

Kol Ha-olam kulo
Gesher tzar m'od (3x)
Kol Ha-olam kulo,
Gesher tzar m'od, gesher tzar m'od

The whole world
is a very narrow bridge,

V'ha-ikar, v'ha-ikar,
lo lifached, lo lifached clal
V'ha-ikar, v'ha-ikar,
lo l'fached clal.

And the most important thing
Is not to be afraid at all.

Attributed to R. Nahman of Bratzlav

“Laying out the dead” is a time-honored ritual process, both spiritual and practical, that spans world cultures. In Judaism, this ritual process is the responsibility of the Hevra Kadisha (חברת קדישא), the Sacred Society whose members have presided for centuries over the burial practices of Jewish communities throughout the world.

There are five core practices that comprise the work of the Hevra Kadisha:

Sh'mirah (שמירה): Vigil-keeping from the time of death until burial;

Rehitzah (רחיצה): Washing the body to remove dirt and foreign matter;

Taharah (טהרה): Ritual purification of the body;

Halbashah (הלבשה): Dressing the body in *takhrichim* / shrouds (תכריכים);

Hashkavah (השכבה): Placing the dead in the coffin (the actual “laying out”).

Taharah, the specific term for ritual purification, is also the word conventionally used to encompass all of the practices from washing to laying out the dead. This *Taharah* Manual is based upon the broader definition of *taharah*. The responsibilities of *sh'mirah* are presented elsewhere, in materials prepared by our Hevra Kadisha and others.

Taharah traditions have evolved over centuries and continents; the rituals are learned through practice and passed from one generation to the next. Over time, each Hevra Kadisha develops its own unique customs (*minhagim*) as appropriate to the values and needs of particular communities, in keeping with the general principles of *taharah*.

Chesed Shel Emet

Kaya Stern-Kaufman

Genesis 47:29

(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.

Rashi on Genesis 47:29

(1) AND WHEN THE DAYS OF ISRAEL'S DEATH APPROACHED — (4) MERCY AND TRUTH — The mercy shown to the dead is "mercy of truth" (true, disinterested kindness) since one cannot hope for any reward (Genesis Rabbah 96:5).

Our Rabbis taught: In three respects is *gemilut hasadim* / dispensation of kindnesses greater than *tzedakah* / righteous giving. *Tzedakah* [is given] with one's money; *gemilut hasadim* [is given] with one's body / self or with one's money. *Tzedakah* [is given] to the poor; *gemilut hasadim* [is given] to the poor or to the rich. *Tzedakah* [is given] to the living; *gemilut hasadim* [is given] to the living or to the dead. Rabbi Eliezer said: Whoever does *tzedakah* and justice, it is as if he has filled the whole entire world with *hesed* / kindness, as it is said: "[God] loves *tzedakah* and justice; the *hesed* of YHVH fills the world" [Psalm 33:5].

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate *Sukkah* 49b

בראשית מ"ז:כ"ט

(כט) וַיִּקְרָבוּ יְמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמוֹתוֹ וַיִּקְרָא לְבָנָו לְיוֹסֵף וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אִם־נָא מְצֹאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ שְׂיִם־נָא יָדְךָ תַּחַת יְרֵכִי וְעָשִׂיתָ עִמָּדִי חֶסֶד וְאָמַת אֶל־נָא תִקְבְּרֵנִי בְּמִצְרָיִם:

רש"י על בראשית מ"ז:כ"ט

(ד) חסד ואמת. חסד שעושים עם המתים הוא חסד של אמת, שאינו מצפה לתשלום גמול:

ת"ר: בשלושה דברים גדולה גמילות חסדים יותר מן הצדקה. צדקה בממונו, גמילות חסדים בין בגופו בין בממונו. צדקה לעניים, גמילות חסדים בין לעניים בין לעשירים. צדקה לחיים, גמילות חסדים בין לחיים בין למתים. א"ר אליעזר: כל העושה צדקה ומשפט כאילו מילא כל העולם כולו חסד, שנאמר: "אוהב צדקה ומשפט, חסד ה' מלאה הארץ" [תהילים לג, ה].

