

Will Death Die?

By

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What is the Tanakh's view of death? What happens when we die? Will there always be death? Does the Tanakh talk of death dying? Death is a very big topic in the Tanakh as well as life in general. So today we will look at death as talked of in the Tanakh.

We will look at this from several ways. First we will examine the Hebrew words related to the English word death. We will look at different phrases for death in the Tanakh and try to make an analysis of this topic in that Tanakh.

Mut (Mem-Vav-Tav) reference number 4191 and found on page 675 of the NEHC. It is a verb and means in the simplest sense to die.

To Die:

Bereshit/Genesis 35:18

16 They set out from Bethel; but when they were still some distance short of Ephrath, Rachel was in childbirth, and she had hard labor. 17 When her labor was at its hardest, the midwife said to her, "Have no fear, for it is another boy for you." 18 But as she breathed her last—for **she was dying (metah מתה)**—she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin. Thus Rachel died. She was buried on the road to Ephrath—now Bethlehem. 20 Over her grave Jacob set up a pillar; it is the pillar at Rachel's grave to this day.

Dying or Died is how this is represented. Rachel died crying out Ben-oni (Son or my woe).

Bereshit/Genesis 48:7

7 I [do this because], when I was returning from Paddan, Rachel **died (metah מתה)**, to my sorrow, while I was journeying in the land of Canaan, when still some distance short of Ephrath; and I buried her there on the road to Ephrath"—now Bethlehem.

Here Yaaqov is relating how Rachel died. The same word is used thus, this was in a past tense.

Bereshit/Genesis 50:15

15 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was **dead (Met מֵת)**, they said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrong that we did him!"

Here the brothers of Yosef are concerned after their Father died.

Bereshit/Genesis 7:22

21 And all flesh that stirred on earth perished—birds, cattle, beasts, and all the things that swarmed upon the earth, and all mankind. 22 All in whose nostrils was the merest breath of life, all that was on dry land, **died (metu מָתוּ)**. 23 All existence on earth was blotted out—man, cattle, creeping things, and birds of the sky; they were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark. 24 And when the waters had swelled on the earth one hundred and fifty days,

They died all those having breath.

Bamidbar/Numbers 16:29

28 Moshe said: By this you shall know that (it is) Yehovah (who) sent me to do all these deeds, that (it was) not from my (own) heart: 29 if **like the death (Kamot כָּמוֹת)** of all humans **these-men die (yemuton יָמָתוּן)**, and the calling-to-account of all humans is accounted upon them, (it is) not Yehovah (who) has sent me. 30 But if Yehovah creates a new-creation, and the ground opens its mouth, and swallows up them and all that is theirs, and they go down alive into Sheol, then you will know that these men have scorned Yehovah. 31 Now it was, just as he finished speaking all these words, there split the ground that was beneath them; 32 the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up them and their households, all the human beings that belonged to Korah and all the property. 33 So they went down, they and all theirs, alive, into Sheol; the earth covered them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly.

Here we see that they did not die as men normally do but died none the lest.

Dying from breaking a part of Torah.

Shemot/Exodus 21:12, 14, 15, 16, 17

12 He who **fatally (vemet וָמֵת)** strikes a man shall be put to **[utterly] death (mot yumat מוֹת יוּמָת)**. 13 If he did not do it by design, but it came about by an act of haElohim, I will assign you a place to which he can flee. 14 When a man schemes against another and kills him treacherously, you shall take him from My very altar to be

put to death (lamut לָמוּת). 15 He who strikes his father or his mother shall be put to [utterly] death (mot yumat מוֹת יוּמָת). 16 He who kidnaps a man—whether he has sold him or is still holding him—shall be put to [utterly] death (mot yumat מוֹת יוּמָת). 17 He who insults his father or his mother shall be put to [utterly] death (mot yumat מוֹת יוּמָת). 18 When men quarrel and one strikes the other with stone or fist, and he does not die (yamut יָמוּת) but has to take to his bed—19 if he then gets up and walks outdoors upon his staff, the assailant shall go unpunished, except that he must pay for his idleness and his cure. 20 When a man strikes his slave, male or female, with a rod, and he dies there and then, he must be avenged.

You see that many of the tzavot/commands were such that one who broke a mitzvah was to utterly die.

