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COMPARATIVE STUDY OF AMERICAN AND  
ISRAELI TEENAGERS' ATTITUDES  
TOWARD DEATH

THESIS

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By

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One hundred American teenagers and 84 Israeli teenagers were interviewed by open-ended questionnaires in order to study their attitudes toward death, holding variables like religion, socio-economic status, and education constant. All the respondents are Jewish, members of a youth movement, high school students, and are fifteen to sixteen years old.

The results show a strong tendency to avoid discussions and thoughts about death, more so by the Israelis. Death is strongly feared and associated with war and car accidents, more so by the Israelis. Americans associate army service with death. Death is generally viewed as physical and spiritual cessation of life.

The avoidance approach and fear of death that were found suggest the need to offer special courses on man and death in high schools.

*JPC*

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

An interesting pattern is revealed while reading about the attitudes and behavior of Americans regarding death and while observing their behavior when confronted with death. Death is "dead" in the United States. The subject is taboo. It is generally forbidden to discuss the topic of death with youngsters or with the elderly.

In the United States the tendency to segregate the elderly in senior citizens homes or senior citizens clubs (sometimes referred to as "a golden age club," which ironically raises doubts regarding the relevance of the title to the actual situation) denies young people contact with the phenomena of aging and death.

The avoidance of the subject has much to do with modern society changing from a religious one to a more secular one. In a religious society where people believe strongly and practice one of the existing religions, they also accept the beliefs regarding death. These beliefs are part of their religious teachings. Among these beliefs are the concept of salvation and "the next world" -- heaven and hell. It is easier to discuss death with people who believe their souls to be

eternal in "life beyond death," because death may then be viewed as a beginning and not the end.

As the Western world has become more and more secular, it has come to rely on scientific explanations for phenomena previously related with religion, and there is little or no hope of life after death. As a result, people are afraid because science does not answer the question, what happens to us after .

Moreover, modern medical science makes it possible to avoid inevitable death from most diseases or malfunctions of the body. The transplant operations, the kidney machines, the heart and lung machines, and many other devices of modern medicine make it possible for some people to survive. Some expect that the technique of freezing people, when improved, will allow "life" for maybe eternity. Death is conceived today as something that can be postponed, rather than an unpreventable act of God.

All humans try to repress thoughts about death because of fear or anxiety. It is assumed that all persons have some concepts or attitudes toward death which are dormant, and one way to evoke them is by confronting a person with a direct question or statement related to death. But the question remains, why would anybody want to study attitudes toward death and, as specified in this research, teenagers' attitudes toward death?

Where there is no war, death will mostly occur at old age. But where there is war, many people are killed, and knowing one who was killed or fearing for someone else's life results in thoughts about death.

Unfortunately, I lost my brother, who was only twenty-eight years old, in October, 1973. My brother was killed in the Yom Kippur War between Israel and Egypt. When I received the news, I was in Dallas, Texas, a peaceful, quiet community far away from the noise of cannons and the air raid alarms. I immediately flew to Israel to comfort my parents and my brother's widow. In a matter of a few hours, I found myself facing deep sorrow, pain, and grief. The tragic news about many other dear friends who were killed forced me to face the problem of how to cope with death.

If I were religious and could believe in life beyond death, everything would have been much easier. If I could have fully believed that "The Lord has given, the Lord has taken, Blessed be the name of the Lord," then I would have had peace of mind. But I am not religious and it is very difficult to accept the death of a young man in the prime of his life. It is impossible to accept the grim fact that he no longer exists.

At this time, I began thinking about death and the meaning of death. The more I thought about death, the more confused and the



more frightened I became, not so much afraid for myself, but more so for other beloved persons. It occurred to me that it is not the fear of what happens to the dead as much as the fear we have for ourselves, the ones who survive and have to confront death. It seems that one never thinks of death until confronted with the death of a very close person, or when one lives under the constant threat of death. The fear reminds one that it might happen again to another close friend. As an Israeli, this fear is very realistic to me. As long as there is no permanent peace in the Middle East, the war can explode any day, and it will take more victims.

It may be assumed that the four wars Israel has experienced since its independence in 1948 have had a strong impact on her countrymen regarding their attitudes toward death. Furthermore, since Israel is a very small country, both in land and population, the impact of the wars on the population would be much greater than the impact of the two wars in which the United States has participated since World War II. These differences in the impact of the wars and the number of persons killed per population between the United States and Israel must result in different types of behavior and attitudes toward death.

During my stay in Israel in the summer of 1974, I spoke to friends and youngsters about death. The ultimate impression was a

strong correlation between death and war among Israelis. I felt the fear and anxiety in their comments. I tried to speak to some professors in the fields of sociology and psychology about the subject to determine if they had any thoughts about attitudes toward death. The reply usually was that studies have been made regarding widows, orphans, and dying patients, but they personally had no ideas or thoughts regarding Israelis. This reply was quite surprising since I expected that in a country constantly faced with war and death, more attention would be given to the subject by social scientists.

The United States, after my sad visit to Israel in October, 1973, was like another planet. The tranquility of American life, the peacefulness and the security were the exact opposite of that in Israel and of what I felt. I wondered whether Americans would ask my feelings about the present or the future as an Israeli citizen faced with death under circumstances which are not common to American life. No one asked. Death seemed so far away for Americans.

It is both interesting and shocking to find that in both the United States and Israel, the studies regarding death are mainly about dying patients, children, and customs of mourning. All these studies concentrate on the psychological and psychiatric aspects.

While we are faced with death every day of our lives, how do we prepare ourselves to face death, to cope with it, when it happens

in the family or to friends? Car accidents, cancer, heart attacks, murders, etc., are common causes of death. Yet we regard a person who thinks about death constantly and who states publicly his fears that he will not survive the next moment, as pessimistic, melancholy, and, to a certain degree, disturbed or psychotic. But what about "normal" people who might think about death from time to time? Death is a part of living and as we are taught to live and to enjoy living, we should also be taught how to deal with the ultimate end.

It thus seems to be of value to discover what people think about death. Some knowledge exists from studies about the attitudes of senior citizens, of dying people, and of children, but almost nothing is known about the attitudes of teenagers.

Adolescence is an important phase in developing and crystallizing a body of values and perspectives about social and cultural phenomena. This age group is characterized by intensive social contacts and social awareness. The adolescent's social contacts are, in general, with peers rather than with adults, and many attitudes toward life are formed through this intensive peer-oriented social contact.

Adolescence is also a time of achieving emotional independence from one's parents and trying to gain confidence that one can be economically independent, if necessary. The adolescent forms a

personal philosophy and an outlook on the world by observing adults and peers.

It will be valuable to discover what are the differences, directions, and patterns of attitudes toward death between teenagers in the United States and in the Israeli society. The results of such an investigation might serve to increase interest in the study of patterns of fear and anxiety in societies which experience differing patterns of conflict. If a general pattern of apathy toward death is found, then a tendency toward what Alvin Toffler calls in his book Future Shock (1) "transience" may be discovered. The results might indicate a need to enlarge the program of family life cycle in schools, so it will include a more realistic approach to death and dying. Still another reason for the need of such a study is to discover differences between a country which has experienced "peace-time" versus a country which has experienced "war-time" regarding attitudes toward death.

In this study there is one major assumption: that differences will be found between the attitudes of American teenagers and Israeli teenagers toward death. The goal of this study is to analyze the pattern of attitudes toward death in Israel and in the United States.

This study will not focus upon individual attitudes toward the subject of death, per se. In other words, the concern here is not for

attitudes toward dying, or religious concepts of death, or for bereavement or treatment of the dead. The main interest is to discover whether or not teenagers have a concept of death; i. e. : What is death? What are the main causes of death? Are teenagers afraid of death? Is the concept of death related to certain phenomena such as war, murders, etc. ? It is expected that the attitudes of teenagers from two different social and cultural settings, two different countries, will differ even when controlling for religion and socio-economic status.

Recognizing the interaction between formation of attitudes and an individual's social setting, a study that attempts to clarify the questions involved is important. It is important especially when focusing upon the issue of death and man's ability to face death and cope with it (not necessarily one's own death) from a sociological point of view.

## CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

While examining the different published materials on the subject of death, one finds that many approaches have been tried to study this topic.

Dying and death are events that happen to each of us. Termination is the universal ending of all living things. For some, death is the absence of life; for others it is the beginning of life beyond one's own conception. Life is the full accounting of one's personal diary, one's memory bank, including one's experience of the present moment. It is the life of one's mind that looks out on the world and reflects it upon himself.

Death is viewed by many people as the end of potentiality and of any further conscious experience. It is essentially synonymous with the conclusion of conscious life.