תלמוד בבלי, מסכת סוכה מט, ב'

Escort: Sh'mirah and Shiva

Said Rabbi Hisda: A person's soul mourns over him all seven [days of mourning], as it is said: "...and his soul over him will mourn" [Job 14:22], and it is written: "...and [Joseph] made mourning for his father seven days" [Genesis 50:10]. Said Rabbi Yehudah: [When] a dead person has no comforters, ten people go and sit in his place. That one who died in the neighborhood of Rabbi Yehudah, he had no comforters. Every day Rabbi Yehudah would bring ten [people], and they sat in his place. After seven days [the dead person] appeared in a dream to Rabbi Yehudah and said to him: Let your mind be at rest, for you have set my mind at rest. Said Rabbi Abahu: Everything that [we] say before the dead, they know, until the stone is closed [over the grave]. Rabbi Hiyya and Rabbi Shimon the son of Rabbi disagreed about this. One said: Until the stone is closed [over the grave], and one said: Until the flesh decomposes. [There is support for] the one who said: Until the flesh decomposes, as it is written: "Only his flesh will be painful to him, and his soul over him will mourn" [Job 14:22]. [There is support for] the one who said: Until the stone is closed [over the grave], as it is written: "And the dust will return to the earth as it was..." [Ecclesiastes 12:7]. Our rabbis taught: "...and the spirit will return to God Who gave it" [second half of the same verse]. Give it [back] as it was given to you, in purity / *taharah*; so you [shall be] in purity.]

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate *Shabbat* 152a-b

אמר רב חסדא: נפשו של אדם מתאבלת עליו כל שבעה, שנאמר "ונפשו עליו תאבל" [איוב יד, כב], וכתוב "ויעש לאביו אבל שבעת ימים" [בראשית נ, י]. אמר רב יהודה: מת שאין לו מנחמין, הולכין עשרה בני אדם ויושבין במקומו. ההוא דשכיב בשבבותיה דרב יהודה, לא היו לו מנחמין. כל יומא הוה דבר רב יהודה בי עשרה ויתבי בדוכתיה. לאחר שבעה ימים איתחזי ליה בחילמיה דרב יהודה ואמר ליה: תנוח דעתך, שהנחת את דעתי. אמר רבי אבהו: כל שאומרים לפני המת יודע עד שיסתם הגולל. פליגי בה רבי חייא ורבי שמעון ברבי. חד אמר עד שיסתם הגולל, וחד אמר עד שיתעכל הבשר. מאן דאמר עד שיתעכל הבשר, דכתיב "אך-בשרו עליו יכאב, ונפשו עליו תאבל" [איוב יד, כב]. מאן דאמר עד שיסתם הגולל, דכתיב "וישב העפר על-הארץ כשהיה וגו'" [קהלת יב, ז]. תנו רבנן: "והרוח תשוב אל-האלהים אשר נתנה" [שם]. תנה לו כמו שנתנה לך בטהרה, אף אתה בטהרה.

תלמוד בבלי, מסכת שבת קנב, א'-ב'

***Sh'mirah* Guidelines**

The primary task of the *shomer/shomeret* who sits with the deceased is to provide spiritual support and comfort to the deceased. Jewish tradition teaches that the separation of the soul from the environs of the body is a process that occurs over time. The *shomer/shomeret* provides comfort to the soul by accompanying it at this critical juncture in the spiritual journey. The volunteer acts as a kind of spiritual anchor and escort for the soul at this time. This devotional act of sitting with the dead is understood to provide comfort to the soul as it begins its journey away from the physical world.

Traditionally, the volunteer recites psalms aloud. Singing gentle songs can also be soothing as well as reading aloud from other sacred texts, poetry or books that were meaningful to the deceased or particularly anchoring and inspirational to the *shomer/shomeret*. We read aloud because it is taught that the soul can hear during this period. The funeral home provides several books in the room with the deceased for this purpose.

“Changing of the Guard “- When your shift is over and a new person arrives to relieve you, please minimize any extraneous conversation. It is fine to share some information about the deceased in the most respectful manner. Please do not leave the body unattended for any amount of time. Please turn off cell phones and refrain from eating and drinking during this period. We are there present for one single purpose- to serve the deceased. Thank you for your willingness to volunteer for this most sacred work.

