Sukkot which gives you six months to find it."

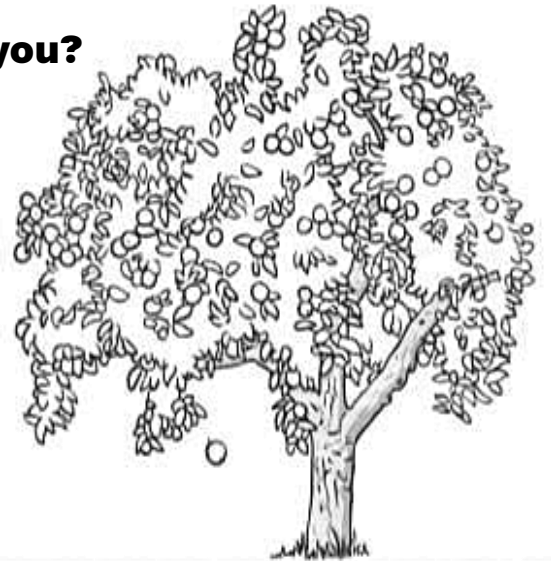
"If it exists anywhere on earth, your majesty," replied Benaiah, "I will find it and bring it to you, but what makes the ring so special?" "It has magic powers," answered the king. "If a happy man looks at it, he becomes sad, and if a sad man looks at it, he becomes happy."

Solomon knew that no such ring existed in the world, but he wished to give his minister a little taste of humility. Spring passed and then summer, and still Benaiah had no idea where he could find the ring. On the night before Sukkot, he decided to take a walk in one of the poorest quarters of Jerusalem. He passed by a merchant who had begun to set out the day's wares on a shabby carpet. "Have you by any chance heard of a magic ring that makes the happy wearer forget his joy and the broken-hearted wearer forget his sorrows?" asked Benaiah. He watched the grandfather take a plain gold ring from his carpet and engrave something on it. When Benaiah read the words on the ring, his face broke out in a wide smile. That night the entire city welcomed in the holiday of Sukkot with great festivity.

"Well, my friend," said Solomon, "have you found what I sent you after?" All the ministers laughed and Solomon himself smiled. To everyone's surprise, Benaiah held up a small gold ring and declared, "Here it is, your majesty!"

As soon as Solomon read the inscription, the smile vanished from his face. The jeweler had written three Hebrew letters on the gold band: gimel, zayin, yud, which began the words "Gam zeh ya'avov" "This too shall pass."

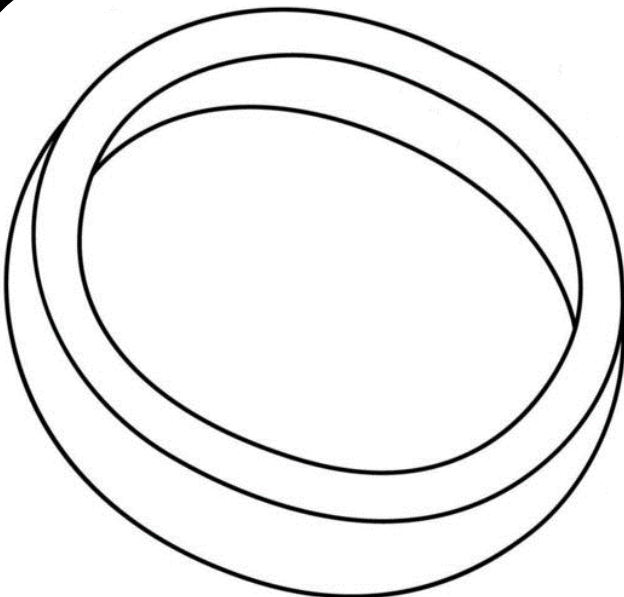
Q: What fruit tree was already planted for you?