Shemot/Exodus 19:12

12 You shall set bounds for the people round about, saying, ‘Beware of going up the mountain or touching the border of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to [utterly] death (mot yumat מוֹת יוּמָת):

They were to be put to death and even tells in that chapter how they were to be put to death.

Surely Die:

Bereshit/Genesis 2:17

16 And Yehovah Elohim commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you are free to eat; 17 but as for the tree of knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat of it; for as soon as you eat of it, you shall [surely] die (mot temut מוֹת תָּמוּת).”

The surely dying is immediate death here yet in other areas it was.

Bereshit/Genesis 3:4

2 The woman replied to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the other trees of the garden. 3 It is only about fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that Elohim said: ‘You shall not eat of it or touch it, lest you die (temutun תָּמוּתוֹן).” 4 And the serpent said to the woman, “You are not going to die (lo mut temutun לֹא-מוֹת תָּמוּתוֹן),

The serpent was telling Chava they would not utterly die.

Bereshit/Genesis 26:11

10 Abimelech said, “What have you done to us! One of the people might have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us.” 11 Abimelech then charged all the people, saying, “Anyone who molests this man or his wife shall be put to **[utterly] death (mot yumat מות יומת)**.”

Here we see the King proclaim death as a punishment. Utter or absolute death.

Shemot/Exodus 22:19 (18)

18 Whoever lies with a beast shall be put to **[utterly] death (mot yumat מות יומת)**).

Again telling us they will be absolutely put to death.

Shemot/Exodus 31:14, 15

13 Speak to the Israelite people and say: Nevertheless, you must keep My sabbaths, for this is a sign between Me and you throughout the ages, that you may know that I Yehovah have consecrated you. 14 You shall keep the sabbath, for it is holy for you. He who profanes it shall be put to **[utterly] death (mot yumat מות יומת)**: whoever does work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his kin. 15 Six days may work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be a sabbath of complete rest, holy to Yehovah; whoever does work on the sabbath day shall be put to **[utterly] death (mot yumat מות יומת)**.

Here we see that to be cut off literally means death in the case of violating Shabbat.

Vayiqra/Leviticus 20:2, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 27

2 Say further to the Israelite people: Anyone among the Israelites, or among the strangers residing in Israel, who gives any of his offspring to Molech, shall be put to **death (mot yumat מות יומת)**; the people of the land shall pelt him with stones.

9 If anyone insults his father or his mother, he shall be put to **death (mot yumat מות יומת)**; he has insulted his father and his mother—his bloodguilt is upon him.

10 If a man commits adultery with a married woman, committing adultery with another man's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to **death** (**mot yumat מות יומת**). 11 If a man lies with his father's wife, it is the nakedness of his father that he has uncovered; the two shall be put to **death** (**mot yum'tu מות־יומתו**)—their bloodguilt is upon them. 12 If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall be put to **death** (**mot yum'tu מות־יומתו**); they have committed incest—their bloodguilt is upon them. 13 If a man lies with a male as one lies with a woman, the two of them have done an abhorrent thing; they shall be put to **death** (**mot yumatu מות יומתו**)—their bloodguilt is upon them.

You are beginning to see that many commands the penalty was death not figuratively but literally.

Dead know nothing

Ecclesiastes/Kohelet 9:3-5

3 That is the sad thing about all that goes on under the sun: that the same fate is in store for all. (Not only that, but men's hearts are full of sadness, and their minds of madness, while they live; and then—to **the dead** (**hametim הַמֵּתִים**)!) 4 For he who is reckoned among the living has something to look forward to—even a live dog is better than a **dead** (**hamet הַמֵּת**) lion—5 since the living know **they will die** (**sheyamutu שְׂיָמֻתוּ**). **But the dead** (**vahametim וְהַמֵּתִים**) know nothing; they have no more recompense, for even the memory of them has died (forgotten).

The Dead have nothing. No knowledge, no memory, no benefits. Only the living have a chance to effect their lives and to know Yehovah.

Tehillim/Psalms 88:10-11

10 My eyes pine away from affliction; I call to You, Yehovah, each day; I stretch out my hands to You. 11 Do You work wonders **for the dead** (**halametim הַלַּמֵּתִים**)? Do the **shades** (**r'pha'im – dead one/unhealed ones**) rise to praise You? *Selah*.