A critical question is how an individual, group, or society, relates to the knowledge that death is certain. The idea of death has posed an eternal mystery which is at the core of our religious and philosophical systems of thought. Profound contradictions exist in our thinking about death. Our tradition assumes that man is both

terminated by death and yet capable of continuing in another sense beyond death. It is viewed on one hand as the ultimate personal disaster, as something frightening and unpleasant to think about, and yet, on the other hand, it is also regarded as a first step to eternity.

This dichotomy has resulted in different philosophical works regarding death and distinct views by the different religions toward death. One religion may teach the eternity of the soul while another does not.

Every individual regards death differently, whether it is fantasizing or by having extreme fears and anxiety; these have resulted in several sociological, psychological and psychiatric works in which these attitudes are analyzed.

The number of works written on death is immense. Of concern to this study are those in which sociological aspects are emphasized. It is not simple to distinguish among the papers that deal with the subject of death from a purely psychological point of view or a purely sociological point of view. In this chapter an attempt is made to review the major works which approach the subject of death with an emphasis on sociological aspects that are of interest to this study. In order to do so, an extremely large number of books, articles, unpublished material (tapes, papers, etc.) and films were reviewed.



It was hard to eliminate many books and articles not reviewed here, since all contributed to one's understanding of death and death-related behavior. Still, it was necessary to reduce the material reviewed to the works which follow closely those aspects of importance to this study and to works that are representative of others with similar conclusions.

For the purpose of organizing this discussion, the literature is reviewed according to those aspects most relevant to this study. They will be dealt with in the following order:

1.     Jewish Culture and Death - Since the sample of this study is Jewish teenagers -- Americans and Israelis -- one must look into the way Judaism perceives death. Both the philosophical views as well as the customs of mourning and bereavement will be discussed.
2.     Theological Views of Death - Views of death will be discussed from the Biblical development of the Ancient Hebrew Bible Period through Christianity to its present status in the Western world.
3.     Death and the Modern Western World - The affect of secularization and science on the concepts of death will be analyzed. An attempt will be made to find what bodies replace the traditional role of religion and religious institutions in crystallizing the attitudes toward death and the customs of mourning and bereavement.

4. Common Attitudes Toward Death - Common attitudes toward death, like fear, anxiety, and denial, will be discussed from the different points of view of psychologists, psychiatrists, and sociologists.

5. Dying Patients and Fear of Death - The special problem involved with dying patients will be separately discussed. It is important to understand the relation of the dying patient with his environment, like family, friends, and the medical staff. At the same time it is important to understand the attitudes of the people in the dying patient's environment toward him and his death. The importance of this case lies in the fact that the dying person and the people who surround him are conscious of the existence of death and cannot deny it. They are faced with death for a period of time in their lives and there is no escape.

6. Life Cycle and Death - A discussion will be held on the different concepts of death common to the various age groups. Emphasis will be made on teenagers, ages thirteen to eighteen, since this age group is the interest of this study. The common concepts of death within each age group will be tied up with other topics discussed above.

## Jewish Culture and Death

In Judaism, the activities of the mourners follow a prescribed pattern. Since the bereaved must not weep too long or too severely for the dead, the Talmud -- the body of Jewish law -- limits mourning to three days for weeping, seven for lamenting, and thirty for abstaining from haircuts and the wearing of pressed clothes.

Jewish ritual also provides companionship for the bereaved. Mourners should not eat their own bread on the funeral day, which makes it necessary for relatives and friends to visit the home of the bereaved to bring food as well as offering comfort and compassion.

For the first seven days -- The Shivah -- the mourner sits at home on a low stool, his shirt torn, receives consolation from friends and relatives, and has to say a special prayer, called the "Kaddish." The orthodox Jews will recite the Kaddish every day for one year. The Kaddish does not mention death or the dead, but rather is a humble and faithful acceptance of God's decree (1, 2, 3).

Spiro (34) believes that Judaism as a sociocultural system provides specific laws, rites, and mores of mourning, not in order to deny the need for various defenses, but to prevent them from becoming pathological, by not allowing the mourner to perform the mourning in isolation, but as an active member of the group. Judaism eliminates

the possibilities of defenses like regression, denial, self-punishment, and projection. By being with friends and family for the time of the mourning, one has the opportunity to detach himself from the deceased and to experience a sense of acceptance by his community.

The Bible states that a man is mortal and finite, death is an inevitable fact of life and must be faced.

What profit hath man of all his labour wherein he laboureth under the sun? One generation passeth away and another generation cometh, and the earth abideth forever. (Ecclesiastes 1:3-5)

For what vanity has thou created all the children of men. What man is he that liveth and shall not see death, that shall deliver his soul from the power of the grave. (Psalms 89:48-49)

The Bible gives two reasons for death -- one as a natural event -- there is a time for everything, a time to be born and a time to die. Man has to return to dust from which he is made, thus completing a life cycle. The second Biblical idea views death as punishment for sin.

Among Jews, to die on Sabbath and to die of a disease are considered good omens. To die amid weeping or at the close of the Sabbath are bad omens.

Silverman (33) suggests that the Hebrew view of death was guided by confidence in God as the creator and sustainer of life and in his purpose for the people of Israel.

The Hebrew concept of death and afterlife developed out of the Jewish experiences, and apocalyptic literature reflects their moral conflict over the question of how a good creator could permit his people to suffer, thereby allowing his purpose to be thwarted.

### Theological Views of Death

Mills (29) reviews the change in attitudes toward death that occurred, beginning with the period of the Enlightenment. The major change was in the decreased belief that a death of a person would bring him to God, on the one hand, and the increased trust and belief in science as a means to prolong life, on the other.

Theological understandings are not sought; death is a result of an accident or of negligence or of disease. The dying are isolated in hospitals and the elderly are removed to "sunset villages." Ministers are requested to speak briefly at funerals and not to mention the deceased (6, p. 8).

McGatch (27) states that we have lost our faith in the doctrine of immortality, but we know of no other way to deal with or to explain the phenomenon of death. For this reason we attempt to mask death, to make it invisible so it will not threaten us. We lack the terminology and the basic concepts for describing death. The taboos are so strong that few care to discuss the issue of death and afterlife openly.

McGatch analyzes key statements concerning death from ancient Greece and the Bible, through the early seventeenth century, in an effort to show what have been the basic Christian attitudes toward death and afterlife. He tries to interpret some problems concerning these doctrines and makes an effort to reformulate a Christian view of death in the light of contemporary patterns of thought and of the historical traditions (with the help of significant pieces of modern fiction).

Keck (22) states that Jesus worked within the apocalyptic tradition with its emphasis on judgment, the defeat of Satan and resurrection. Death was not the focal point of Jesus' message. He called for repentance and trust in God.

Paul in I Corinthians 15 reflects the apocalyptic understanding of death as he confronts the Greek world and rejects immortality for resurrection. For Paul, death is a moral question, i. e., will God vindicate himself by redeeming his creation? John presents another alternative in describing eternal life as already present.

McGatch is concerned with the period of the early church through Reformation (9). In this period, a concern for the plight of the soul after death and fear for its ultimate destiny dominates. Resurrection then gave way to immortality, and finally corporate salvation -- God's restoration of a people -- gave way to preoccupation

with individual salvation. May (26) is concerned with the assistance modern man can get from his religion in understanding death.

The loss of transcendence in death has led to an emphasis on life and a denial of death. Yet excesses in the attempts to avoid and deny death actually affirm its mystery and sacred power.

Christian faith enables men to face death and its threat to human existence. Confidence in God frees man to live in this world and to serve his fellows. Hocking (17) states that whereas man abandons religious beliefs, he still wants to understand or believe in survival.

The abandonment of religious beliefs in favor of science left people in a vacuum. The different religions provided men with comfort. Belief in afterlife and resurrection gave men the strength to face death without fear. The abandonment of religion and increasing trust in science brought about the doubt in the probability of resurrection and afterlife. This doubt resulted in fear and other anxieties about death, since science could not provide the same comfort. The Enlightenment caused men to neglect the subject of life and death from a theological point of view and bring about discussion of death from a supernatural point of view. While different religions could furnish men with trust in eternity, science brought about skepticism about eternity.

## Death and the Modern Western World

Toynbee (36) discusses changing attitudes toward death in the modern Western world. He discusses the problem of death being "dead" that is unmentionable today. People do not die, but "pass on" or "pass away"; even funerals become ceremonies very much like weddings.