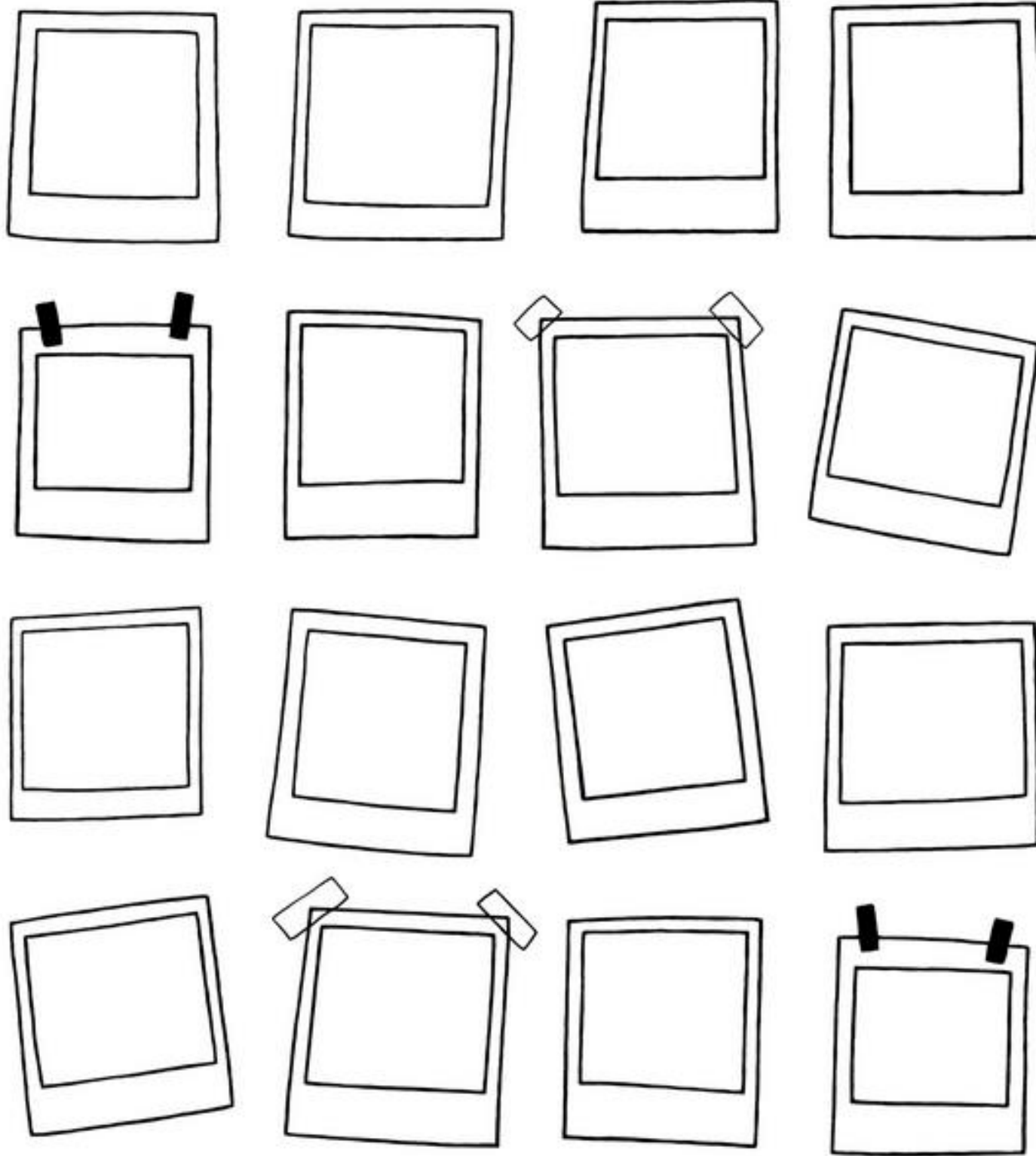
Q: Have you planted any fruit trees for the next generation?



Q: If a ring was custom made for you, what reminder would it be:



The Scenic Overlooks



“Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.
The important thing is not to stop questioning.” – Albert Einstein



Legacy, Meaning, and Continuity

According to the Book
"A Time to Mourn, A Time to Comfort"
by Dr. Ron Wolfson

The modern Jewish perspective interprets
immortality in three different ways:

We live on through our descendants

We live on through our deeds

We live on through our common destiny
with the Jewish People.

Self-Reflection Exercise...

Consider writing
your own
obituary...

What items
would you want
included?

Question: Does one of these resonate with you
more than the others?

Question: Did you excel in all of the above?
How so? Why or why not?

Question: Is there another way to achieve
immortality?



Once you realize what is truly
important in your life and the
moments that matter - you can
determine if you have left a clear
path for the next generation.

What will be here long after you've
passed?



“Whatever you choose to do, leave tracks. That means don’t do it just for yourself. You will want to leave the world a little better for your having lived.”

– Ruth Bader Ginsberg

Think back on all the things you've already done.

A memory that stands out from a trip I took is...

One souvenir I hold dear is...

What is my favorite spot on earth? "My happy place"

What is something I never thought I could do... but I did it!

One time I felt true "awe" was...

Try Finishing this Sentence

A place I'd like to return to is... because...

The Mile Markers

Death out of Time

Mental Decline

Known

Terminal Illness

Suicide

Decline

Physical Decline

Unknown

Death

Traumatic

Peaceful

Sudden



Psalm 121

A Song of Ascents.

I lift my eyes to the mountains —
from where will my help come?
My help will come from the Lord,
Maker of heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot falter; your
guardian does not slumber.
Indeed, the Guardian of Israel
neither slumbers nor sleeps.
The Lord is your guardian; the Lord
is your protective shade at your right
hand.
The sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.
The Lord will guard you from all
evil; He will guard your soul.
The Lord will guard your going and
your coming from now and for all
time.

שִׁיר לַמַּעֲלוֹת, אֲשָׁא עֵינַי אֶל
הַהָרִים, מֵאֵיזן יבֹא עֲזָרִי:
עֲזָרִי מֵעַם יְיָ, עֲשֵׂה
שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ: אֵל יִתֵּן
לְמוֹט רַגְלֶךָ, אֵל יְנוּם
שֹׁמְרֶךָ: הֲנֵה לֹא יְנוּם וְלֹא
יִישָׁן שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל:
יְיָ שֹׁמְרֶךָ, יְיָ
צִלְּךָ עַל יַד יְמִינֶךָ:
יוֹמָם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לֹא יַכְכֶּה,
וַיָּרַח בַּלַּיְלָה: יְיָ
יִשְׁמְרֶךָ מִכָּל רָע, יִשְׁמֹר אֶת
נַפְשֶׁךָ: יְיָ יִשְׁמֹר
צֵאתְךָ וּבואֶךָ, מֵעַתָּה
וְעַד עוֹלָם:



Psalm 130

A Song of Ascents.