Shomer- Guard (hebrew, masculine form)

Shomeret- Guard (hebrew, feminine form)

שְׁעֲרֶיךָ כַּעֲרֵב הַעֲרִיָּים שְׂנֵי־לָשׁוֹן מִהַר גִּלְעָד׃
 שְׁעֲרֶיךָ כַּעֲרֵב הַקְּצוּבוֹת שְׁעֲלֵיךָ מִזֶּה־הַהַרְצָה שְׂפָלָם׃
 מִתְּאֵימֹת וְשִׁפְכֵיךָ אֵיךְ בָּהֶם׃
 כְּחוֹט הַשֶּׁנִּי שְׂפֹתֵיךָ וְמוֹדֵיךָ נֶאֱוָה׃
 כְּפִלְחַת הַרְפוּזוֹן כְּקִתְוֵן מִפְּעֵר קְצוּפֵיךָ׃
 כְּמַגְדָּל הַדְּוִיד צְאוּרֵיךָ כְּנִי קִתְלֵיךָ׃
 אֵלֶיךָ הַמַּגֵּן תִּקְלֵי עֲלֵיךָ כֹּל־שִׁלְטֵי הַגְּבוּרִים׃
 שְׁנֵי־שְׁנֵיךָ עֲפָרִים תִּתְאוּרֵי צְרִיבֵי הַרְעִים׃
 כְּשִׁלְטָנִים׃

שיר השירים ד:א-י

שְׁנֵי־שְׁנֵיךָ עֲפָרִים תִּתְאוּרֵי צְרִיבֵי הַרְעִים

Sa'rech k'eder ha'iztim sheggalshu mehar gilad:
Shimmayich k'eder hakk'isvot she'alu min-harachtsah shekullam
matimot v'shakullah en bahem:
K'chut hashani sifotayich umibarech naveh k'yelach harimmon
rakkatech mibba'ad l'isammatech
K'migdal David tsavarech banay l'talpiyyot elef hammagen taluy
alav kol shilte haggibborim:
Sh'ne shadayich kishne ofanim t'ome ts'vyyach harro'im bashoshannim:
Kullach yafah ra'yati umum en bach:

Your hair like a flock of goats bounding down Mount
 Gilad.
 Your teeth white ewes, all alike, that come up fresh from
 the pond.
 A crimson ribbon your lips—how I listen for your voice!
 The curve of your cheek a pomegranate in the thicket of
 your hair.
 Your neck is a tower of David, raised in splendor,
 a thousand bucklers hand upon it, all the shields of the
 warriors.
 Your breasts are two fawns, twins of a gazelle, grazing in a
 field of lilies.
 You are all beautiful, my love, my perfect one.

SONG OF SONGS 4:1-7



רֵאשׁוּ כְּתָם פֹּה קַוְצוֹתָיו תִּלְתְּלִים שְׁחֹרֹת כְּעוֹרָב:

עֵינָיו כְּיוֹנִים עַל-אַפְיָקִי מַיִם רְהָצוֹת בְּחֶלֶב יִשְׁבוֹת

עַל-מַלְאָת:

לְהָיוּ פְּעֻרֹתָהּ הַבְּשָׂם מִגְּדֵלוֹת מִרְקָחִים שֹׁפְתוֹתָיו

שׁוֹשְׁנוֹיִם נְטֹפֹת מוֹר עֵבֶר:

יָדָיו גְּלִילֵי זָהָב מְמַלְאִים בְּתַרְשִׁישׁ מַעֲצֵי עֲשֵׂת שָׁן

מַעֲלָפֹת סְפִירִים:

שׁוֹקְדוֹ עֲמוּדָיו שֵׁשׁ מְיֻסָּדִים עַל-אַדְנֵי-פֹה מִרְאוּהוּ בְּלִבְנוֹ

בְּחוֹר פְּאֶרְזִים:

חֲפוּ מִמֹּת קַיִם וְכָלִי מִתְמַדִּים זֶה דוֹדִי וְזֶה רַעִי בְּנוֹת

יְרוּשָׁלָּם: שִׁד הַשְּׂדִים הֵיאִ-יוֹ

Rosho ketem paz k'vutsotav taltalim sh'chorot ka'orev:

Enav k'yonim al-afike mayim rochatsot bechalah yosh'vot al-milet:

*L'chayav ka'anugat habosem migd'lot merkachim siftotav shoshannim
not'fot mor over:*

*Yadav g'lile zahav m'mulla'im battarshish me'av eshet shen m'ullefet
sappirim:*

*Shokav ammude shesh miyussadim al-adne-faz marehu kall'vanon
bachur ka'anazim:*

*Chiko mamtakkim v'chullo machamadim zeh dodi v'zeh re'i b'not
yerushalam.*

His head is burnished gold, the mane of his hair black as the raven.