Toynbee says:

There is no precedent in past human experience for even a guess at the intensity of the feelings of horror, grief, fear and above all guilt that ritual murder on the atomic scale would bring to the surface of a human being's consciousness from the dark and deep abyss which the progress of the genuine science of Psychology is revealing to us. (36, p. 152)

Lerner (25) notes that in traditional American literature like Hawthorne, Melville, Poe, Faulkner and Hemingway, one finds a tragic depth that belies the surface thinness of ordinary American death attitudes. Lerner compares this with the great effort to reveal the mystery of death by the Greeks during the Middle Ages and by various European writers like Mann and Tolstoy. Lerner also finds that Americans "escape" death with word usage -- they never die, but "pass away." A "funeral parlor" is decorated to look like a bank. In the ceremony, everything is hushed and everybody whispers as if not to awaken the dead.



Lerner states that there has been little in American literature about the dignity of old age, as there is little about the grace of dying, except in war novels.

Lerner further notes that American culture detracts from sensitivity to death and grief, to suicide and immortality, emphasizing the "here and now," youth and action.

While Lerner discusses attitudes toward death in fiction, others discuss attitudes toward death in different modern communities.

Gorer (13) describes the situation in Britain regarding mourning customs. Between World War I and today, the culturally imposed ritual of mourning has been abandoned by the English. Those who hide their grief to the stage that no one can guess anything had happened, are admired. The absence of social forms of mourning has unfortunate psychological effects.

This work reports on a survey of the attitudes of a representative sample of recently bereaved Englishmen. The investigation concluded that the tendency in Britain is in the direction of simpler burial rites. The people questioned were ambivalent and uncertain as to how one is to explain death or deal with it. One-third of the sample stated that they said nothing to their children about the death of a relative. About one-third explained by religious terms, though they, themselves, did not believe in religious concepts of death and afterlife.

A large number of the sample believes in some form of afterlife, but only a small percentage saw any connection between afterlife and a doctrine of judgment and none believed in eternal damnation. The tendency was to think of death as the beginning of a more pleasant mode of existence.

Apparently, church teachings have little influence over the content of the beliefs regarding death, even though the tendency is to avoid superstitions and the unpleasant.

As a result of the disbelief in these religious doctrines, violent death became the subject of a new class of pornographic literature and films, not a "nude pornography" but violent-crime dramas.

Fulton (8) discovered a movement in American society which is a product of the tendency to avoid death -- the memorial society movement. He surveyed members of eleven memorial societies (or funeral reform societies) across the United States. The population researched was highly educated, relatively low in traditional religious affiliation, and had an annual income reported twice that of an average American. The study showed that these groups desired to eliminate the body from the funeral, avoided funerals more often than the average American, and showed a greater reluctance than the average person to permit their children to attend a funeral ceremony.

It is interesting that persons from such a high socio-economic level as these respondents who generally attempt to deal realistically with their children, teaching them not to believe in ghosts, Santa Claus, etc., behave in a contrary manner where death is concerned and tend "to protect" their children from knowing about the definite end of men.

Mitford (31) reveals the American funeral practices and discusses the so-called "Funeral Industry." She reveals the financial costs involved in the display of funerals. She notes the way morticians cover the fact that death has something to do with the funeral -- their job, it seems, is to disguise the fact of death. A new vocabulary was even developed to support the disguise. One does not die, but "passes on" and undertakers are being called "grief therapists." Mitford concludes that one accepts the undertakers' services and the way they mask the dead and diminish any sign of death from the funerals, because of one's own fear of death.

Campbell (1) believes that there is a central relevance of death and death-related behaviors to social organization. The ultimate determinants of the response to death rest in the needs and nature of the social system. The rituals, ceremonies and prescribed behaviors of any culture reflect its values and priorities. Funeral directors serve as agents of the population. These agents provide what people

want. Thus their role is symbolic of the secular approach toward death.

#### Common Attitudes Toward Death -- Fear, Denial and Anxiety

Elam (5) states that the individual uses denial as a main form of dealing with the concept of his own death and attempts to use it as a means of dealing with the death of others. One's concept of death changes, however, as he matures, and his attitude may undergo a change. Elam suggests that when studying death and in assisting persons who are either dying or reacting to the death of another, it is important to recognize the possible variety and the signs which indicate that a person is able to handle these facts of life in ways other than denial.

Mourning is necessary to the process of adjustment to death of loved ones and is followed by an orderly progression. Interference with mourning will often lead to depression. Thus, the role of religion and caretakers in American society is to provide an environment which supports a reaction to death. This reaction fulfills the emotional needs of the individual in a culturally accepted way.

Feifel (6) states that one's reaction to impending death is a function of interweaving factors. Some of the most significant ones appear to be

1. The psychological maturity of the individual,
2. The kind of coping techniques available to him,
3. Variables of religious orientation, age, socio-economic status, etc.,
4. Severity of the organic process, and
5. The attitudes of the physician and the other significant persons in the dying patient's world.

Heywood (15) is concerned with the question of what death is and why so many Westerners fear it. Even though orthodox materialists argue that mind must die with body, there are others who argue that a number of hints and clues regarding the nature of death leave the question open.

Heywood divides fear of death as to

- 1) Fear of the process of dying, and
- 2) A biological instinct to survive.

It is harder to "take" death today, since death is less familiar than it used to be. Fewer of the young die and the old are isolated in hospitals or special homes.

The decay of religion has made death even more of an unknown quantity. The materialist thus has nothing to cling to after death. Even today few publishers, few editors of papers, and so forth are willing to publish articles on the possibility of future life (perhaps as

a way of repressing their own fear of death.) One indication that fear of death is widespread, but repressed, is that in personal life its mention is so often taboo. Another symptom of repressed anxiety about death may be the wide interest of the American public in violence and destruction -- at a safe distance: in a book, a film, theater, and news.

Gordon (12) takes a philosophical approach to account for man's fear of death. Gordon presents the idea that the fear of death is poisoning our lives, and much of our culture represents a response to this fear. According to this writer, most of us are afraid to contemplate our own ending. When something reminds us that we too shall die, we flee and turn our thoughts to happier matters.

According to Gordon, what one fears most is the loss of one's pleasurable sensations, one's thoughts, one's thinking ability and one's self. Gordon is certain that one "knows" what death is, and there is no reason for us to fear it. Furthermore, death, which has frightened man since his emergence as a thinking creature, is his ultimate and eternal unification experience. Death comes to all, not as a scourge or punishment, but as the culmination and fulfillment of life.

Choron (3) believes that there is no longer a strong taboo

against the examination of death and therefore a growing number of people must cope with an acute awareness of their mortality.

Based on the work of philosophers, psychiatrists, and physiologists, Choron discusses the many aspects of man's fear of death. Choron divides the fear of death into the varieties of (1) fear of what happens after death, (2) fear of the "event" of dying, and (3) fear of ceasing to be.

Lepp (24) believes that most men fear dying and its pains rather than death itself. Young people tend to fear mostly the death of loved ones like family members. Lepp believes that fear of death is "normal" and serves a positive function, since it stimulates us and increases our joy in living. By the same token, those in love with life, those who enjoy life, are less afraid of death than those who live superficially.

#### Dying Patients and the Fear of Death

Montefiore (32) deals with attitudes toward aging, death-anxiety, in chronically ill or dying patients. The author states that attitudes toward aging reflect many of our underlying fears of death. Death is taboo -- an unproductive "failure" in the victim and a source of guilt to those who survive him. Resulting from this attitude in the general population are many ethical problems in the treatment of the aged.

Carlozzi's (2) goal is to examine and understand the behavior and attitudes of the terminally ill and their families when faced with death and also to comprehend the interrelated needs of the patient, his family, pastor, and physician in a situation where death appears to be inevitable.

Carl G. Carlozzi discusses the fear of death that stems primarily from the thought of physical pain and suffering which generally accompanies the dying process. By repressing thoughts about death, man is able to find a temporary peace of mind. The second source of fear is the thought of leaving one's loved ones behind. This creates an unbearable anxiety. The third source of fear stems from the thought of entering an unknown realm of one sort or another.

Hinton (16) discusses the special problems of dying patients facing their own death and gives suggestions on how to care for the dying patient. Hinton presents some aspects that are of interest from a sociological point of view. For example, he discusses the case of a man who tried all his life to use his religion to deny the possibility of death. This man would not accept the fact that his life on earth will terminate and undoubtedly was ill prepared to face his own death. Many people in our culture are not prepared to die, even though there are many features in our culture that will not let us forget death.



Tragedies involving loss of life are being announced every day in newspapers, magazines, television, radio, etc. There are discussions about the threat of atomic bombs to our lives, and so forth. People listen to these with remote interest and read murder stories for pleasure.

There are many emotions aroused by death. The most common is fear; the others are sorrow and anger. Some people never gain much insight into death; a few reject the idea of natural death and explain the causes of death in other ways, more acceptable to them.