Out of the depths I call to You, O Lord.
My Lord, hearken to my voice; let Your ears
be attentive to the voice of my pleas.
God, if You were to preserve iniquities, my
Lord, Who could survive?
But forgiveness is with You, that You may be
feared.
I hope in the Lord; my soul hopes, and I long
for His word.
My soul yearns for the Lord more than [night]
watchmen [waiting] for the morning, wait for
the morning.
Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the
Lord there is kindness; with Him there is
abounding deliverance.
And He will redeem Israel from all its
iniquities.

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת, מִמַּעַמְקִים
קָרָאתִיךָ יְיָ: אֲדֹנָי
שְׁמָעָה בְּקוֹלִי, תִּהְיֶינָה
אָזְנוֹיךָ קְשׁוּבוֹת לְקוֹל
תַּחֲנוּנָי: אִם עֲוֹנוֹת תִּשְׁמֹר
יְהִי, אֲדֹנָי מִי יַעֲמֹד: כִּי עִמָּךָ
הַסְּלִיחָה, לְמַעַן תִּגְרָא: קוֹיִתִּי
יְיָ קוֹיִתָּה נַפְשִׁי, וְלֹדְכִרוֹ
הוֹחֵלְתִּי: נַפְשִׁי לְאֲדֹנָי,
מִשְׁמָרִים לְבַקֵּר, שְׁמָרִים
לְבַקֵּר: יַחַל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל
יְיָ, כִּי עִם יְיָ הַחֶסֶד
וְהַרְבֵּה עֲמוֹ פְדוּת: וְהוּא יִפְדֶּה
אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל עֲוֹנוֹתָיו:

Living with Dying

The UnetanaH Tokef Prayer is recited on Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur

בְּרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה יִכְתְּבוּן, וּבַיּוֹם
צוּם כְּפוּר יִחְתַּמּוּן. כְּמָה
יַעֲבְרוּן, וְכַמָּה יִבְרָאוּן, מִי
יִחְיֶה, וּמִי יָמוּת, מִי בְּקֶצֶז, וּמִי
לֹא בְּקֶצֶז, מִי בַּמַּיִם, וּמִי
בָּאֵשׁ, מִי בְּחֶרֶב, וּמִי בַחַיָּה,
מִי בְרָעַב, וּמִי בְצָמָא, מִי
בְרַעַשׁ, וּמִי בַמַּגָּפָה, מִי
בַחֲנִיקָה, וּמִי בַסְּקִילָה, מִי
יְנוּחַ, וּמִי יָנוּעַ, מִי יִשְׁקֹט,
וּמִי יִטְרַף, מִי יִשְׁלוּ, וּמִי
יִתְיַסֵּר, מִי יַעֲנִי, וּמִי יַעֲשִׂיר,
מִי יִשְׁפֹּל, וּמִי יָרוּם.
וּתְשׁוּבָה וּתְפִלָּה וְצַדִּיקָה
מַעֲבִירִין אֶת רֹעַ הַגְּזֵרָה.

On Rosh Hashanah it is inscribed, and on Yom Kippur it is sealed - how many shall pass away and how many shall be born, who shall live and who shall die, who in good time, and who by an untimely death, who by water and who by fire, who by sword and who by wild beast, who by famine and who by thirst, who by earthquake and who by plague, who by strangulation and who by lapidation, who shall have rest and who wander, who shall be at peace and who pursued, who shall be serene and who tormented, who shall become impoverished and who wealthy, who shall be debased, and who exalted. But repentance, prayer and righteousness avert the severity of the decree.



He is my God and my redeemer, my rock in the time of sorrow.

On the day that I call upon him he shall be my banner and my strength.

In His hand I entrust my spirit when I sleep and when I wake.

And with that spirit I also entrust my soul,
THE LORD IS MINE, I SHALL NOT FEAR.

Adon Olam

וְהוּא אֱלֹהֵי יְחִי גְאֻלִּי
וְהוּא נְסִי וּמְנוֹס לִי
וְצוּר חֲבֻלִי בְּעַת צָרָה
מְנַת כּוֹסֵי בְיוֹם אֶקְרָא

בְּיָדוֹ אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי
וְעַם רוּחִי גְנוּיָתִי
בְּעַת אִישׁוֹן וְאֶעִירָה
יְיָ לִי וְלֹא אִירָא



Psychiatrist Elisabeth Kubler-Ross popularized the concept of the five stages of grief which are:

