

CHAPTER XI.

A. When two deaths occur in town, the one that died first is buried first; and if the first has to be left over night, the second is buried. And although it is said: Whoever leaves his dead over night transgresses a negative commandment, [A1](#) still, if it is done for the purpose of digging a grave, to prepare shrouds, or to enable his outside relatives to attend to his funeral, it does not matter. If a master and a pupil die on the same day, the master is buried first; a pupil and a common man, the pupil is buried first. If both are masters, or pupils, or common men, the one that died first is buried first. A man and a woman, the woman is buried first, because the latter is more liable to become disgusting.

B. These are the differences between a man and a woman:

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A man may be left in the street to hold an oration over him, but not a woman; the greatest man of the city may accompany a man, but he is not to be troubled for a woman. R. Jehudah said: He may; the funeral meal is taken over a man, but not over a woman. Said R. Jehudah: If she has little children, the meal is taken with them.

C. They do not stand in line, nor is the mourning benediction said after the burial of the first, but after the second; then they do all this, and console, and exempt the public from doing so. Two mourners may not be consoled together, unless they are in the very same position in the community. The same is the case with two corpses to be carried in one hearse: An accident happened in the city of Usha wherein a house tumbled down and killed two male children and one female child, and R. Jehudah ordered that all three should be carried together. The male children were put on one side, and the female on the other, and they lamented over them: "Woe, woe, bridegroom! Woe, bride!" Two funeral orations may not be held in one town at the same time, unless there is enough attendance for both. The same is the case with two brides, they must not be married at the same time, unless there is enough attendance for both. R. Simeon b. Elazar said: Even in this case it is not advisable to do so, because there may be enmity. [C1](#)

D. The corpse must be set aside for a bride, [D1](#) because the honor of the living precedes that of the dead. A bride, however, must be set aside for a king, for the honor of the king. King Agrippa, however, stepped aside for the sake of a bride, and he was praised by the sages. His remark was: "I have time to put on my crown every day, and she can put on her crown only once in her lifetime."

E. The study of the Law (in the colleges) must not be interrupted for the sake of a burial or a bride. Abba Saul, however, said: The performance of meritorious deeds has preference over study, as was the custom of R. Jehudah. Whenever he saw a funeral or a bridal party coming, he glanced at the disciples, telling

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them: The performance supersedes study. If one of the parents of a married couple die, the woman must not paint nor adorn herself, and her husband must not protest against it. Sweeping, washing glasses, and making of the beds is not considered as labor to a mourner.

The rabbis taught: "The mourner's house may be swept and besprinkled, and the dishes, glasses, flasks, and jugs may be rinsed, but no gum to be put on coal, or spices, may be brought to the mourner's house." Must it not? But has not Bar Qappara taught: "No benediction is pronounced over gums (to be put on coal) or spices in the mourner's house"; from which it is inferred that only the benediction is not pronounced, but they may be brought there? These present no difficulty: the first statement relates to the place where the mourner is sitting; the statement of Bar Qappara, to the place where the consolers are sitting.

F. If one leaves five sons, who were at his table, but each one slept at his own house, each one must lower his couch in his own house, otherwise the performance is made only in the house which is used for sleeping. If, however, there were five rooms, and all were used, it must be done in all. One lodging in another's house, if he is intimate with his host, he must lower his couch, otherwise he need not. One who is on a journey and hears of the death of one of his near relatives, if he can lower his couch without any difficulty, he may do so. One may turn over his couch on two benches, or on four stones, no matter if there were even five mattresses on top of it, and was four spans above the ground, provided the legs of the couch are in the air. This, however, is after the burial; but when the corpse is in the house, he may not sleep even on an upturned couch.

G. The performance of lowering the couch is sometimes for six days, and sometimes for five, four, and three days, no more, no less. How so? If the death occurred on a week-day, it is for six days; if in the afternoon of the eve of Sabbath, it is for five days; if a festival succeeds this Sabbath, for four days; and if the two days of New Year succeed this Sabbath, it is for three days. [G1](#)

Footnotes

[48:A1](#)

CHAPTER XI.

A. The negative commandment is Deut. xxi. 23, although it is spoken only of one hanged by judicial decree. It seems to us, however, that it only means that the corpse must be taken away from the house in which it died, and not that it must be buried on the same day; and this we do for two reasons: first, because it would be a contradiction to what is said above that they deposited the corpse in a prepared grave, and also that they examine the deed the first three days; and second, if it meant that it must be buried the same day, the Talmud would say that he transgresses a positive commandment also, as further on the verse says, "But thou shalt surely bury him on that day." However, the expression "negative commandment" is taken from the corrections of Elias Wilna, who took it from the Talmud elsewhere.

[49:C1](#) C. Enmity may be caused between certain persons and the bride, why they went to the other wedding and not to hers. He, therefore, differs only in the case of a marriage, but not in the case of a funeral.

[49:D1](#) D. It means when they meet together at the gate or on a narrow street.

[50:G1](#) G. The Mishna was taught before the existing calendar was made, as since then New Year cannot fall on Sunday.

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