Glasner and Strauss (11) focus on the interaction between hospital staffs and patients, rather than on the patients themselves. It is a report on contexts of action rather than merely on attitudes toward death. The authors claim that they have been less concerned with death itself than the process of dying -- a process often of considerable duration. The authors are interested in the ability of the medical staff, which takes care of the dying patient, to cope with the problem of facing death. They focus on the social action that arises while handling the death of patients and the social consequences for the medical staff, the patients, and their families. The analysis is based upon what the authors term "awareness context" -- referring to who, in the dying situation, knows about the probabilities of death for the dying patient.

## Life Cycle and Death

Many existing studies on death cannot be placed under one title or another. For example, those studies which discuss fear and anxiety of death are also concerned with changes in attitudes at different stages of man's life. On the other hand, some studies are specific and geared toward a certain age group. Unfortunately for this research, there are few studies on the attitudes of teenagers toward death or studies on any other aspect of death and teenagers. Most studies deal with older people, the terminally ill, and the aspects of fear and anxiety.

A study on a biracial group of 260 community volunteers, 60 years of age, in North Carolina, was reported by Jeffers and others (19). The respondents were asked the following questions during the course of a series of interviews and examinations: 1) Are you afraid to die? and 2) Do you believe in life after death?

In answer to the first question, 10 per cent of the respondents admitted fear of death, 35 per cent outrightly denied such fear, while the remainder gave qualified denials of fear. Respondents who answered negatively were more religious and experienced less rejection and depression.

To the second question only 2 per cent were denials, 21 per cent "not sure," and 77 per cent "yes, sure of it." Belief in life after death was found to be associated with less fear of death, religious activities, and less depression, lower socio-economic status, and more females than males.

Clinical impressions were that denial is an important mechanism for dealing with anxiety in old age.

Hendin (14) deals with some aspects of death. First, he is concerned with the criteria of death -- when is a person pronounced dead: when his brain stops functioning or when his heart stops beating? Even though this is purely a medical decision, people are the ones to decide. As Hendin presents it, for thousands of years, death has been considered as the cessation of the functions of life. Today the question is: **which** are the key functions of life? Another question is whether keeping a person on artificial maintenance of some of these functions could be considered as life.

Hendin raises the question whether a child should be told the truth, lied to a little, or kept from the truth regarding death. He points out that because of the anxiety about death adults have, they have a strong tendency to shield a child from death and dying. Psychologists, however, feel that it is better to tell children the truth about death at an early age. This should be done in a normal, matter-

of-fact fashion. The exposed child should know that death is a part of life.

A child's first concept of death is separation. This concept prevails until the age of three. Between ages three and five or six, children normally view death as a temporary situation, like someone resting or taking a trip. Up to about the age of ten, most children visualize death as a bogeyman, a skeleton, or an eerie ghost dressed in white. By about the age of ten, children are usually able to understand that "death" is not a person. At this age, children are usually able to formulate realistic concepts based on biological principles. Still, parents and teachers should discuss death with them; otherwise they will not learn that death is final.

Ginott(10) says that a child should not be deprived of his right to grieve and mourn. He should be free to feel sorrow in the loss of someone loved. The child's humanity is deepened and his character ennobled, when he can lament the end of life and love. A child who is not told of death in the family may become confused and feel great anxiety. He may fill the gap with figments of his imagination, usually far more bizarre and more frightening. These childhood fantasies can be carried into maturity. Children should be encouraged, according to Ginott, to express sorrow and to attend funerals. They should be told the truth and should be allowed to remain children in the sense

Yudkin (37) discusses the fears and fantasies children have about death. Yudkin calls for parents and teachers to help children understand death by telling them the truth about it, by bringing into the open the topic of grief and mourning.

Hinton (16) believes that children's ideas about death may sound naive or poorly integrated, because adults do not fully explain or reveal to them what death is.

The many scholars who discuss death and children agree that, in order to prevent fear and anxiety, death should be explained to the child. Sara Stein (35) wrote a book designed especially for children, with directions to parents on how to explain death. The book first discusses the subject with regard to the death of a pet, as recommended by many psychologists. Afterwards it brings up the topic of the death of a grandfather. With beautiful photographs it reveals the connection between life and death and the cyclicity that exists in our world. The directions or commentary which is written for parents may also help adults to understand better their own reservations about talking of death and to help them explain it to their children.

Marjorie Mitchell (30), in her extensive study about children's attitudes toward death, brings up the special attitudes of adolescents.

Mitchell found two modern elements: the adolescent's awareness of mass annihilation and the changing nature of birth, sex, and reproduction due to the advances of birth control.

Hogan (18) found that adolescents tend to view death as a biological end, in terms of their fear of the unknown, as punishment or reward, and as related to their religious beliefs. Additionally, females stress a concern for their families and friends. Psychoanalytical and sexual conceptions of death were not generally supported.

Kastenbaum (20) explored 260 teenagers and came to the following conclusions: the adolescent lives in an intense present; the "now" is so real to him that past and future become vague. Most of the teenagers regard their remote time fields as risky, unpleasant, and devoid of significant positive values. Eighty-five per cent of the sample give extreme longevity of life for themselves. Fifteen per cent only see death as a real prospect and plan their lives in this light. The death-oriented tend to be more outspokenly religious and church activities are important in their lives.

In other studies Kastenbaum (21) found that young men with low manifest death-concern showed significantly greater extension into

the future. Students projected their death as being a long way off (to their sixties) and as tranquil and graceful.

Galburgh and Rotman (9), in a study on 137 college students regarding their attitudes toward personal death, found that religion appears to have some effect on their attitudes. A belief in some sort of afterlife seems to be an important, though not necessarily a healthy way of adjusting to death. They did not find age, sex, education, and contact with death of others to be significant in affecting the attitudes toward death. It was found that the feelings about the subject of death are fairly well established by approximately eighteen years of age. It was found also that the attitudes were most significantly influenced by discussion with their parents at an early age.

The literature review presented here does not pretend to be exhaustive, but it does give an overall view of the different aspects being dealt with in regard to the topic of death.

As mentioned before, these works are only representative of the hundreds of books and articles which were reviewed. Even though it was hard to eliminate those which were not reviewed here, it is the investigator's feeling that the ones presented are the most relevant to this subject.

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## CHAPTER III

### METHODS OF RESEARCH

In this chapter, the methods used to measure attitudes toward death are discussed. The samples are described as well as the content analysis method that was used in support of the findings.

#### The Sample

Two available samples of teenagers responded to questionnaires. One group was from Israel and the other group was from the United States. During the week of July 19, 1974, eighty-four Scouts, boys and girls from Tel-Aviv, Israel, who attended a leadership training seminar, as representatives of their troops, were asked to answer the questionnaire given to them. The group answered the questions, supervised by adults to prevent discussions while doing so. No clues were given beforehand regarding the content of the questionnaire and there was no discussion concerning the subject.

All those interviewed were teenagers, fifteen to sixteen years of age. They were high school students and of the Jewish faith. They were from middle to upper middle-class families. The size of the Israeli sample totaled eighty-four, of which thirty-six were boys and forty-eight were girls.

The questionnaire distributed was in the Hebrew language. During the months of October and November, 1974, one hundred teenagers were asked to answer a questionnaire in Dallas, Texas. The youngsters were all members of Bnai-Brith Youth Organization (B. B. Y. O.), which is a non-affiliated youth organization for Jewish teenagers.

The subjects were interviewed while attending their regular chapter meetings. No advance clues were given and no discussion preceded their response to the questionnaire. An adult was present to prevent discussions while answering the questions.

The size of the sample totaled one hundred, of which fifty were boys and fifty were girls. The teenagers were all fifteen to sixteen years of age, all from middle to upper middle-class families, and all were high school students.

#### The Rationale Behind the Selection of Variables

To insure results which would meet the demands of this research, it was decided to control several variables:

1. All the teenagers are Jewish. The teenagers interviewed in Israel are Jewish, since people of the Jewish faith comprise the

major population of Israel and thus represent the school system, mass media effects, etc. Also, the literature suggests that religious differences result in different reactions. The practices of mourning, the philosophy behind the concept of death, vary between Judaism and Catholicism or Protestantism. It is not the purpose in this research to discover differences based on religious practices. As explained in the statement of the problem, this study is concerned with differences derived from different cultural settings.

2. All the teenagers are high school students, members of a Jewish youth movement, and of similar socio-economic background.

For many of the same reasons mentioned above, the major purpose of this study is not to seek differences based on socio-economic status or age. Thus, by controlling these variables, differences found between these two samples will not need to be attributed to these constant variables, but may be attributed to those variables not held constant.