Denial

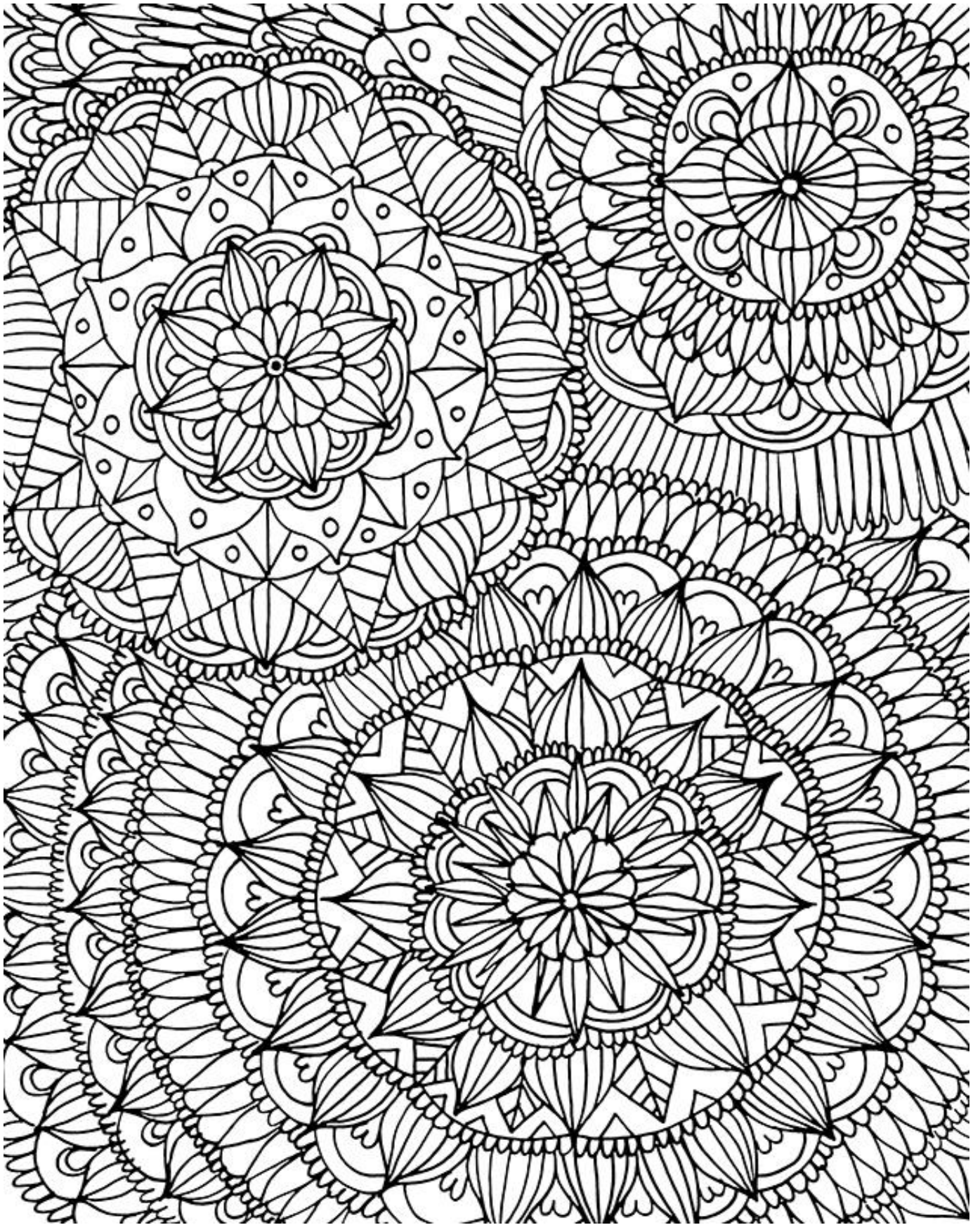
Anger

Bargaining

Depression

Acceptance





“If you are not a better person tomorrow than you are today, what need have you for a tomorrow?” – Rabbi Nachman of Breslov

What is left unfinished?

What is left unresolved?

What is still on my to-do-list?

Some ideas: travel? hobbies? learning? Projects?

What regrets do I have?

Some ideas: professionally, personally, choices

What relationship is not complete, still fractured, unrepairable?

Would I fix the above situation if I could?

If I died tomorrow, I would be most upset that I didn't get to...

Try Finishing this Sentence

When I think about death, I am most worried about...



West: The Destination

Text Study

Source: Psalm 23

מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד יְהוָה רֹעִי לֹא אֶחְסֵר:

A psalm of David.
The LORD is my shepherd; I lack nothing.

בְּנֵאֹת דֶּשָׁא יִרְבִּיצֵנִי עַל־מֵי מְנַחֹת
יְנַהֲלֵנִי:

He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me to still waters.

נַפְשִׁי יִשׁוּבֵב יְנַחֲנֵי בְּמַעְגְלֵי־צֶדֶק
לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ:

He renews my life;
He guides me in right paths
as befits His name.

גַּם כִּי־אֵלֶךְ בְּגֵיא צַלְמוֹת לֹא־אִירָא
רֵעַ כִּי־אַתָּה עִמָּדִי שִׁבְטְךָ וְמִשְׁעֲנֹתֶךָ
הִמָּה יְנַחֲמֵנִי:

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow
of death,
I fear no harm, for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff—they comfort me.

תַּעֲרֹךְ לִפְנֵי | שְׁלֹחַן נֹגַד צַרְרֵי דִשְׁנֹתַי
בְּשֶׁמֶן רֹאשִׁי כּוֹסֵי רוּיָה:

You spread a table for me in full view of my
enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
my drink is abundant.

אֵף | טוֹב וַחֲסֵד יִרְדְּפוּנִי כָּל־יְמֵי חַיֵּי
וְשִׁבְתִּי בְּבֵית־יְהוָה לְאָרְךָ יָמִים: {פ}

Only goodness and steadfast love shall pursue me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
for many long years.