His eyes like doves by the rivers of milk and plenty.

His cheeks a bed of spices, a treasure of precious scents, his lips red lilies wet with myrrh.

His arm a golden scepter with gems of topaz,

his loins the ivory thrones inlaid with sapphire,

his thighs like marble pillars on pedestals of gold.

Tall as Mount Lebanon, a man like a cedar!

His mouth is sweet wine, he is all delight.

This is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

SONG OF SONGS 5:11-16



nor in a large basket,¹⁴² אלא בסלים – but in plain baskets.¹⁴³
 We do not recite the mourners' blessing¹⁴⁴ on Chol HaMoed; אבל עומדין
 – and we promptly dismiss the ופוקרין את הרבים¹⁴⁵ –
 but we do stand in a row and console,¹⁴⁶ – but we do stand in a row and console,¹⁴⁶
 – and we promptly dismiss the public.¹⁴⁶ – We do not set down the bier in the street on Chol HaMoed,¹⁴⁷ שלא
 – We do not set down the bier in the street on Chol HaMoed,¹⁴⁷ –
 – so as not to encourage eulogies, which are forbidden on Chol HaMoed.¹⁴⁸ ולא של נשים לעולם
 – so as not to encourage eulogies, which are forbidden on Chol HaMoed.¹⁴⁸ –
 – for the sake of their dignity.¹⁴⁹ – Nor are the biers of women ever set down in the street, מפני הכבוד

Gemara The Gemara cites a Baraisa that explains the origin of the Mishnah's ruling concerning the way in which food may be delivered to a house of mourning:

The Rabbis taught in a Baraisa: בראשונה היו – The Rabbis taught in a Baraisa: תנו רבנן
 – ORIGINALY, when THEY WOULD DELIVER מוליכין בבית האבל
 TO A HOUSE OF MOURNING, עשירים בקלתות של כסף ושל –
 THE WEALTHY would deliver it in BASKETS OF SILVER AND GOLD,
 – AND THE POOR IN BASKETS OF PEELED WILLOW TWIGS, והיו עניים מתביישים
 – AND THE POOR WOULD FEEL ASHAMED. התקינו שיהו הכל מביאין –
 [THE RABBIS] therefore INSTITUTED THAT ALL SHOULD BRING
 IN BASKETS OF PEELED WILLOW TWIGS, – בסקלי נצרים של ערבה קלופה
 – OUT OF CONCERN FOR THE HONOR OF THE POOR. מפני כבודן של עניים

The Gemara cites another Baraisa reflecting the same sensitivity:

The Rabbis taught in a Baraisa: בראשונה היו משקין – The Rabbis taught in a Baraisa: תנו רבנן
 – ORIGINALY, when THEY WOULD SERVE DRINKS IN A
 HOUSE OF MOURNING, עשירים בזכוכית לבנה –
 THE WEALTHY would serve IN vessels of WHITE GLASS,¹⁵⁰
 – AND THE POOR IN vessels of COLORED GLASS. והיו עניים

AND THE POOR WOULD FEEL ASHAMED. התקינו שיהו – [THE RABBIS] therefore INSTITUTED
 THAT ALL who serve drinks at the mourners' home SHOULD SERVE
 them IN vessels of COLORED GLASS, – OUT OF CONCERN FOR THE HONOR OF THE POOR.
 מפני כבודן של עניים

The Gemara quotes a Baraisa, with a series of rulings dictated by the same concern:

BRAYSHANA – ORIGINALY, THEY WOULD leave UNCOVERED THE FACES OF THE WEALTHY who had died¹⁵¹
 ומכסין – WHILE THEY WOULD COVER THE FACES OF THE POOR who had died,
 – FOR [THEIR FACES] WERE BLACKENED BY FAMINE; מפני שהיו מושחרין פניהן מפני בצורת
 – AND THE POOR WOULD FEEL ASHAMED. והיו עניים מתביישים –
 [THE RABBIS] therefore INSTITUTED THAT THEY SHOULD COVER THE FACES OF ALL who die,
 – OUT OF CONCERN FOR THE HONOR OF THE POOR. מפני כבודן של עניים

The Baraisa continues:

BRAYSHANA – ORIGINALY, when THEY WOULD TAKE OUT corpses to be buried, THE WEALTHY would take
 them out ON A DARGASH, – AND THE POOR would take them out

ornamented couch.

