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Jews and the Idea of Death
by Julie Zhuk on 2023-06-19

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If anyone ever asks you why we don't put flowers on graves at a Jewish burial site, it is because from the beginning they are a beautiful thing to anything alive. Unfortunately, when someone is dead, they mean nothing; eventually, plants die too. When they die, they mean nothing to the dead. When plants are dead, they are no longer seen as a beautiful thing. When the body is dead, it is seen as a temporary thing, and it is no longer there. When the person is dead, the only thing that remains is the eternal part of the person, and that is the soul. Jews believe that the soul of the person lives on and that is called the Neshama. The body is like a flower, it blossoms, and eventually, it fades away. The soul is like a solid stone, and it lives on forever.

When Jewish people die, they believe that the most important thing is what they did in their life before they passed away, whatever they were able to give to others whether it was charity or help in any way before they passed onto the World to Come. The most important aspect comes from the achievements of the soul and not from the human being's body. That is what remains beyond the grave. The money that we make, the holidays that go on, the food we eat, and the games that we play are all just the flowers that die along with us. The most important aspect of our lives is the good deeds that we do. These things include the love that we show others and the light that we bring into this world; these are eternal. As hard as it is, when someone close to you dies and you want to give them flowers don't! Remember to take the money that you would have spent on those flowers and give it to charity.

Do this in the memory of that person who has died. Then take a modest stone that has cost you nothing and place it on the person's grave. Go stand at the person's grave and tell them although they are no longer physically there with you now, the impact they had on you is everlasting. I found all of this on Chabad.org from a source by a man named Aron Moss. It really spoke to me because my father's parents both have died and my mother's father who I never got a chance to meet passed away before I was born, and I was named after him. My mother's mom died right before she turned one hundred and it happened in the middle of COVID; I wasn't able to travel to Los Angeles where she was living at the time, and I wasn't able to attend the funeral either.