This author is working with the assumption that the existing variables are similar in both societies, i. e., that being Jewish in Dallas is like being Jewish in Israel; that membership in a youth movement in Israel is similar to and has the same effects as being a member of a youth movement in Dallas; and that the socio-economic status of the respondents in Dallas is similar to that of the respondents

in Israel. The basis for accepting these assumptions lies in the following facts:

1. Teenagers from the northern part of Tel-Aviv are compared to teenagers from the northern part of Dallas. Both sections of these cities represent the dwellings of middle and upper classes.
2. All teenagers in both groups are high school students and thus exposed to the academic and social life of adolescence.
3. In Dallas, only members of the Bnai-Brith Youth Organization were interviewed since it is non-religious and is not affiliated with any Temple. The main goals of this youth movement are social goals within the context of Judaism (i. e. , all members are Jewish). The rationale of this movement is non-religious, which means that it does not concern itself, primarily, with religious practice.

For purposes of comparison, the Bnai-Brith Youth Organization is the youth organization which comes closest to the Scout movement in Israel. It should be noted that the Israeli teenagers interviewed are members of the secular wing of the Scouts (there is a small troop of Orthodox Scouts). The Scout movement in Israel is also a social movement which has as its goals, in addition to social activities, the education of values such as good citizenship. These same goals are found in the goals of Bnai-Brith Youth Organization.

### Measuring Latent Attitudes Toward Death

Most studies regarding attitudes, and most books which deal with attitude measurement, perceive the attitudes as straight lines, running from one extreme such as positive (agree) to the other, to the negative (disagree). These methods take for granted that a person has a constructed attitude toward any issue which could be either positive, negative, or neutral. (2)

This linear form of scaling of attitudes was not chosen in this research for two reasons: first, there is a possibility that an attitude toward death might simply not exist, or not be present in a part of our sample. It is also true that an individual's attitudes toward any issue could exist, but are dormant most of the time and may be awakened by a stimulus. The question is whether or not presenting a statement or a picture will evoke the response which we are looking for, and if we will use the statement method and the linear scaling -- is this really how the attitude toward death is shaped? A. N. Oppenheim (1, p. 107) doubts it: "There is no proof, however, that the model of a linear continuum is necessarily correct, though it does make things easier for measurement purposes. For all we know, attitudes may be shaped more like concentric circles or overlapping ellipses or three dimensional cloud formations."

As presented in the review of literature, attitudes toward death are believed to be changeable with age and if not dormant, at least not open. An attitude toward death is believed to be latent due to fears and anxieties regarding death. This study is not concerned with a response to a given statement, but the interviewee's own feelings toward death. The questions are intended to allow each respondent to create his own "statements," and by the way that he forms them, to understand his attitudes. Thus, the method of open-ended questionnaire was utilized in this study.

Taking into consideration that some questions will be avoided, no answer given, or answered "I don't know," it is our belief that no answer, or "don't know" represent forms of an attitude as well as a direct response.

The advantage of an open-ended questionnaire lies in its ability to get responses in the interviewee's own words. To the question, "what is death?", answers like "How would I know?", "I never experienced it," or "That's a dumb question" were offered. These kinds of responses can be as informative as agreeing or disagreeing to a statement.

#### The Problems of a Cross Cultural Study

The questionnaires given to the Israeli teenagers (Appendix I) and the Dallas teenagers (Appendix II) are similar but not identical.



(The variation was taken into consideration while coding answers.)

The variation between the instruments derives from the limitations that exist in administering a cross-cultural study. Some of the topics presented in the questionnaire have meaning to the American teenagers, but at the same time, they might be inappropriate and irrelevant to an Israeli teenager. For example, the question about preference of courses at school was very clear to the Israelis. At the age of fifteen, every high school student in Israel has to decide whether or not he wants to specialize in Humanities (Literature, History, Languages, etc.), Social Sciences, Biology, Mathematics, etc. After his selection is made, he is placed in a class where all of the courses are geared to the direction selected, and minor attention is paid to those that were rejected. In the United States, the method is different since most of the courses are electives and not compulsory. Thus, it is more difficult to code the answers of the Dallas teenagers on this question.

For the same reason, it was necessary to add and omit some questions. The following questions were added to the American questionnaire:

1. What do you think about serving in the army? This question was not necessary in the Israeli questionnaire because army

service is an expected part of life, as is schooling. It is compulsory and not voluntary.

2. Have you ever noticed obituaries in the paper? Do you read them? In the Israeli questionnaire, we did not ask this question because it was taken for granted that everyone notices them. It was decided to ask the question in Dallas because of the relegation of obituaries in American papers to back pages, which makes them unnoticeable.

3. What are the topics you discuss at meetings in the youth movement? This question was added after we learned that the Bnai-Brith Youth Organization's summer convention dealt with the subject of death. Since it is not a subject that is discussed in regular meetings, we wanted to see if it was still discussed by the members.

4. What are the circumstances under which you would be willing to give up your life? Give an example. It seemed to be interesting and important to discover if a teenager would consider this a possibility in the first place. In the second place, it seemed interesting to know what, and for whom, he would give his life.

The following questions were omitted from the questionnaire presented in Dallas:

1. Type of books you like to read. It seemed enough to know three books the interviewed read lately and infer from this.

2. Do you believe in the next world (or life beyond death)?

The answers given by the Israelis seemed inconsistent, and it was felt that the belief in the next world was imposed on them. By omitting this question, we wanted to see if this belief would arise in another way through other questions.

### Supporting Evidence

In order to discover the relative effect that the mass media has upon the individual in shaping his attitudes toward death, it seemed important to look into the role of newspapers.

During the month of March, 1974, two major newspapers, The Dallas Times Herald and Ha'aretz of Israel, were observed in order to find the relative space dedicated to the topics of death. It was expected that discussions of death in the form of reports and information concerning assassinations, armed robberies, accidents, and different types of crimes and accidents which result in death would be found. The other kind of information studied was obituaries and all kinds of information regarding funeral arrangements.

In Dallas, there are two major newspapers. In Israel, there are four major morning papers and two major evening papers in the Hebrew language. There are many others in foreign languages such as English, French, Arabic, etc. Ha'aretz is the major morning

paper in Israel and second in distribution in comparison with all other papers. The Dallas Times Herald has a distribution of 255,693 daily.

For twenty-five days in March, 1974, these two newspapers were observed and measured for every space devoted to the above-mentioned subjects related to death.

A distinction was made between information regarding death, related subjects and obituaries.

The measurements were taken by centimeter per column. The columns are equal in both papers, though the front page of the Dallas Times Herald is divided differently into larger columns and the measuring was done in consideration of and equation to the other parts of the paper. (Examples for columns and obituaries are in Appendix III.)

Census data were also used to support some of the findings and presuppositions.

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## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

The goals of this study were to determine

1. The various aspects of fear and its relation to death,
2. The way death is conceptualized by teenagers,
3. The effect of cultural differences on attitudes toward death,
4. The relationship between personal exposure to death and attitudes toward death,
5. The individual's ability to predict the length of his life,
6. The relationship between beliefs in afterlife and attitudes toward death, and
7. External effects, such as war, army service and death in family on attitudes toward death.

The questions presented to the subjects cover these various aspects of attitudes toward death and death-related behavior.

TABLE I  
 SOURCES OF FEAR AMONG  
 ISRAELI AND AMERICAN  
 TEENAGERS

	Israelis (n = 84)	Americans (n = 100)
Death	35.7%	42.0%
War	1.2	5.0
Loneliness	11.9	3.0
Darkness, animals	7.1	9.0
Conformity ("square")	14.3	18.0
No answer	29.8	23.0
Total	100.0%	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 8.44(4df)$   $P < .05$

The largest source of fear both for Israelis and Americans, though the Israelis to a smaller degree than Americans, is death. Overall the pattern is similar; both Israelis and Americans are mostly afraid of death.

Two questions were asked regarding the way one conceptualizes death:

- 1) What happens to people when they die; and
- 2) What is death?

The answers to the first question are categorized in Table II.

TABLE II  
THE RESPONSE OF AMERICAN AND ISRAELI  
TEENAGERS TO THE QUESTION: "WHAT  
HAPPENS TO PEOPLE WHEN THEY DIE?"

	Israelis (n = 84)	Americans (n = 100)
"Their soul goes to another world"	17.8%	31.0%
"Finished and that's it"	54.7	57.0
No answer	27.5	12.0
Total	100.0%	100.0%

The answers to the second question, "What is death?" are categorized in Table III.