Stopping for Directions



The course has been set. Up until now you've successfully navigated life thus far. But now there is a tree down in the road, a road closure and no visible detour signs. How do you adjust and where can you turn for assistance. Know your resources along the way.

Physically

Palliative Care: is specialized medical care for people living with a serious illness. This type of care is focused on providing relief from the symptoms and stress of the illness. The goal is to improve quality of life for both the patient and the family. Can be concurrent with curative treatments.

Hospice Care: is specialized care that provides physical comfort and emotional, social and spiritual support for people nearing the end of life. Your hospice team includes doctors, nurses, social workers and home health aides who provide care that centers on your comfort and dignity when a patient has a life expectancy of 6 months or less.

Emotionally

Shadow Work: involves exploring and integrating the unconscious aspects of oneself, such as repressed emotions, fears, and desires, to achieve personal growth and wholeness.

Social Workers: assist with filling out advance directives, connect you with resources, assist with paperwork FMLA, Medicare/Medicaid, help find counselors/support groups and provide support.

Grief Counselors: aid in helping people come to terms with feelings of loss. Grief is a common emotion and sometimes physical response felt after experiencing loss, a disaster or a traumatic event.

Spiritually

Clergy: A Rabbi/community member can engage in bikkur cholim (visiting with the sick). Non-denominational chaplains may also provide insight into the death and dying process.

Teshuvah: is usually translated from the Hebrew as repentance, but it literally means return. As in turning back to something you've strayed or looked away from.

Vidui: Can refer to the Yom Kippur prayer of confession or the Jewish deathbed confessional, a personal prayer that acknowledges the imperfections of the dying person and seeks a final reconciliation with God.

Be sure you are asking directions from someone who knows where they are AND someone who understands where you seek to go...



In my career/life choices...

In the way I viewed (myself/the world)...

In my relationships...

I wish I had made a U-turn during this situation...

I made a left when I should have made a right but as a result I...

“As long as the world is turning and spinning, we’re gonna be dizzy and we’re gonna make mistakes.” – Mel Brooks

The Final Mile

Jacob's Death

Genesis 49, 28-10

כָּל־אֵלֶּה שְׁבֵטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר
וְזֹאת אֲשֶׁר־דָּבַר לָהֶם אָבִיהֶם וַיְבָרֶךְ
אוֹתָם אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר כִּבְרָכְתּוּ בִּרְךְ אֹתָם:
28 All these were the tribes of Israel,
twelve in number, and this is what
their father said to them as he bade
them farewell, addressing to each a
parting word appropriate to him.

וַיִּצַו אוֹתָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אֲנִי נֹאסֵף
אֶל־עַמִּי קְבְּרוּ אֹתִי אֶל־אֲבֹתַי
אֶל־הַמְעֵרָה אֲשֶׁר בְּשָׂדֵה עֶפְרוֹן
הַחִתִּי:
29 Then he instructed them, saying to
them, “I am about to be gathered to
my kin. Bury me with my ancestors*
in the cave which is in the field of
Ephron the Hittite,

בַּמְעֵרָה אֲשֶׁר בְּשָׂדֵה הַמְכַפְּלָה אֲשֶׁר
עַל־פְּנֵי־מַמְרָא בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר קָנָה
אַבְרָהָם אֶת־הַשָּׂדֶה מֵאֵת עֶפְרוֹן הַחִתִּי
לְאַחֲזֹת־קֶבֶר:
30 the cave which is in the field of
Machpelah, facing Mamre, in the land
of Canaan, the field that Abraham
bought from Ephron the Hittite for a
burial site—

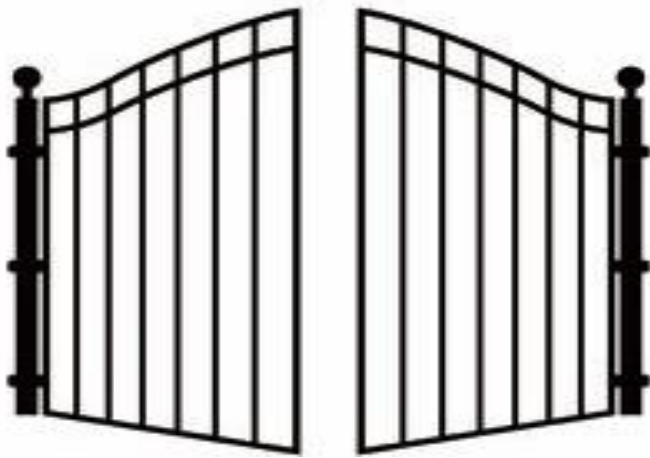
שָׁמָּה קְבְּרוּ אֶת־אַבְרָהָם וְאֵת שָׂרָה
אֲשֶׁתּוֹ שָׁמָּה קְבְּרוּ אֶת־יִצְחָק וְאֵת
רִבְקָה אֲשֶׁתּוֹ וְשָׁמָּה קְבַרְתִּי אֶת־לֵאָה:
31 there Abraham and his wife Sarah
were buried; there Isaac and his wife
Rebekah were buried; and there I
buried Leah—

מִקְנֵה הַשָּׂדֶה וְהַמְעֵרָה אֲשֶׁר־בוּ מֵאֵת
בְּנֵי־חֵת:
32 the field and the cave in it, bought
from the Hittites.”