NOTES

tively: a small table (*Rashi ms.*, *Nimukei Yosef*, first explanation) or platter (*Aruch*).

42. Delivery of food in these vessels is a mark of elegance (*Nimukei Yosef*). The reason for not delivering food on elegant servers will be explained in the Gemara.

43. The exact type of basket will be explained by the Gemara. [As noted above (24b note 35), it is the view of *Rashi* and others that the previous Mishnah, as well as this one, do not refer specifically to Chol HaMoed but define the general rules of mourning. However, even the Rishonim (cited there) who maintain that these Mishnahs speak of Chol HaMoed agree that this restriction on the types of servers that may be used applies throughout the year. Nonetheless, the Mishnah chose to state this ruling in connection with Chol HaMoed because one might have thought that it should be permitted to use more elegant servers on Chol HaMoed so that the delivery of food would look more like a gift rather than a ritual of mourning (*Nimukei Yosef*).]

44. Upon returning from the burial, it was customary to serve the mourner's meal [סעודה הקראיה] in the street. At this meal, a blessing concluding with מנחה אבלים, *Blessed is He Who consoles the mourners*, was recited (*Rashi*, *Kesubos* 8b ד"ה ברחבה 8b). [This blessing was therefore also known as the *street blessing*; see Gemara there for the full text of this blessing. See also *Ran* (in his appendix to *Moed Katan* – *Kuntres Acharon*).] This blessing was recited only in the presence of a *minyan* (excluding the mourners), and was repeated during the *shivah* when people who had not been present at the original blessing came to offer condolences (*Gemara* *ibid.*). According to some, it was recited over a cup of wine (*Ramban*, *Toras HaAdam* p. 149-151; *Chidushei HaRan*, *Kuntres Acharon*; see there for another version of the text of this blessing). It is no longer the custom to recite this blessing (*Ramban* and *Ran* *ibid.*; see *Tur Yoreh Deah* 379 and *Shulchan Aruch* there).

45. After burial, those present file past the mourner and offer him condolences (*Rashi* above, 24b ואין עומדין; *Ramban*, *Toras HaAdam* p. 153). [The custom today is for the people to form parallel rows and for the mourners to pass between them to receive condolences. See *Sanhedrin* 19a and *Yerushalmi*, *Berachos* 3:2.]

46. *Rashi ms.* and *Nimukei Yosef*. Since the usual practice of reciting the mourners' blessing in the street does not take place on Chol HaMoed, there is no reason for the public to remain any longer (*ibid.*). Others explain this to mean that by standing in a row and consoling the mourner on Chol HaMoed, the public is freed from having to come back and do this after Yom Tov (*Raavad*, quoted by *Nimukei Yosef*; *Meiri*; see *Chidushei HaRan* for yet another explanation).

47. To offer eulogies for a Torah scholar [who may be eulogized on Chol HaMoed, as the Gemara will state on 27b] (*Rashi*, as explained by *Rashash*; see next note).

48. I.e. so as not to encourage eulogies for ordinary people who died, for whom eulogies are forbidden on Chol HaMoed. Thus, although an exception to the ban on eulogies on Chol HaMoed is made for Torah scholars, the Mishnah teaches that they should not be eulogized in the street [where eulogies were commonly held] (*Rashash* in explanation of *Rashi*).

Other Rishonim explain the Mishnah to be referring to the funerals of ordinary people. The Mishnah teaches that their bier should not be set down in the street en route to burial, since that would encourage eulogies (*Meiri*) [since it was the custom for eulogies to be said in the street en route to the burial]. Therefore, before taking out the bier to the burial place, one must ascertain that the grave is prepared and ready (*Nimukei Yosef*; *Yoreh Deah* 401:1).

49. Because blood may flow from them [and stain their shrouds], which would be an embarrassment (*Rashi*; the Gemara, 28a, will discuss whether this is true for all women or only for those who die in childbirth; see note 2 there).

50. A type of precious glass (see *Berachos* 31a and *Rashi* ד"ה כסא דמוקרא). [Possibly, clear glass – see *Rashi* to the Mishnah in *Beitzah* 33a ד"ה מן המים. Clear glass was difficult to produce in the ancient world, and thus very expensive.]

51. This was to arouse people to weeping. They would say, "Look at how robust and handsome his face was, and now it will succumb to decay" (*Rav*; *Nimukei Yosef*).

