

[1] ראב"ן: צדקה על צדקה קבלת

In this book, Solomon did not employ expressions which would be synonymous with the meaning of *hevel*, as his father did: *Men of low degree are 'vanity,' and men of high degree are 'a lie'* (Psalms 62:10). Similarly, *I have spent my strength for 'nought' and 'vanity'* (Isaiah 49:4). Solomon however, utilized only the term *hevel* in this entire book because his purpose was directed to the meaning of the word *havla* (breath). In my estimation, the expression *haveil havalim* in unlike *king of kings* and *a servant of servants*. Rather, it expresses a command; Solomon bids man to nullify the vanities and neither make them a mainstay of his thoughts nor think that he can give much substance to them. Solomon then deviated [from the subject] and commenced an account of creation in general, [expressing his belief] that the individual things which stem from the main ones contain *the delights of the sons of men* (2:8) and the affairs which man mistakenly follows and sins. It is they that are vanity, but the elements exist and endure.

Thus he said, *'Haveil havalim' saith Koheles; 'havail havalim,' all is vanity. What profit hath man of all his labor wherein he laboreth under the sun* (1:2-3)? That is to say, what does man gain from all the physical toil at which he labors? Even if he were to exert great effort, nothing is likely to endure for him; it will all leave him just as the breath which is exhaled and whose cessation of existence is incomprehensible to him.

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The Jewish man and the bottle

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BRUSSELS (EJP)---Can a Jew be buried together with a bottle of Vodka ?

The Rabbinical Center of Europe (RCE), which assists more than 600 rabbis across Europe on issues of daily life, was confronted last week with this very unusual halachic (related to Halacha or Jewish religious law) question after a member of a Jewish community in Germany passed away.

The man's last will was to be buried with his best friend, a bottle of Vodka, with which he had never parted during his lifetime.

After hearing the weird request, the Jewish community's rabbi immediately contacted the RCE's halachic experts in Brussels in order to determine if it is permissible to place a bottle of Vodka in the grave of the man.

Germany has become the home of a sizable Jewish community of immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

The man, who lived in Karlsruhe, a city located in the south west of Germany, emigrated from the Soviet Union in the 70s and was not connected to the local Jewish community. However, a good friend of him, who is a regular participant of community events and an acquaintance of the local rabbi, delivered this last message of his friend to the rabbi.

"Every day he would drink a half a glass of Vodka in the morning and a half in the evening," he told the rabbi.

The issue however actually raises a serious halachic dilemma.

On the one hand it is extremely important to fulfill the last wish of a Jew, but on the other hand it is unacceptable to bury any object together with the body of a deceased person.

The difficult question was then forwarded to Rabbi Yaacov Rozhe who serves as chairman of the Zaka Rabbinical Council and as representative of Israel's chief rabbinate in the Medical Institute of Abu Kabir.

He replied that there is no halachic prohibition of placing the bottle near the coffin but under no circumstances may it be placed in the coffin itself nor beneath it so that no object interposes between the coffin and the ground.

With the implementation of this ruling the man and the bottle passed away side by side...

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