In the Tehillim we see many examples of speakers who remind us that only in living can one praise Yehovah. The dead cannot even see any wonders done by Yehovah.

Tehillim/Psalms 115:17

17 The dead (hametim **הַמֵּתִים**) cannot praise Yehovah, nor any who go down into silence. 18 But we will bless Yehovah now and forever. Hallelujah.

Again the dead know nothing only the living can praise Yehovah. As long as we live we should praise him. In looking at the verb form we see that those who have died or dying are ceasing to be. Their resting place is sheol/grave until their time comes and a resurrection comes. When our loved one dies, they rest/sleep in the grave until something happens to change that. On our own, we have but one life. This is our only chance. Only through Yehovah do we get a chance to experience life again.

The next Hebrew word is Mavet (Mem-Vav-Tav), which is reference number 4194 found on pg. 560 BDB or pg. 680 in the NEHC. It is a Masculine Noun. Being it comes from the verb it would be something like died one/or dying one.

Bamidbar/Numbers 35:25, 28, 32

25 The assembly shall protect the manslayer from the blood-avenger, and the assembly shall restore him to the city of refuge to which he fled, and there he shall remain until the **death (mot מוֹת)** of the high priest who was anointed with the sacred oil. 26 But if the manslayer ever goes outside the limits of the city of refuge to which he has fled, 27 and the blood-avenger comes upon him outside the limits of his city of refuge, and the blood-avenger kills the manslayer, there is no bloodguilt on his account. 28 For he must remain inside his city of refuge until the **death (mot מוֹת)** of the high priest; after the **death (mot מוֹת)** of the high priest, the manslayer may return to his land holding. 29 Such shall be your law of procedure throughout the ages in all your settlements. 30 If anyone kills a person, the manslayer may be executed only on the evidence of witnesses; the testimony of a single witness against a person shall not suffice for a sentence of death. 31 You may not accept a ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of a capital crime; he must be put to death. 32 Nor may you accept ransom in lieu of flight to a city of refuge, enabling one to return to live on his land before the **death (mot מוֹת)** of the priest.

The involuntary Slayer must wait until death/mot of the Kohen Gadol before returning to his property.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 21:22

22 If a man is guilty of a capital offense and is put to **death (mavet מָוֶת)**, and you impale him on a stake, 23 you must not let his corpse remain on the stake overnight, but must bury him the same day. For an impaled body is an affront to Elohim: you shall not defile the land that Yehovah Eloheykha is giving you to possess.

Here we see that when one is punished his dead body may be impaled but it may not be left over night.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 30:15, 19

12 It is not in the heavens, that you should say, “Who among us can go up to the heavens and get it for us and impart it to us, that we may observe it?” 13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, “Who among us can cross to the other side of the sea and get it for us and impart it to us, that we may observe it?” 14 No, the thing is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to observe it.

15 See, I set before you this day life (et hachayim) and prosperity (vaet hatov), **death** (vaet hamavet וְאֶת־הַמָּוֶת) and adversity (vaet hara). 16 For I command you this day, to love Yehovah Eloheykha, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His laws, and His rules, that you may thrive and increase, and that Yehovah Eloheykha may bless you in the land that you are about to enter and possess. 17 But if your heart turns away and you give no heed, and are lured into the worship and service of other gods, 18 I declare to you this day that you shall certainly perish; you shall not long endure on the soil that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. 19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day: I have put before you life **and death** (vahamavet וְהַמָּוֶת), blessing and curse. Choose life—if you and your offspring would live—20 by loving Yehovah Eloheykha, heeding His commands, and holding fast to Him. For thereby you shall have life and shall long endure upon the soil that Yehovah swore to your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give to them.

He desires that we choose life and not death. While it is not clear what death would be here in reading the Tanakh we can see that it was indicated that death could be 1) removal from the land, 2) premature death, or 3) separation from his people.

Tehillim/Psalms 6:5(6)

5 Yehovah, turn! Rescue me! Deliver me as befits Your faithfulness. 6 For there is no praise of You **among the dead** (bamavet בַּמָּוֶת); in Sheol, who can acclaim You?

In the dead there is no praise for Yehovah.