ON A BIER.¹¹ - AND THE POOR - והיו עניים מתבוישין - בקליכה would feel ASHAMED. - התקינו שיהו הכל מוציאין בקליכה [THE RABBIS] therefore INSTITUTED THAT EVERYONE SHOULD TAKE OUT their corpses ON A BIER, מפני כבודן של עניים - OUT OF CONCERN FOR THE HONOR OF THE POOR.]

The Baraisa continues:

ORIGINALLY, - בראשונה היו מניחין את המוגמר תחת חולי מעים מתים, THEY WOULD PLACE INCENSE UNDER THOSE WHO HAD DIED WITH INTESTINAL DISORDERS¹² - והיו חולי מעים חיים מתבוישין - AND THE LIVING WHO WERE afflicted WITH INTESTINAL DISORDERS WOULD FEEL ASHAMED.¹³ - [THE RABBIS] therefore INSTITUTED THAT THEY SHOULD PLACE INCENSE UNDER EVERYONE, מפני כבודן של חולי מעים חיים - OUT OF CONCERN FOR THE HONOR OF THE LIVING WHO WERE afflicted WITH INTESTINAL DISORDERS.

The Baraisa continues:

ORIGINALLY, - בראשונה היו מטבילין את הכלים על גבי נדות מתות, THEY WOULD IMMERSER UTENSILS ON ACCOUNT OF MENSTRUATING WOMEN WHO HAD DIED, i.e. they would immerse the utensils used by them before they died,¹⁴ - והיו נדות חיות מתבוישות - AND LIVING MENSTRUANTS WOULD FEEL ASHAMED.¹⁵ - [THE RABBIS] therefore INSTITUTED THAT THEY SHOULD IMMERSER utensils ON ACCOUNT OF ALL WOMEN who died, מפני כבודן של נדות חיות - OUT OF CONCERN FOR THE HONOR OF THE LIVING MENSTRUANTS.

The Baraisa cites another example:

ORIGINALLY, THEY WOULD IMMERSER UTENSILS ON ACCOUNT OF ZAVIM¹⁶ WHO HAD DIED, i.e. they would immerse utensils used by them before they died, והיו זבין חיים מתבוישין - AND LIVING ZAVIM WOULD FEEL ASHAMED. - [THE RABBIS] therefore INSTITUTED THAT THEY SHOULD IMMERSER utensils ON ACCOUNT OF ALL who had died, מפני כבודן של זבין חיים - OUT OF CONCERN FOR THE HONOR OF LIVING ZAVIM.

The Baraisa continues:

ORIGINALLY, - בראשונה היתה הוצאת המת קשה לקרוביו יותר ממיתתו, THE EXPENSE OF TAKING OUT (i.e. burying) THE DECEASED

WAS EVEN HARDER ON THE RELATIVES THAN HIS DEATH, עד שהיו קרוביו מניחין אותו בכורחין - TO THE POINT THAT HIS RELATIVES WOULD LEAVE HIM AND FLEE.¹⁷ - עד שבה רבן גמליאל ונהג קלות - UNTIL RABBAN GAMLIEL CAME AND TREATED HIMSELF LIGHTLY - ויצא בבלי פשתן - BY GOING OUT (i.e. by being buried) IN plain LINEN GARMENTS.¹⁸ - ונהגו העם אחריו לצאת בבלי פשתן - FOLLOWING HIS EXAMPLE THE PEOPLE WENT OUT (i.e. were buried) IN plain LINEN GARMENTS.

The Gemara comments upon the last statement of the Baraisa: - והאידינא נהוג עלמא - אמר רב פפא - Nowadays, it is the custom of the people - אבילו בצרדא בר וזנא - to dress the dead even in coarse canvas worth just a zuz.

The Mishnah states:

THE BIER IS NOT PLACED IN THE STREET during Chol HaMoed, so as not to encourage eulogies.

The Gemara teaches the rule regarding eulogies for a Torah scholar during Chol HaMoed:

אין מועד בפני תלמיד חכם - אמר רב פפא - Chol HaMoed does not stand in the way of a deceased Torah scholar, i.e. the prohibition to eulogize on Chol HaMoed does not apply in the case of a Torah scholar who died;¹⁹ - וכל שכן חנוכה - and surely Chanukah and Purim do not stand in his way.²⁰ - והגוי מילי בפניו - However, this is so only in his presence, i.e. in the presence of his bier, - אבל שלא בפניו לא - but when he is not present, it is prohibited.