TABLE III  
 DEFINITION OF DEATH BY ISRAELI  
 AND AMERICAN TEENAGERS

	Israelis (n = 84)	Americans (n = 100)
Life stops physically	64.3%	53.0%
Life stops physically and spiritually	10.7	23.0
Other	4.8	11.0
No answer	20.2	13.0
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Thirty-one per cent of the American teenagers believe in the eternity of the soul compared to 17.8 per cent of the Israelis. But at the same time, about an equal number of Israelis and Americans believe that when somebody dies, "he is finished and that is it." Some of the respondents went as far as to say "they are buried and rot." Interestingly, the results of the first question are not similar to the answers given to the second question regarding the definition of death. As shown in Table III, only 10.7 per cent of the Israeli respondents definitely believe that all functions stop compared to 54.7

per cent who respond likewise in the first question. Only 23 per cent of the American teenagers, compared to 57 per cent in the first question, responded in a similar and expected manner.

The combined results of Tables II and III to the question, "Do you believe in the next world?" are shown in Table IV. As these results indicate, when asked "What is death?", the respondents were not as certain about the discontinuation of the survival of the soul as they were in response to the question, "What happens to people when they die?". Both American teenagers and Israeli teenagers preferred to say that life stops physically, with no reference to the soul. This response indicates an uncertainty and indecisive opinion regarding the possibility of survival of the soul or afterlife. As opposed, only a third of the respondents believe in afterlife or the "next world." Also, about 22 per cent of the Israeli teenagers believe in the "next world," while 31 per cent of the American teenagers do so. About the same percentage of American teenagers and Israeli teenagers do not believe in the continuation of spiritual life. These results indicate the same pattern of attitudes toward the concept of "afterlife" and the concept of death in both Israeli and American teenagers.

that they can cry and mourn and should not have to take the role of a missing adult.

Hendin (14) suggests death be discussed in school by the way of talking about pets that children own or animals in general. This way it will not be personal and the subject will be accomplished in a simple matter-of-fact way that should not be offensive.

A special problem occurs when a child in a family is dying, since the adults rarely reach the stage of acceptance before the child dies. The dying child does not get any assistance and dies alone. Hendin thinks that the truth should not be kept from fatally ill children. They should be told of their sickness and their questions about death should be answered in order to ease their anxiety and fear, in order to let them die in peace.

Feifel (7) indicates that dying people wish to be surrounded by family, children, and friends. Hospitals, nevertheless, typically prohibit children from visiting patients. When permitted to do so, children are allowed in specific areas of the hospital at designated times. Moreover, some religions prohibit the presence of children during mourning or at funerals. For example, the Jewish book of law -- the Talmud -- says that children with their happiness, loveliness, and young age take the adults' mind off the mourning.

TABLE IV

THE BELIEF IN AFTERLIFE AND THE DEFINITION OF DEATH  
OF ISRAELI AND AMERICAN TEENAGERS

	Belief in the Next World	Life Stop Physically	Soul goes to Another World	Disbelief in Next World	Life Stop Physically & Spiritually	"Finished and That's It"
Israelis	22.6% (n = 19)	64.3% (n = 54)	17.8% (n = 15)	64.3% (n = 54)	10.7% (n = 9)	54.7% (n = 46)
Americans	31.0% (n = 31)	53.0% (n = 53)	31.0% (n = 31)	60.0% (n = 50)	23.0% (n = 23)	57.0% (n = 57)

About 50 per cent of both Israeli respondents and American respondents have attended a funeral.

TABLE V  
FUNERAL ATTENDANCE EXPERIENCE OF  
ISRAELI AND AMERICAN TEENAGERS

	Israelis (n = 84)	Americans (n = 100)
Attended	44.0%	47.0%
Did not attend	47.6	50.0
No response	8.4	3.0
Total	100.0%	100.0%

The variable of funeral attendance as an external effect on shaping attitudes toward death and as a cause of difference between the two cultures, Israeli and American, will have to be ruled out since both groups, Israeli teenagers and American teenagers, were equally exposed to the death and funeral of a relative. The distribution of attending and not attending a funeral is the same in both groups -- about 50 per cent attended and about 50 per cent did not attend a funeral.

The respondents were asked for the cause of relatives' deaths and what they thought would be the cause of their own death. The results are shown in Table VI.

TABLE VI  
CAUSE OF DEATH

	Car Accidents		Natural		War		Cancer, Heart Disease, Illness	
	R*	O*	R	O	R	O	R	O
Israelis (n = 84)	5.9%	61.9%	13.1%	40.5%	17.8%	36.9%	23.8%	51.0%
Americans (n = 100)	6.0%	5.0%	25.0%	47.0%	0	0	55.0%	25.0%

\*R - Relative's cause of death; O - What the respondent thinks will be the cause of his own death.

$$\chi^2 = 109.1129 \quad \text{d.f.} = 7 \quad p < 0.001$$

The selected relatives of most teenagers in Israel died of illness (i. e., cancer, heart attacks and others) and as a result of the war, with only 6 per cent dying in car accidents. Yet, when conceptualizing one's own death, Israeli teenagers gave car accidents the highest rating; illness the second highest rating, natural death third highest rating, and war received the lowest rating.

The fact that war is thought to be the least likely cause of death might indicate an attempt by Israeli teenagers to repress this possibility. In the Yom Kippur War (October, 1973), approximately 2,800 Israeli soldiers were killed in two weeks. The population of Israel was approximately 3,200,500. Thus, the impact of the war was felt strongly, especially when taking into consideration the small size of the country of Israel and the fact that Israel has gone through four wars in twenty-six years of its existence. Still, the response indicates a tendency to overlook the possibility of death during wartime. The fact that 36.9 per cent of the Israeli respondents did take war as a possible cause of one's own death, as compared to none of the American respondents, shows that the peculiar situation Israel is in has a strong impact on its teenagers. The idea that 36.9 per cent of the Israeli respondents associate war with their own death is alarming, yet a realistic approach as well. These Israeli teenagers face the possibility of war every day of their lives and are only a few years away from army service which will put them in the front lines if war begins again.

The high consideration given to car accidents as the major cause of one's own death seems natural when one looks at the data reported in October, 1974, that the percentage of car accidents in

Israel is three times larger than in the United States. In 1972 there were 22,011 casualties in car accidents in Israel, in which 651 were fatalities. One hundred of the 651 killed were children under nineteen years of age; 399 were between the ages of fifteen to sixty-four; and forty-nine were older than sixty-five. (The data are taken from the "Israeli Government Census Data, " 1972.)

The rate of death in car accidents is higher in Israel than in the United States, but not as high as the death rate resulting from war.

The American respondents listed natural death as the major cause of one's own death and listed car accidents last, even though the rate of death in car accidents is high in Texas. In 1970, 3,635 people were killed in car accidents in Texas. The population of Texas in 1970 was 11,196,730. Thus, the rate of death in car accidents in Texas alone is approximately 15 per cent higher than in Israel. Once again, however, it may be that the impact of car accidents is felt much stronger in a country the size of Israel. (According to the cease fire lines of 1967, Israel is 34,493 square miles, including lakes; Texas is 267,339 square miles, about 7.75 times larger than the state of Israel.)



Further evidence of the impact the wars have on teenagers in Israel are formed in the answer to the questions "Are you afraid of war and why?"

The results of these questions show that 67.8 per cent of the Israeli respondents and 75 per cent of the American subjects are afraid of war-related death. The rate of fear is high. In both populations, 24 per cent of each said that they are not afraid of war, but 9 per cent of the Israeli subjects did not respond to the question. Sixty per cent of both populations said that they are afraid because war might result in death.

Although both populations expressed their fear of war and associated it with death equally, none of the American teenagers listed war as his own expected cause of death, while 37 per cent of the Israeli teenagers did so.

These results indicate that while war is a remote possibility for the American teenagers -- something one sees in the movies or has read about in books -- the Israeli teenagers are faced with war and are realistic to a certain degree as to its possible results. Fear of war might be so universal that its association with death is commonly found, but the concept of war as one's own expected cause of death is not. In this case, it appears to be a result of a reality, of growing up under the threat of war and facing signs of war in everyday life.

It is important to notice that a greater proportion of females answered the question, "Are you afraid of war?", and that they are more afraid of war and war-related death than the males. Of the 68 per cent of the Israeli teenagers who are afraid of war, 48 per cent are females. Of the 60 per cent of the Israeli teenagers who associate war with death, 42 per cent are females. This response indicates once again the repression of war and death that exists in a country which finds itself at war. Males are most likely to be the ones to fight and to face death, while the females usually stay out of battle situations. Despite this, less than 50 per cent of the males are afraid of war and associate it with death (the males who are afraid are only 20 per cent of the total Israeli respondents).

The same proportion of males and females expressed fear of war and associated war with death in the American sample, but considering the fact that war is not "real" to American teenagers, it seems that this finding is not significant.

