

Visiting Gravesites During the High Holiday Season

On Entering a Cemetery: Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who has created you with judgment, Who fed and sustained you in judgment, Who brought death upon you in Judgment, Who knows all of you in justice and Who will restore you back to life: Blessed be You, the One Who revives the dead.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר יָצַר אֶתְכֶם בְּדִין וְזָן וְכִלְכַּל אֶתְכֶם בְּדִין, וְהֵמִית אֶתְכֶם בְּדִין, וַיּוֹדַע מִסְפַּר כְּלָכְכֶם בְּדִין, וְהוּא עֲתִיד לְהַחְיֹתְכֶם וּלְקַיֵּם אֶתְכֶם בְּדִין, בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, מְסִיחַ הַמֵּתִים

On the eve of Rosh Hashana... there are places where there is a custom to go to the graves and to pray very much there and to give charity to poor people there. **Shulchan Aurkh, Orach Chayim 581**

מכבסין ומסתפרין בערב ראש השנה (ויש נוהגין לטבול בערב ר"ה משום קרי) (כל בו) (ויש מקומות נוהגין לילך על הקברות ולהרבות שם בתחינות (מהרי"ל) ונותנים שם צדקה לעניים (כל בו):

It is customary to go to the cemetery *erev Rosh Hashanah* after the *Shacharit* prayers and bow prayerfully at the graves of *tzaddikim* [righteous men]. Charity should be given to the poor, and many fervent supplications offered to arouse the saintly *tzaddikim*, in their eternal resting place to intercede for us on the Day of Judgement. An additional reason for going to the cemetery is that the place where *tzaddikim* are buried is sacred and pure, and prayers are more readily accepted when they are offered on sacred ground, and the Holy One, blessed is He, will show us kindness for the sake of the *tzaddikim*.

But it should not be your intention to appeal to the dead who rest there, for that would be tantamount to "Inquiring of the dead," ([Deuteronomy 18:11](#)), which is forbidden, but you should ask of Hashem, blessed is His name, to have mercy on you for the sake of the *tzaddikim* who rest in the dust.

When you arrive at the cemetery, if you have not seen graves within the past thirty days, you must say the berachah: *Asher yatzar eschem badin* [Who has formed you in judgement etc.] (see Chapter 60:11. above) When you approach the grave, you should say, "May it be Your will, that the repose of [so-and-so] who is buried here, be in peace, and may his merit aid me."

יְהִי רְצוֹן שְׁמֵתָהּ מְנוּחָתוֹ שֶׁל (פְּלוֹנִי) הַקְּבוּר פֶּה בְּכַבּוֹד, וְזָכוּתוֹ יַעֲמַד לִי

When placing your hand on the grave, the left hand only should be placed, —not the right hand. You should recite the verse, "God will always guide you, and satisfy your soul with splendor, and make your bones strong, you will be like a watered garden and like a spring of water whose water will not fail." ([Isaiah 58:11](#)) "May you lie in peace, and may you sleep in peace until *Menachem* (the Comforter, *Moshiach*) comes, announcing peace." (When placing your hand [on the grave] you should have in mind the verse, "The Lord will always guide you," which contains fifteen words the same as the number of joints in the hands.)... **Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 128:13**

We wonder, as we prepare to enter the Yamim Noraim, the High Holy Days, what will be our epitaph? What will be our legacy? How will we be remembered? We visit the cemetery at this season to set our priorities straight, to remind ourselves about what truly matters, what remains long after we have left this earth: the good we did, the words we shared, the comfort we offered, the relationships we nurtured, the acts of kindness we performed, the times we asked forgiveness, the times we forgave, the love we freely gave and received.
Rabbi Debra Cantor, Visiting gravesites during the High Holiday season, CT Jewish Ledger

Gates of Reincarnation/שער הגלגולים

Chapter 1: another well known concept of our rabbis: ruchot or neshamot of the righteous are infused into a person, in accord with the esoteric principle called “ibur,” to assist a person in his service of God. As is written in Midrash Ne’elam, [still] in handwritten manuscript [form], concerning the statement that “Someone who comes to purify himself, they help him.” Rebbe Nathan said: The souls of the righteous come and help him. Undoubtedly, the ruchot and neshamot of tzadikim are “hidden away” and “bound up” with the “Bundle of Life”.

הקדמה א: גם בזה תבין ענין המפורסם בדברי רז"ל, כי רוחיהון דצדיקייא או נשמתיהון, באים ומתעברים, באדם, בסוד הנקרא עיבור, לסייעו בעבודת השי"ת וכמ"ש במדרש הנעלם מכתבת יד, על הבא ליטרה ומסייעים אותו, ר' נתן אומר נשמתם של צדיקים, באות ומסייעים אותו... והנה אין ספק, כי רוחיהון ונשמתיהון דצדיקים, הם גנוזות וצרורות בצרור החיים

Soul Candle/נר נשמה

The soul of a person is a candle of the Lord • נר יהוה, נשמת אדם •
Proverbs 20:27

Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 152b

...the Holy One, blessed be He: concerning the bodies of the righteous He says, He enter into peace, they rest in their beds; while concerning their souls it says, yet the soul of my lord shall be bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord your God

תלמוד בבלי מסכת שבת דף קנב עמוד ב
אף הקדוש ברוך הוא, על גופן של צדיקים אומר דיבוא שלום ינוחו על משכבותם ועל נשמתן הוא אומר הוהיתה נפש אדני צרורה בצרור החיים

Yizkor – Eil Malei Rachamim/יזכור

<p>May God remember the souls of our friends, members of this holy congregation, who have gone to their eternal home. May their souls be bound up in the bond of life. May these moments of meditation strengthen the ties that link us to their memory. May they rest in peace forever in God's presence. Amen.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>IN MEMORY OF CONGREGANTS:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">יזכור אלהים נשמות ידידינו חברי הקהל הקדוש הזה שהלכו לעולמם. אנא תהיינה נפשותיהם צרות בצרור החיים ותהי מנוחתם פבדה, שבע שמחות את פניך, נעימות בימיןך נצח. אמן.</p>
<p>Exalted, compassionate God, grant perfect peace in Your sheltering presence, among the holy and the pure, whose radiance is like the heavens, to the souls of all those we have recalled today. May their memory be a blessing, and may they rest in paradise. Master of mercy, may they find eternal shelter beneath Your sheltering wings, and may their souls be bound up in the bond of life. ADONAI is their portion. May they rest in peace. And let us say: Amen.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>IN MEMORY OF ALL THE DEAD:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">אל מלא רחמים, שוכן במרומים, המצא מנוחה נכונה תחת כנפי השכינה, במעלות קדושים וטהורים, קזרה הרקיע מזהירים, לנשמות כל-אלה שהזכרנו היום לברכה, שהלכו לעולמם, בגן עדן תהי מנוחתם. אנא בעל הרחמים, הסתירם בסתר כנפיך לעולמים. וצרור בצרור החיים את-נשמותיהם. יהוה הוא נחלתם. וינוחו בשלום על משכבותיהם. ונאמר אמן.</p>

Reading Jewish Tombstones

Here are a few helpful pointers: At the top of most Jewish tombstones is the abbreviation פ"נ, which stands for po nikbar or po nitman, meaning “here lies”. At the end of many Hebrew tombstone inscriptions you will find the abbreviation ת נ צ ב ה, which is an abbreviation of a verse from the Bible, the first book of Samuel, 25:29, “May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life”.

[Read more from JewishGen.](http://www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/tombstones.html): www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/tombstones.html