Tehillim/Psalms 49: 17 (18)

49:1 For the leader. Of the Korahites. A psalm. 2 Hear this, all you peoples; give ear, all inhabitants of the world, 3 men of all estates, rich and poor alike. 4 My mouth utters wisdom, my speech is full of insight. 5 I will turn my attention to a theme, set forth my lesson to the music of a lyre. 6 In time of trouble, why should I fear the encompassing evil of those who would supplant me—7 men who trust in their riches, who glory in their great wealth? 8 Ah, it cannot redeem a man, or pay his ransom to Elohim; 9 the price of life is too high; and so one ceases to be, forever. 10 Shall he

live eternally, and never see the grave? **11** For one sees that the wise die, that the foolish and ignorant both perish, leaving their wealth to others. **12** Their grave is their eternal home, the dwelling-place for all generations of those once famous on earth. **13** Man does not abide in honor; he is like the beasts that perish. **14** Such is the fate of those who are self-confident, the end of those pleased with their own talk. *Selah.* **15** Sheep like they head for Sheol, with Death as their shepherd. The upright shall rule over them at daybreak, and their form shall waste away in Sheol till its nobility be gone. **16** But Elohim will redeem my life from the clutches of Sheol, for He will take me. *Selah.* **17** Do not be afraid when a man becomes rich, when his household goods increase; **18** for when **he dies** (**bamoto** בָּמוֹתוֹ) he can take none of it along; his goods cannot follow him down. **19** Though he congratulates himself in his lifetime — “They must admit that you did well by yourself”—**20** yet he must join the company of his ancestors, who will never see daylight again. **21** Man does not understand honor; he is like the beasts that perish.

Here we see that all ones wealth, smarts, confidence will not delay the coming of one’s dead. For we all end up there.

Ecclesiastes/Kohelet 3:19

19 For in respect of the fate of man and the fate of beast, they have one and the same fate: as the one dies (**bamot** בָּמוֹת) so dies (**mot** מוֹת) the other, and both have the same lifebreath (*ruach*); man has no superiority over beast, since both amount to nothing. **20** Both go to the same place; both came from dust and both return to dust. **21** Who knows if a man’s lifebreath (*ruach*) does rise upward and if a beast’s breath (*ruach*) does sink down into the earth?

We see even in Solomon’s time there must have been some discussion of a difference in the life breath (*ruach*) and whether there is a difference. In his understanding he says not. If *ruach* returns to Yehovah then they all do.

Ecclesiastes/Kohelet 8:8

8 No man has authority over the lifebreath (*ruach*)—to hold back the lifebreath (*ruach*); there is no authority over the day of **death** (**hamavet** הַמָּוֶת). There is no mustering out from that war; wickedness is powerless to save its owner.

There is a time for all of us to die we don’t know when and we can’t escape it.

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 38:18

18 For it is not Sheol that praises You, Not Death (**mavet** מָוֶת) that extols You; Nor do they who descend into the Pit, Hope for Your grace (truth). **19** The living, only the

living Can give thanks to You, As I do this day; Fathers relate to children Your acts of grace:

Again only the living may communicate with Yehovah and praise and give thanks to him.

The Tanakh makes it clear that existence ends with death.

Ecclesiastes 3:19-20

18 So I decided, as regards men, to dissociate them [from] the divine beings and to face the fact that they are beasts. 19 For in respect of the fate of man and the fate of beast, they have one and the same fate: as the one dies so dies the other, and both have the same lifebreath; man has no superiority over beast, since both amount to nothing.

In Melekh Solomon's time there may have been discussions whether men were divine beings or not but in his wisdom he saw them as beasts. Like the animals we all die.

Ecclesiastes 9:2-6

2 —none! For the same fate is in store for all: for the righteous, and for the wicked; for the good and pure, and for the impure; for him who sacrifices, and for him who does not; for him who is pleasing, and for him who is displeasing; and for him who swears, and for him who shuns oaths. 3 That is the sad thing about all that goes on under the sun: that the same fate is in store for all. (Not only that, but men's hearts are full of sadness, and their minds of madness, while they live; and then—to the dead!) 4 For he who is reckoned among the living has something to look forward to—even a live dog is better than a dead lion—5 since the living know they will die. But the dead know nothing; they have no more recompense, for even the memory of them has died. 6 Their loves, their hates, their jealousies have long since perished; and they have no more share till the end of time in all that goes on under the sun.