In this aspect one has to consider the possibility of associating death with military service, especially in Israel where military service is compulsory. Of the Israeli teenagers 90.9 per cent responded that they are not afraid of army service, while only 8.3 per cent said that it depends on the assignment. Still 100 per cent of the Israeli teenagers said they will definitely serve in the army.

Eighty per cent of the American teenagers said they did not plan to serve in the military and 50 per cent thought military service should be voluntary and also that they would not like to serve at all. Almost half (44 per cent) of the American teenagers are afraid of military service as compared to none of the Israeli teenagers, as reported previously.

Again, these responses strongly suggest repression of the possible association of the military, war and death. Obviously these findings indicate that the Israeli educational system effectively prepares its citizens for defending their country. These Israeli teenagers view military service as vital to their existence and thus avoid fear of war despite the fact that war in Israel means possible death whether one serves in the army or not (more so if one serves in the army). There is no simple explanation for the high rate of fear expressed of military service among the American teenagers, since military service is voluntary and rarely associated with active participation in war. The most recent wars the United States has participated in, like Viet Nam and Korea, are not regarded as vital to the survival of the United States.

When asked "How long do you want to live?", similar responses were received from both groups.

TABLE VII  
ISRAELI AND AMERICAN TEENAGERS'  
DESIRED LONGEVITY

	Israelis (n = 84)	Americans (n = 100)
Maximum, above 90	60.7%	62.0%
70 - 90 years	16.7	27.0
Less than 70	11.9	2.0
No response	10.7	9.0
Total	100.0%	100.0%

The results show that both Israeli teenagers and American teenagers want to live a long life, longer than the average. Still more American teenagers wish to live to be older than 70 years. More Israeli teenagers wish to live less than 70 years. The American teenagers tend to project longer life than do the Israeli teenagers.

When asked "Do you really think you will live up to this age?", the following responses were found:

TABLE VIII  
 AMERICAN AND ISRAELI TEENAGERS' BELIEF  
 IN DESIRED LONGEVITY

	Israelis (n = 84)	Americans (n = 100)
Yes	34.5%	56.0%
No	15.5	11.0
Maybe	27.4	18.0
No response	22.6	15.0
Total	100.0%	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 6.8072$$

d. f. = 2

P < .02

The American teenagers appear to be more optimistic than the Israeli teenagers. The Americans find it easier to project long life with no interference. The American teenagers showed similar optimism in response to the question "Do you think something will interfere in the course of your life?"

TABLE IX  
 POSSIBLE INTERFERENCE IN LIFE OF  
 ISRAELI AND AMERICAN TEENAGERS

	Israelis (n = 84)	Americans (n = 100)
Yes	63.1%	42.0%
No	5.9	37.0
No response	31.0	21.0
Total	100.0%	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 22.9754$  d. f. = 1  
 significant at .00 level

Only 5.9 per cent of the Israeli teenagers believe nothing will happen that will interfere with their life, compared to 37 per cent of the American teenagers.

The desire to live long life in both groups of respondents is typically found in this age group. It is difficult for most teenagers to project their future lives or to look back on the past. Thus, the optimism revealed among the American teenagers appears normal, while the skepticism of the Israeli teenagers is irregular. This tendency toward optimism by the American teenagers is expressed

strongly in their responses to the question, "Explain why do you believe you will live up to that age."

TABLE X  
REASONS FOR THE BELIEFS OF AMERICAN  
AND ISRAELI TEENAGERS IN LONGEVITY

	Israelis (n = 84)	Americans (n = 100)
Average life in the country	19.0%	7.0%
Want to live	14.2%	45.0
Can't believe I'll die	3.5%	0
Can't tell	13.0%	6.0
"Why not," "because"	5.9%	4.0
Die in a war	3.5%	4.0
No response	40.5%	40.0
Total	100.0 %	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 27.8982$       d.f. = 5      significant at .00 level

The American teenagers believe in the possibility of living a long life because they want to live! This optimism is not shared by the Israeli teenagers. More Israelis than Americans believe that something will interfere with the course of their life. The Israeli teenagers

show more consideration for the average life span in the country. More Israelis indicate that they cannot tell whether they will live to the age they want to live to.

The average length of life in Israel in 1972 was 73.2 years for females and 70.5 for males. Only 16.6 per cent of the Israeli respondents said they expect to live to the age of seventy or greater. Only 19.04 per cent of the Israeli teenagers explained their desire to live to a certain age on the basis of the average length of life in the country.

The average life span in the United States in 1972 was 67.4 for males and 75.2 for females. Yet, only 27 per cent of the American teenagers think they will live to be in this range. The vast majority -- 62 per cent -- think they will live longer and only 7 per cent stated "average length of life" as the basis for their wish to live up to a certain age.

One question was introduced to the American teenagers only in an attempt to measure the regard given to life in general and to find under what circumstances one would be willing to give up one's life. The response shows a high regard for one's own life, on the one hand, and little willingness to give it up, on the other hand.



TABLE XI  
 CIRCUMSTANCES FOR GIVING UP ONE'S LIFE  
 (AMERICANS ONLY)  
 n = 100

For family or friends	M*	19	%	35	%
	F*	16			
When one's life is painful	M	0		5	
	F	5			
For the United States	M	6		10	
	F	4			
For one's religion	M	2		2	
	F	0			
Never - life is too precious to give up	M	6		22	
	F	16			
No response	M	17		26	
	F	9			
Total		100	%	100	%

\*M - Males; F - Females

The fact that 22 per cent are simply not willing to sacrifice their lives under any circumstances and that 74 per cent answered the question could indicate a high regard for life on the one hand and an avoidance of the possibility of death for oneself on the other.

## Exposure to Newspapers

One of the most important agents that affects and forms attitudes is the media. The exposure of American teenagers and Israeli teenagers to the media was investigated by analyzing one form of media -- the newspapers. In order to find their impact on formation of attitudes toward death, two major newspapers, one in the United States and one in Israel, were studied, as well as the time teenagers devote to reading newspapers and their favorite columns.

After measuring the space devoted to death and death-related subjects in The Dallas Times Herald (1), a daily evening paper which is being published in Dallas, Texas, and Ha'aretz (2), a daily morning paper, published in Tel Aviv, Israel, the following observations were made. It is necessary, first of all, to differentiate between two types of information presented in the newspapers. One type includes the accounts and stories about crimes that have resulted in death (e. g., armed robberies and murders). In this category are also included accidents that result in death and feature stories about victims of the above-mentioned or any story about a death of a well known person. This type of information will be referred to as "Type R, " indicating "Regular. "

The other type of information presented in the newspapers includes obituaries and different types of death notices. Within this category (referred to as "death notices") there are two types of information: (1) death notices with a photo of the deceased and a short feature about his life and work. This includes information about the rites and the time scheduled for the funeral. (2) The other type are small obituaries that appear in the newspaper among the personal notices. These obituaries are small and hardly noticeable unless one looks for them for a purpose.

The following results demonstrate the space devoted to the above-mentioned types of information as measured during the month of March, 1974.

TABLE XII

SPACE\* DEVOTED TO DEATH AND RELATED SUBJECTS  
IN THE ISRAELI AND AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS

	Type R	Death Notices
<u>The Dallas Times Herald</u>	2, 190 cm	3, 776 cm
<u>Ha'aretz</u>	1, 813 cm	12, 036 cm
Difference	+ 377 cm more in <u>The Dallas Times Herald</u>	- 8, 860 cm more in <u>Ha'aretz</u>

\*The space is measured by centimeters per column.

The Dallas Times Herald devoted 377 centimeters per column more space to "Type R" death reports. On the other hand, the Israeli newspaper devoted 8,860 more centimeters per column to personal death and funeral notices.

It is hard to find any significance in the difference between the two newspapers regarding "Type R" information. It is only natural that a large city like Dallas with its social problems, developed highways, and armed robberies will have more to say on this subject. By the same token, one can say that it is only natural for Israel to have so many death notices, since it is only five months since the Yom Kippur War; Israel lost about 2,800 soldiers in that war, and the names of the dead were revealed only lately. But what makes the difference is not the war, because even if the number of people killed in the war were subtracted from the total difference, there would still be more than a 6,000 centimeter difference in the Israeli newspaper. The difference, thus, is due to the different customs existing in both countries.

When one opens an Israeli newspaper, he is struck immediately with the sight of big black frames with names written in them (even if he does not read Hebrew, the kind of information given is obvious) covering between a quarter of a page to one whole page. It is a custom in Israel to announce the death of a person to the newspapers. The

space devoted for the death announcement ranges between three centimeters on two columns to an entire page. The range depends on how rich or famous the person was who passed away. (The newspaper charges for death notices as much as for advertisements.)