וַיְכַל יַעֲקֹב לְצַוֹת אֶת־בָּנָיו וַיֹּאסֶף
רַגְלָיו אֶל־הַמַּטָּה וַיִּגְעַע וַיֹּאסֶף
אֶל־עַמּוּיוֹ:
33 When Jacob finished his instructions
to his sons, he drew his feet into the
bed and, breathing his last, he was
gathered to his kin.*

50

וַיִּפֹּל יוֹסֵף עַל־פְּנֵי אָבִיו וַיִּבְכֶּה עָלָיו
וַיִּשְׁקֵלּוּ:
1 Joseph flung himself upon his father's
face and wept over him and kissed
him.



What are the symptoms of active dying?

- Patient is less responsive
- Hallucinations, delirium, and agitation
- Temperature changes
- Patient's skin changes color (mottling)
- Blood pressure drops significantly
- Terminal Congestion
- Long pauses/irregular breathing

Judaism calls a person in this state a “goses” a dying person, who is expected to die within 72 hours or 3 days, because of illness or of old age.

What should you do during this time?

- Be present. Visit if appropriate
- Tell stories, laugh, cry
- Respect the dying, their family and the medical staff
- Recognize situation cues and adjust behavior as needed
- Do not offer to help, just help.
- Reach out – you are not alone.

Seeing loved ones who are deceased

ANCESTRAL GUIDES - FAMILIAL BEINGS: Rabbi Shimon said: 'Have you seen today the image of your father or your mother? For so we have learnt, that at the hour of one's departure from the world, their father or mother and other relatives gather round, and they see them and recognize them, and likewise all with whom they had associated in this world, and they accompany their soul to the place where it is to abide. (Zohar I, 218a).

Withdrawing from this world

ANCESTRAL GUIDES - MYTHIC BEINGS: When one departs this world...they see many strange things on their way & meet Adam, the first person, sitting at the gate of Gan Eden, ready to welcome all who have observed commands of their Master. (Zohar, I, 65b) ...no person dies before seeing the Shekhinah...(Zohar, III, 88a) and with the Shekhinah there come 3 ministering angels to receive the soul of the righteous (Zohar, I, 98a).

Anticipatory Grief, Storytelling

LIFE REVIEW: when God desires to take back a person's spirit, all the days they have lived in this world **pass in review.** (Zohar I, 221b).

“Seeing the Light –”

Kabbalah teaches that at the moment of passing, every positive thought, word, or deed that occurred during the person's life is concentrated into a pristine spiritual light. This light is revealed to the world and in the Heavenly spheres where it continues to shine and have an effect on those above and below.



“Every act of forgiveness mends something broken in this fractured world. It is a step, however small, in the long, hard journey to redemption.”
– Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

When I'm gone.

If eligible I would like to be an organ/tissue/cornea donor... (Yes/No/Depends)

I have made or want you to make arrangements with _____ funeral home

I would like someone to sit Shemira for me (Yes/No/Details)

I would like Tahara performed (Yes/No/Details)

It's important to me that Shiva is Observed (1,3,7 day(s) Yes/No/Details)

I would like someone to say Kaddish for me (Yes/no/details)

(During Shiva, shloshim, the full allotted time, Yizkor, Yahrzeit Date)

An important item I do (or do not) want included is:

If you're not sure about a decision I want you to consult: _____

Or use this when trying to decide: _____

The Destination

This may surprise you...

Judaism doesn't have a singular answer – there are many afterlife beliefs.

Sheol

Gan Eden

Gehenna

Gilgul

Olam Haba

T'chiyat Ha-Metim

Ilui neshama

Devarim 18, 10-11

לֹא־יִמָּצָא בָּךְ מֵעֶבֶר בְּנוֹ-וּבִתּוֹ בְּאֵשׁ
קִסָּם קִסְמִים מְעוֹנֵן וּמְנַחֵשׁ וּמְכַשֵּׁף:
10 Let no one be found among you who
consigns a son or daughter to the fire,
or who is an augur, a soothsayer, a
diviner, a sorcerer,

וְחֹבֵר חֶבֶר וְשֹׂאֵל אוֹב וַיִּדְעֹנֵי וְדַרְשׁ
אֱלֹהֵי-הַמֵּתִים:
11 one who casts spells, or one who
consults ghosts or familiar spirits, or
one who inquires of the dead.

Isaiah 2, 2-3

וְהָיָה | בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים נִכּוֹן
יְהוָה הַר בֵּית-יְהוָה בְּרֹאשׁ
הַהָרִים וְנִשְׂאָ מִגְּבְעוֹת וְנִהְרָו
אֲלָיו כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם:
2 In the days to come,
The Mount of GOD's
House
Shall stand firm above the
mountains
And tower above the hills;
And all the nations
Shall gaze on it with joy.