Both wicked and righteous die. The dead know nothing they don't even have a memory. Only while living do we have a chance to affect our lives.

Shemu'el Bet/II Samuel 12:16-23

16 David entreated Elohim for the boy; David fasted, and he went in and spent the night lying on the ground. 17 The senior servants of his household tried to induce him to get up from the ground; but he refused, nor would he partake of food with them. 18 On the seventh day the child died. David's servants were afraid to tell David that the child was dead; for they said, "We spoke to him when the child was alive and he wouldn't listen to us; how can we tell him that the child is dead? He might do something terrible." 19 When David saw his servants talking in whispers, David understood that the child was dead; David asked his servants, "Is the child dead?" "Yes," they replied. 20 Thereupon David rose from the ground; he bathed and anointed himself, and he changed his clothes. He went into the House of Yehovah and prostrated himself. Then he went home and

asked for food, which they set before him, and he ate. 21 His courtiers asked him, “Why have you acted in this manner? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but now that the child is dead, you rise and take food!” 22 He replied, “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept because I thought: ‘Who knows? Yehovah may have pity on me, and the child may live.’ 23 But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will never come back to me.”

Even David understood once dead they would not come back but we would die one day.

Throughout the period the Tanakh was being written this finiteness of the death was known. Whereas, there is no concept of hell and heaven for the departed only whether the return of the ruach was for all ruach or only man’s ruach. The dead only sleep in the sheol (grave).

Bamidbar/Numbers 16: 29 if these men die as all men do, if their lot be the common fate of all mankind, it was not the Lord who sent me. 30 But if the Lord brings about something unheard-of, so that the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol, you shall know that these men have spurned the Lord.” 31 Scarcely had he finished speaking all these words when the ground under them burst asunder, 32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up with their households, all Korah’s people and all their possessions. 33 They went down alive into Sheol, with all that belonged to them; the earth closed over them and they vanished from the midst of the congregation.

What is counted to all men is to die and be buried. This was different in that they were buried alive.

Psalms 6:6 For there is no praise of You among the dead; in Sheol, who can acclaim You?

Since the dead know nothing they cannot speak or talk.

Ecclesiastes 9:10

10 Whatever it is in your power to do, do with all your might. For there is no action, no reasoning, no learning, no wisdom in Sheol, where you are going.

Since the dead know nothing there is no action, reasoning, learning or wisdom in the grave.

Psalms 115:17

17 The dead cannot praise the Lord, nor any who go down into silence.

So you see that sheol in Judaism was traditionally known as the grave. It is only in the Rabbanical writings and other influences that a concept of Hell based upon a valley in the

Tanakh.

Name of the valley to the south and south-west of Jerusalem (Josh. xv. 8, xviii. 16; Neh. xi. 30; II Kings xxiii. 10; II Chron. xxxiii. 6; Jer. vii. 31 *et seq.*, xix. 2, xxxii. 35). Its modern name is "Wadi al-Rababah." The southwestern gate of the city, overlooking the valley, came to be known as "the gate of the valley." The valley was notorious for the worship of Moloch carried on there (comp. Jer. ii. 23). According to Jer. vii. 31 *et seq.*, xix. 6 *et seq.*, it was to be turned into a place of burial; hence "the accursed valley Ge-hinnom" ("Gehenna" in the N. T.) came to be synonymous with a place of punishment, and thus with hell (comp. Isa. lxvi. 24; Enoch, xxvi. *et seq.*; and the rabbinical Hebrew equivalent). [See Gehenna; Paradise](#).^E

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=116&letter=G&search=Hinnom>