The Gemara asks:

Is this indeed so? - והא רב בהנא ספרדיה לרב זביד מנהרדעא - איני - But Rav Kahana eulogized Rav Zevid of Nehardea in the city of Pum Nahara, on Chol HaMoed.²¹

The Gemara answers:

Although it was not in the presence of Rav Zevid, it was the day on which they received the report of his death, - אמר רב פפי - which is treated as the equivalent to being in the presence [of the deceased].²²

The Gemara proceeds to define various terms associated with eulogy:

NOTES

1. *Rashi*; cf. *Rashi ms.* and *Rashi*, cited by *Tosafos*.
2. To mask the unpleasant odors emanating from the corpse.
3. For they realized this would need to be done for them when they died and proclaim to the world that they were afflicted with this disease (*Rashi ms.*).
4. A utensil touched by a *niddah* (menstruating woman) becomes *tamei*. The utensil is purified of its *tumah* by immersion in a *mikveh*.
5. That they, as a class, were being treated differently from other deceased women (*Rashi*). Alternatively, that their *tumah* should be remembered even after their deaths (*Meiri*).
6. A *zav* [a man who has become *tamei* because of a specific type of seminal emission; see Glossary] renders *tamei* any utensil he touches.
7. The wealthy would bury their dead in shrouds costing a thousand *zuz* and more. The poor, who could not afford such shrouds, felt so embarrassed at not being able to provide dignified shrouds for their relatives that they would abandon the corpses of their relatives and flee out of shame, effectively transferring the responsibility of burying the dead to the public (*Nimukei Yosef, Rashi ms.*).
8. At the time of his death he ordered that he be dressed in [inexpensive] shrouds of plain linen (*Rabbeinu Chananel; Tosafos*). Alternatively, Rabban Gamliel instituted this practice when it fell upon him to bury one of his relatives (*Tosafos*, second explanation).
9. *Rashi*. Nor is there a prohibition to clap and engage in lamentations for him (*Ritva*; see *Rashi ms.*), though such expressions of grief are prohibited for others on Chol HaMoed (see *Mishnah 28a*). [See *Megillah 3b*.]
10. [Because Chanukah and Purim are lesser festivals than Chol

HaMoed,] as can be seen from the fact that there is no prohibition against labor on these days, whereas there is such a prohibition on Chol HaMoed (*R' Shlomo ben HaYasom*). Additionally, all the laws of mourning apply on Chanukah and Purim, in contrast to Chol HaMoed, when mourning is observed only in private matters [דברים שבניקעא] (*Ritva*).

[*Ritva's* assertion that the laws of mourning apply in full on Chanukah and Purim is the subject of a dispute. *Rosh* §85 cites the opinion of *Sefer Miktzo'os* (ascribed to *Rabbeinu Chananel*) that Purim is treated as Yom Tov. Thus, mourning is not observed on Purim, and if *shivah* began before Purim, it is canceled by Purim. This is the opinion of *She'iltos*, as cited by *Tur (Orach Chaim 696)*. *Rosh*, however, agrees with the opinion of *Maharam of Rotenburg* that the laws of mourning are observed in private on Purim. *Rambam (Hil. Avel 11:3)* rules that mourning is observed on Purim and Chanukah even in public matters. See *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 686:4* and *Yoreh Deah 401:7*. On Chanukah, all agree that mourning is observed in full, even in regard to public matters (*Mishnah Berurah 670:12*).

[As a practical matter, the Poskim rule that our present-day Torah scholars do not possess the qualifications needed to qualify for this leniency, and we therefore do not eulogize Torah scholars on Chol HaMoed nowadays (*Beur Halachah, Orach Chaim 547* שמוחר *R"י*). Nevertheless, we do permit them to be eulogized on Chanukah and Purim (*Gesher HaChaim ch. 13*).

11. Rav Kahana delivered the eulogy in Pum Nahara, whereas Rav Zevid died [and was buried] in his place of residence, Nehardea (*Rashi ms.*).

12. This is so even for a distant city [where the report does not arrive until after the day of burial] (see *Rashi ms.*; cf. *Nimukei Yosef* and *Meiri*). and even if the report is delayed [by more than thirty days] (*Rambam, Hil. Avel 11:5; Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 401:5*).