וְהָלְכוּ עַמִּים רַבִּים וְאָמְרוּ
לָכוּ | וְנַעֲלָה אֱלֹהֵי-רִיבְנוֹ
אֶל-בֵּית אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב וְיִרְגּוּ
מִדְרָכָיו וְנִלְכָה בְּאַרְחֵיתָיו כִּי
מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה וּדְבַר-יְהוָה
מִירוּשָׁלַם:
3 And the many peoples
shall go and say:
"Come,
Let us go up to the Mount
of
GOD,
To the House of the God
of Jacob;
That we may be
instructed in God's ways,
And that we may walk in
God's paths."
For instruction shall come
forth
from Zion,
The word of GOD from
Jerusalem.

Daniel 12, 1-3

וּבָעֵת הַהִיא יֵעֲמֵד מִיְכָאֵל הַשָּׂר
הַגָּדוֹל הַעֲמִיד עַל-בְּנֵי עַמּוֹךְ וְהָיְתָה עֵת
צָרָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־נִהְיְתָה מִהַיּוֹת גְּזוּי עַד
הָעֵת הַהִיא וּבָעֵת הַהִיא יִמְלֹט עַמּוֹךְ
כָּל-הַנִּמְצָא כְּתוּב בְּסֵפֶר:
1 "At that time, the great prince,
Michael, who stands beside the sons of
your people, will appear. It will be a
time of trouble, the like of which has
never been since the nation came into
being. At that time, your people will
be rescued, all who are found
inscribed in the book.

וְרַבִּים מִיֹּשְׁבֵי אֶדְמַת-עָפָר יִקְיָצוּ אֶלֶּה
לְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם וְאֵלֶּה לְחַרְפוֹת לְדָרְאוֹן
עוֹלָם:
2 Many of those that sleep in the dust of
the earth will awake, some to eternal
life, others to reproaches, to
everlasting abhorrence.

וְהַמְּשֻׁכְּלִים יִזְהָרוּ כְּזֹהַר הַרְקִיעַ
וּמִצְדִּיקֵי הָרַבִּים כְּכּוֹכְבִּים לְעוֹלָם
וָעַד: {פ}
3 And the knowledgeable will be radiant
like the bright expanse of sky, and
those who lead the many to
righteousness will be like the stars
forever and ever.

“I’m a Jew. I’m fascinated by our culture and our history, by what made us the people we are. It influences every breath I take. It informs and guides me. Without it, I’d just be a vacuum.” – Mandy Patinkin

Thoughts from Rabbi Howard Jaffe

Judaism has, from the Torah, itself always spoken of a life following this one. The Torah speaks about what seems to be a physical place, called Sheol, to which one "goes down" following this life. A variety of different passages indicate that Sheol was probably thought of as located in the center of the earth, although it is not ever formally described. What is clear is that this was a well-known concept amongst the ancient Israelites.

It was not until the Pharisees (c. 100 B.C.E.) that the notion of a spiritual life after death developed in any meaningful way in Jewish thought. The Pharisees, who were the forerunners of the rabbis, taught that when the Torah spoke of reward for following God's ways, the reward would be forthcoming in an afterlife, *Olam Ha-Ba* (world to come), as they called it.

They further taught that there would be an end of time as we know it, ushered in by the Messiah, and at that time, bodily resurrection would occur (Hebrew, *T'chiyat Ha-Metim*). While this teaching was an innovation, they insisted that it was rooted in Torah, and quoted extensive proof-texts to make their case. The Pharisees never saw themselves as creating anything new, but unfolding and uncovering that which was already existent but not yet manifest.

The attitude of Judaism might best be summed up as "We really do not know, but if there is a life after this one, and a reward for what we do, then surely it will be dependent upon the kind of life we have lived. Therefore, let us strive to follow God's path for us as closely and as enthusiastically as possible, for then we surely will know all manner of rewards, especially the one of seeing a world that is a better place for our efforts."

OLAM HABA - RABBINIC PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE AND DEATH Rabbi

Jacob said: This world [*Olam HaZeh*] is like a vestibule before the World to Come [*Olam HaBa*]. Prepare yourself in the vestibule that you may enter into the banquet hall.