The place where children were sacrificed to the god Moloch was originally in the "valley of the son of Hinnom," to the south of Jerusalem (Josh. xv. 8, *passim*; II Kings xxiii. 10; Jer. ii. 23; vii. 31-32; xix. 6, 13-14). For this reason the valley was deemed to be accursed, and "Gehenna" therefore soon became a figurative equivalent for "hell." Hell, like paradise, was created by God (Soqah 22a); according to Gen. R. ix. 9, the words "very good" in Gen. i. 31 refer to hell; hence the latter must have been created on the sixth day. Yet opinions on this point vary. According to some sources, it was created on the second day; according to others, even before the world, only its fire being created on the second day (Gen. R. iv., end; Pes. 54a). The "fiery furnace" that Abraham saw (Gen. xv. 17, Hebr.) was Gehenna (Mek. xx. 18b, 71b; comp. Enoch, xcvi. 3, ciii. 8; Matt. xiii. 42, 50; 'Er. 19a, where the "fiery furnace" is also identified with the gate of Gehenna). Opinions also vary as to the situation, extent, and nature of hell. The statement that Gehenna is situated in the valley of Hinnom near Jerusalem, in the "accursed valley" (Enoch, xxvii. 1 *et seq.*), means simply that it has a gate there. It was in Zion, and had a gate in Jerusalem (Isa. xxxi. 9). It had three gates, one in the wilderness, one in the sea, and one in Jerusalem ('Er. 19a). The gate lies between two palm-trees in the valley of Hinnom, from which smoke is continually rising (*ib.*). The mouth is narrow, impeding the smoke, but below Gehenna extends indefinitely (Men. 99b). According to one opinion, it is above the firmament, and according to another, behind the dark mountains (Ta'an. 32b). An Arabian pointed out to a scholar the spot in the wilderness where the earth swallowed the sons of Korah (Num. xvi. 31-32), who descended into Gehenna (Sanh. 110b). It is situated deep down in the earth, and is immeasurably large. "The earth is one-sixtieth of the garden, the garden one-sixtieth of Eden [paradise], Eden one-sixtieth of Gehenna; hence the whole world is like a lid for Gehenna. Some say that Gehenna can not be measured" (Pes. 94a). It is divided into seven compartments (Soqah 10b); a similar view was held by the Babylonians (Jeremias, "Hölle und Paradies bei den Babyloniern," pp. 16 *et seq.*, Leipsic, 1901; Guthe, "Kurzes Bibel-wörterb." p. 272, Tübingen and Leipsic, 1903).

Because of the extent of Gehenna the sun, on setting in the evening, passes by it, and receives from it its own fire (evening glow; B. B. 84a). A fiery stream ("dinur") falls upon the head of the sinner in Gehenna (Qag. 13b). This is "the fire of the West, which every setting sun receives. I came to a fiery river, whose fire flows like water, and which empties into a large sea in the West" (Enoch, xvii. 4-6). Hell here is described exactly as in the Talmud. The Persians believed that glowing molten metal flowed under the feet of sinners (Schwally, "Das Leben nach dem Tode," p. 145, Giessen, 1892). The waters of the warm springs of Tiberias are heated while flowing past Gehenna (Shab. 39a). The fire of Gehenna never goes out (Tosef., Ber. 6, 7; Mark ix. 43 *et seq.*; Matt. xviii. 8, xxv. 41; comp. Schwally, *l.c.* p. 176); there is always plenty of wood there (Men. 100a). This fire is sixty times as hot as any earthly fire (Ber. 57b). There is a smell of sulfur in Gehenna (Enoch, lxvii. 6). This agrees with the Greek idea of hell (Lucian, *Ἀληθεῖς Ἱστορίαι*, i. 29, in Dietrich, "Abraxas," p. 36). The sulfurous smell of the Tiberian medicinal springs was ascribed to their connection with Gehenna. In Isa. lxvi. 16, 24 it is said that God judges by means of fire. Gehenna is dark in spite of the immense masses of fire; it is like night (Yeb. 109b; comp. Job x. 22). The same idea also occurs in Enoch, x. 4, lxxxii. 2; Matt. viii. 12, xxii. 13, xxv. 30 (comp. Schwally, *l.c.* p. 176).

It is assumed that there is an angel-prince in charge of Gehenna. He says to God: "Put everything into my sea; nourish me with the seed of Seth; I am hungry." But God refuses his request, telling him to take the heathen peoples (Shab. 104). God says to the angel-prince: "I punish the slanderers from above, and I also punish them from below with glowing coals" ('Ar. 15b). The souls of the sons of Korah were burned, and the angel-prince gnashed his teeth at them on account of their flattery of Korah (Sanh. 52a). Gehenna cries: "Give me the heretics and the sinful [Roman] power" ('Ab. Zarah 17a).

Judgment.

It is assumed in general that sinners go to hell immediately after their death. The famous teacher Johanan b. Zakkai wept before his death because he did not know whether he would go to paradise or to hell (Ber. 28b). The pious go to paradise, and sinners to hell (B. M. 83b). To every individual is apportioned two shares, one in hell and one in paradise. At death, however, the righteous man's portion in hell is exchanged, so that he has two in heaven, while the reverse is true in the case of sinners (□ag. 15a). Hence it would have been better for the latter not to have lived at all (Yeb. 63b). They are cast into Gehenna to a depth commensurate with their sinfulness. They say: "Lord of the world, Thou hast done well; Paradise for the pious, Gehenna for the wicked" ('Er. 19a).

There are three categories of men; the wholly pious and the arch-sinners are not purified, but only those between these two classes (Ab. R. N. 41). A similar view is expressed in the Babylonian Talmud, which adds that those who have sinned themselves but have not led others into sin remain for twelve months in Gehenna; "after twelve months their bodies are destroyed, their souls are burned, and the wind strews the ashes under the feet of the pious. But as regards the heretics, etc., and Jeroboam, Nebat's son, hell shall pass away, but they shall not pass away" (R. H. 17a; comp. Shab. 33b). All that descend into Gehenna shall come up again, with the exception of three classes of men: those who have committed adultery, or shamed their neighbors, or vilified them (B. M. 58b). The felicity of the pious in paradise excites the wrath of the sinners who behold it when they come from hell (Lev. R. xxxii.). The Book of Enoch (xxvii. 3, xlvi. 9, lxii. 12) paraphrases this thought by saying that the pious rejoice in the pains of hell suffered by the sinners. Abraham takes the damned to his bosom ('Er. 19a; comp. Luke xvi. 19-31). The fire of Gehenna does not touch the Jewish sinners because they confess their sins before the gates of hell and return to God ('Er. 19a). As mentioned above, heretics and the Roman oppressors go to Gehenna, and the same fate awaits the Persians, the oppressors of the Babylonian Jews (Ber. 8b). When Nebuchadnezzar descended into hell, all its inhabitants were afraid that he was coming to rule over them (Shab. 149a; comp. Isa. xiv. 9-10). The Book of Enoch also says that it is chiefly the heathen who are to be cast into the fiery pool on the Day of Judgment (x. 6, xci. 9, et al.). "The Lord, the Almighty, will punish them on the Day of Judgment by putting fire and worms into their flesh, so that they cry out with pain unto all eternity" (Judith xvi. 17).

(see image) Valley of Ge-Hinnom.(From a photograph by Bonfils.)The sinners in Gehenna will be filled with pain when God puts back the souls into the dead bodies on the Day of Judgment, according to Isa. xxxiii. 11 (Sanh. 108b). Enoch also holds (xlvi. 9) that the sinners will disappear like chaff before the faces of the elect. There will be no Gehenna in the future world, however, for God will take the sun out of its case, and it will heal the pious with its rays and will punish the sinners (Ned. 8b).

Sin and Merit.

It is frequently said that certain sins will lead man into Gehenna. The name "Gehenna" itself is explained to mean that unchastity will lead to Gehenna (הַנֶּמֶס=הַנֶּמֶס; 'Er. 19a); so also will adultery, idolatry, pride, mockery, hypocrisy, anger, etc. (So□ah 4b, 41b; Ta'an. 5a; B. B. 10b, 78b; 'Ab. Zarah 18b; Ned. 22a). Hell awaits one who indulges in unseemly speech (Shab. 33a; Enoch, xxvii.); who always follows the advice of his wife (B. M. 59a); who instructs an unworthy pupil (□ul. 133b); who

turns away from the Torah (B. B. 79a; comp. Yoma 72b). For further details see 'Er. 18b, 101a; Sanh. 109b; □id. 81a; Ned. 39b; B. M. 19a.

On the other hand, there are merits that preserve man from going to hell; e.g., philanthropy, fasting, visiting the sick, reading the Shema' and Hallel, and eating the three meals on the Sabbath (Gi□. 7a; B. B. 10a; B. M. 85a; Ned. 40a; Ber. 15b; Pes. 118a; Shab. 118a). Israelites in general are less endangered (Ber. 10a) than heretics, or, according to B. B. 10a, than the heathen. Scholars (□ag. 27a; comp. Men. 99b and Yoma 87a), the poor, and the pious (Yeb. 102b) are especially protected. Three classes of men do not see the face of hell: those that live in penury, those suffering with intestinal catarrh, and those that are pressed by their creditors ('Er. 41b). It would seem that the expressions "doomed to hell" and "to be saved from hell" must be interpreted hyperbolically. A bad woman is compared to Gehenna in Yeb. 63b. On the names of Gehenna see 'Er. 19a; B. B. 79a; Sanh. 111b; et al.