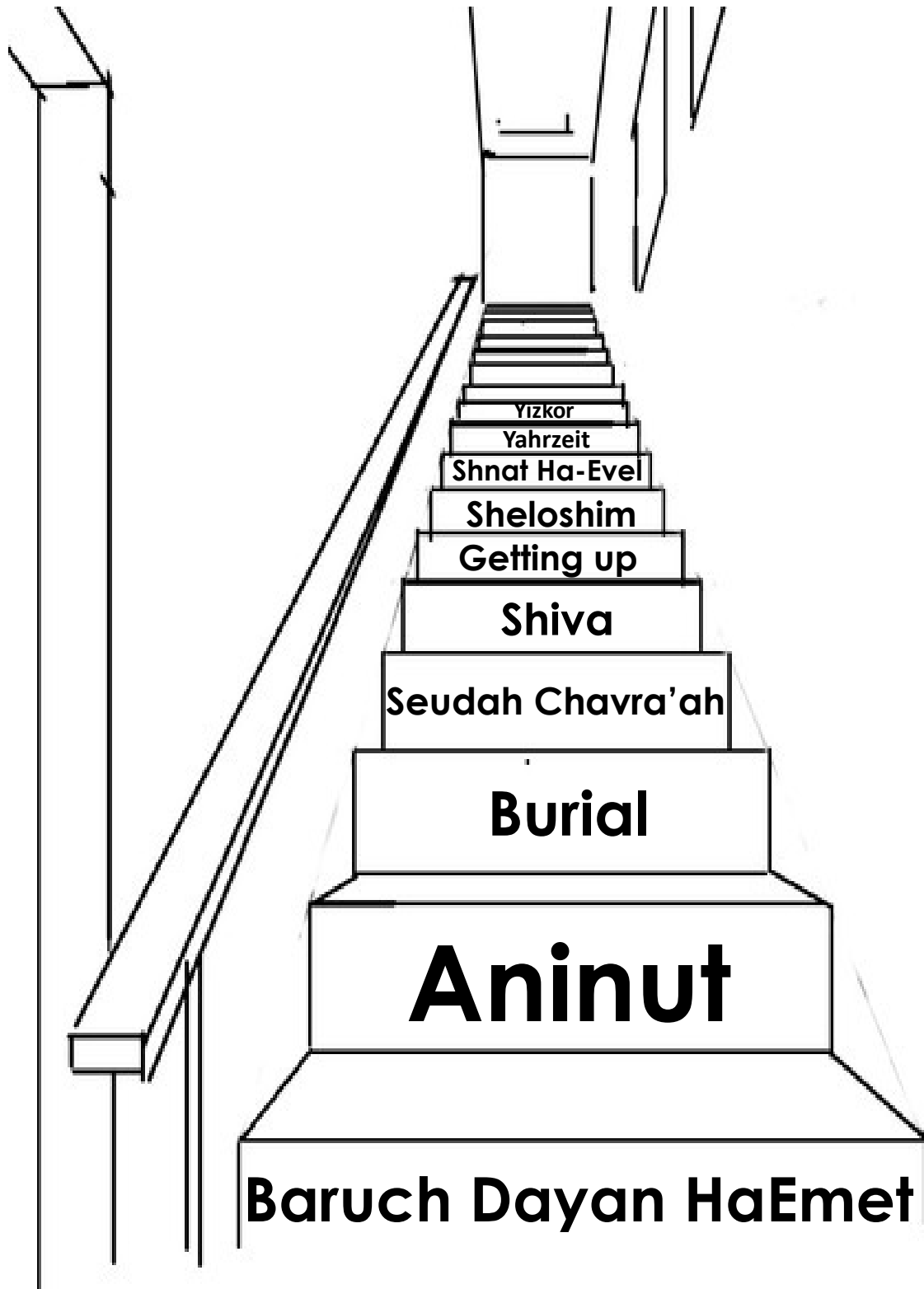
And further, he used to say : "*Better is one hour of repentance and good works in This World [Olam HaZeh] than the whole life of the World to Come [Olam HaBa]. Better is one hour of bliss in the World to Come than the whole of life in this world.*" (**Mishna Avot 4: 16-17**)

OLAM HABA - POST-MORTEM OR MESSIANIC?

My Torah will guide you in your path in THIS WORLD; it will watch over you in your SLEEP; at the hour of DEATH; and when you awake, it will converse with you in OLAM HABA. (**Sifre on Lev. 18:4**)

The story is told that when Rabbi Abahu was about to depart from this life, he beheld all the good things that were stored up for him in Olam Haba, and he rejoiced (**Ex. R. 52:3**).

The Ones We Leave Behind



HIBBUT HA-KEVER/PANGS OF THE GRAVE Rabbi Yehuda said: "for seven days the soul goes to and fro from one's house to one's grave from one's grave to one's house, mourning for the body" (Zohar I, 218b)



“A candle is a small thing. But one candle can light another. And see how its own light increases. As a candle gives its flame to the other, you are such a light.” – Moshe Davis

Remember Me.

When the grief feels overwhelming, I want you to...

I hope you continue the tradition of...

I want you to visit my gravestone (insert guidance on frequency and dates)

Please keep this particular item _____ because...

I felt overwhelmed with grief when _____. Looking back this is what got me through that time...

If I have a way to send you a sign and can choose my modality it would be...

Forgive yourself for...

No matter what I want you to know that...

Concluding Thought

In Judaism we are taught to hold two simultaneous beliefs:

“I am but dust and ashes” and “for me alone the world was created.”

This course is needed but intense - if you are struggling, please seek out help.

References

In addition to the in-text citations:

Conversations of a Lifetime

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Hebrew texts from Sefaria

Reb Simcha Raphael, Ph.D., www.daatinstitute.net

The Shomer Collective

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/jewish-ethical-wills-tzavaot/>

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/writing-an-ethical-will-how-to-get-started/>



For more Jewish wisdom and
resources on death and dying, visit
www.shomercollective.org.

We Remember Them

by Sylvan Kamens & Rabbi Jack Riemer

At the rising sun and at its going down; We remember them.

At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter; We remember them.

At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring; We remember them.

At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer; We remember them.

At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of the autumn; We remember them.

At the beginning of the year and when it ends; We remember them.

**As long as we live, they too will live,
for they are now a part of us as We remember them.**

When we are weary and in need of strength; We remember them.

When we are lost and sick at heart; We remember them.

When we have decisions that are difficult to make; We remember them.

When we have joy we crave to share; We remember them.

When we have achievements that are based on theirs; We remember them.

**For as long as we live, they too will live,
for they are now a part of us as, We remember them.**