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=115&letter=G>

But notice this was a valley and not some netherworld for the wicked. This is why Karaites don't believe in a concept of Hell only the grave as a resting place until resurrection and judgment.

If Death dies it ceases to exist.

The basis for this belief is that the swallowing up of death is death of death. But what does this mean?

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 25:8

8 He will destroy death forever. My Lord GOD will wipe the tears away From all faces And will put an end to the reproach of His people Over all the earth—For it is the LORD who has spoken.

But what is this saying in Hebrew?

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| <p>בִּלַּע הַמָּוֶת לְנֶצַח וּמָחָה אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה דִּמְעָה מֵעַל כָּל־פָּנִים⁸ וְחָרַפַּת עַמּוֹ יִסִּיר מֵעַל כָּל־הָאָרֶץ כִּי יְהוָה דִּבֶּר:</p> |
| Bila hamavet lanetzach umachah adoni Yehovah dim'ah kalpanim vecher'pat amo yasir me'al kal ha'arets kiy Yehovah diber : |
| Swallow the death to oversee and blot out Adoni Yehovah tears from all faces and reproach his people he removes from all the land because Yehovah spoke. |

So what does it mean to swallow? The Hebrew word here is bila, which is reference number 1104. It is a verb and the object is not just death in general but "the death" as in this particular death. When using the Ha prefix in Hebrew "Ha" designated something specific. But lets look at what swallow or bila is used and does it mean utterly destroy as many translators suggest.

Bamidbar/Numbers 16:30

30 But if Yehovah brings about something unheard-of, so that the ground opens its mouth **and swallows** (**ubalah** וּבִלְעָה) them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol, you shall know that these men have spurned Yehovah.”

31 Scarcely had he finished speaking all these words when the ground under them burst asunder, 32 and the earth opened its mouth **and swallowed** (**vativ'la** וַתִּבְלַע) them up with their households, all Korah's people and all their possessions. 33 They went down alive into Sheol, with all that belonged to them; the earth closed over them and they vanished from the midst of the congregation.

Here we see that quite literally from the story he said swallow them and they were swallowed and never to be seen again. This is the Kal form (in the active voice and either transitive or intransitive) of the verb and it would simple mean to swallow.

The use in the Yeshayahu verse is the Piel form (also an active form but mostly transitive) of the verb and so lets look at other verse that use this same form.

Lamentations 2:2,5,16

2 Adoni has **laid waste** (**bila - swallowed** בִּלְעָה) without pity All the habitations of Jacob; He has razed in His anger Fair Judah's strongholds. He has brought low in dishonor The kingdom and its leaders.

5 Adoni has acted like a foe, He has **laid waste** (**bila - swallowed** בִּלְעָה) Israel, Laid waste all her citadels, Destroyed her strongholds. He has increased within Fair Judah Mourning and moaning.

16 All your enemies Jeer at you; They hiss and gnash their teeth, And cry: “**We've ruined her** (**bila'nu – we swallowed** בִּלְעָנוּ)! Ah, this is the day we hoped for; We have lived to see it!”

Here we see the same useage of the verb and we know that Israel was not make to literally disappear like Korah's people. Even if you think that this is just another useage and still believe that literally death will be swallowed up then you have to look a verse above this one which also uses this same for in the same chapter.

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 25:7

7 **And He will destroy** (**ubila** וּבִלְעָה) on this mount the shroud That is drawn over the faces of all the peoples And the covering that is spread Over all the nations:

So we see that there is not literally a covering over all the people and the nations. Thus, we are swallowing and removing that which blocks their view. To me this is an account of restoration of the people who are trampled down by their enemies and thus the death specific to them is reproach that they have earned in not keeping his ways.

So we see that death is the ceasing of existence. If Death were to cease then all existence would go on for all time (forever, olam if you prefer). So by looking at the Hebrew we see that not always does the English translation mean what we think.