Furthermore, it is a custom that the family, friends, employers, etc., will express their sorrow, agony and participation with the family sadness, through the newspaper, by putting a death notice of their own for that person. Sometimes, if the dead man was well known, there will be a few pages devoted to death notices for that person, which might appear for a few days.

This custom has a strong impact, since as mentioned before, the first thing that catches the eye when opening an Israeli newspaper are the black frames. It also has greater impact since the country is so small in size and population and since the newspapers are national and not local.

It seems that findings about reading habits, especially those of newspapers, will indicate to what degree a teenager is liable to be impressed by these death notices. The more hours an Israeli teenager dedicates to newspapers, the more likely he is to observe the names mentioned in the black frames, as well as their presence in the newspaper in the first place.

While assuming that the black frames will have a strong impact on the Israeli teenager, the opposite might be assumed regarding Dallas youths. As mentioned before, the obituaries in The Dallas Times Herald are very tiny and are lost among other personal notices like legal announcements, items for rent, and repairs. There is nothing to distinguish the death notices in the Dallas newspapers from any other sections of the paper. Eventually, they do not catch the eye and attention immediately and not even after reading the paper for a while, unless one looks for them in the first place.

These findings are meaningless without information about reading habits of the individuals. Some people might be conditioned to look for the death notices whether they are framed or not. The impact of the black frames is undoubtedly stronger, more impressive and unavoidable. In Dallas papers, it is very easy to avoid looking at them, and thus not even think consciously or subconsciously about death. The black frames in the Israeli newspapers would cause everybody, even without reading the details, to think about them. Their impact

might remind one of the subliminal advertisements in the movies which were experimented with a few years ago -- seeing them, but not being aware of it, and subconsciously think about death, as a result. The analogy is proper if one assumes that since the Israelis are very accustomed and used to the death notices, they do not even notice them anymore (unless somebody close passed away and they look for the notice).

An attempt was made to find articles about "death" as a subject. Even though the situation in Israel called for such articles, there was only one article in Ha'aretz which dealt with the subject and it also was a review of a radio program which involved that subject. Ironically, the article suggested that it is tasteless to discuss such a subject, useless and even stupid! No similar article dealing with this subject was found in The Dallas Times Herald.

Further research into the subject of newspapers' impact on the formation of attitudes toward death of teenagers was conducted as the teenagers were asked to state the number of newspapers they read daily, the time the teenager devotes to the reading and what sections they prefer to read.

TABLE XIII

NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS READ DAILY BY  
ISRAELI AND AMERICAN TEENAGERS

Number of Newspapers Read Daily	Israelis (n = 84)	Americans (n = 100)
1	70.2%	60.0%
2	21.4	29.0
3	5.9	-
4	2.4	-
No response, none	-	11.0
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Both Israelis and American teenagers mostly read one newspaper every day. Of the American subjects 11 per cent did not respond to the question or stated that they did not read any newspapers. More Israeli teenagers read one newspaper -- 10 per cent more, while more Americans -- 7.6 per cent more -- read two newspapers each day.

This table indicates that the majority of teenagers are exposed to newspapers every day. The degree to which teenagers are exposed



is expressed by the time they devote to reading. The time devoted is described in Table XIV.

TABLE XIV  
TIME DEVOTED TO READING NEWSPAPERS  
BY ISRAELI AND AMERICAN TEENAGERS

	Israelis (n = 84)	Americans (n = 100)
1/2 hour a day	40.7%	68.0%
1 hour a day	39.3	17.0
1-1/2 hour a day	9.5	1.0
2 hours a day	1.2	2.0
More than 2 hours	3.6	-
No response	5.7	12.0
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Israeli teenagers devote more time to reading newspapers than American teenagers. Fourteen and three/tenths per cent of the Israelis devote one and a half hours and more daily to their reading compared to three per cent of Americans. Also, 39.3 per cent of the Israeli teenagers compared to 17 per cent of the American teenagers devote one hour daily to their reading, a difference of 22.3 per cent

more. Finally, 27.3 per cent more Americans compared to Israelis dedicate only half an hour a day to reading newspapers. This table indicates that Israeli teenagers are exposed to newspapers more than American teenagers, if one assumes that the amount of time devoted to reading newspapers has an affect on exposure.

In order to discover if the teenagers are differentially exposed to death-related information, the subjects were asked to list their preference of columns in the newspapers. It is assumed that within the category of "news" will be included "Type R" information. Death notices were placed along with other types of columns in the Israeli questionnaires. The American questionnaire included a specific question regarding obituaries.

The results indicate that when not asked about reading obituaries separately, only 5.95 per cent of the Israeli teenagers reported reading them. When asked specifically about obituaries, 44 per cent of American teenagers noticed them, while 65 per cent said they read them sometimes. It thus seems that Israeli teenagers avoided mentioning obituaries possibly because they did not consider them as "a newspaper column," and thus did not report reading them. This low percentage stands in opposition to the length of time devoted to reading newspapers. By contrast, the high percentage of American teenagers that reported reading obituaries did so after being asked specifically

in a separate question. When asked singly, "What newspaper columns do you like to read?", none of the American teenagers reported reading obituaries. One can only guess at what would have occurred if the Israeli teenagers had been asked specifically about reading obituaries, but it appears that a significantly high percentage would have reported reading obituaries.

The fact that many American teenagers reported reading obituaries sometimes shows that Americans are exposed to death, at least through the media. Interestingly, these figures correlate with the information that about half of the Israeli teenagers and American teenagers were present at a funeral. Since 24 per cent of the teenagers who reported reading obituaries had also attended a funeral, approximately one-quarter of the American teenagers have been exposed to death both through their everyday reading and a death in the family or of friends.

The preference of columns is shown in Table XV.

TABLE XV  
PREFERENCE OF COLUMNS READ BY  
AMERICAN AND ISRAELI TEENAGERS

	Israelis (n = 84)	Americans (n = 100)
News	83.3%	37.0%
Sports	30.9	52.0
Family and education	29.7	21.0
Science	15.5	4.0
Art, culture and entertainment	11.9	17.0
Politics, editorials	15.5	16.0

The most striking difference is the interest in news, including "Type R" information. Eighty-three and three/tenths per cent of the Israeli teenagers read the news compared to 37 per cent of the American teenagers -- a difference of 46 per cent. On the other hand, American teenagers show a much greater interest in sports (52 per cent compared to 30.9 per cent, a difference of 21 per cent).

The difference in the interest shown toward news can be partly explained by the political situation in Israel. The constant tension

based on the bad relations of Israel and the Arab states is felt by most Israelis and thus arouses the interest of almost everyone in the country. For the purpose of this study, it indicates that the Israeli teenagers are far more exposed to "Type R" information than the American teenagers. This information along with the fact that the Israeli teenagers devote more time to reading newspapers indicates that Israelis are more exposed to death and death-related subjects as reported in newspapers than the American teenagers. Furthermore, about 84 per cent of the Israeli teenagers have been exposed to this type of information in the newspapers every day for at least half an hour to an hour compared to 37 per cent of the American teenagers.

#### Comments by Respondents

Several subjects made personal comments which support the conclusion that Israeli and American teenagers repress discussion of their attitudes toward death. In some way, their attitudes toward death can be illustrated through their own response to the questions. A section at the end of each questionnaire was devoted to the subject's comments or thoughts given only the instruction to comment, if they so wished, on any of the subjects raised in the questionnaire.

Even though there was no specific question asked, a large number of the teenagers commented and expressed their feelings. Of the Israeli teenagers 26.2 per cent commented. The Israeli comments

ranged between very negative to very positive attitudes toward the questionnaire and the topics raised. They ranged between "idiotic questionnaire," "very stupid" to "too deep, one feels his personality is being stripped," "very good questions, right to the point."

Following are some of the comments which were representative of the Israeli attitude:

--"Inconsiderate questions. The questions hurt people to whom something has happened."

--"The questions about death seem to be quite stupid, since I did not experience it yet and it is frightening to know about it. A girl my age should not think about death."

--"This questionnaire evokes unpleasant thoughts and fears."

--"It evokes frustrated thoughts about dying in a war."

--"Illogical questions"

--"The questions were interesting, actual to our age. Should have enlarged the questions about death."

--"You didn't have to raise such subjects."

--"I never thought about it (death)."

--"It is clear to me that men are afraid of death, since it causes the cessation of life activities and everyone wants to live. Thus the questionnaire is not vital."

--"It is very convenient to believe that the dead live in the next

world. After my father died, only two years later I began to believe in the next world and since then I always have somebody to talk to and I know he understands. "

Among the American teenagers 68 per cent commented on the questionnaire. Most of the remarks are negative in their attitudes toward the questions and the topics raised. Twenty-three per cent of the American teenagers said they did not want to talk about death, because the subject is morbid, they professed to be too young to discuss death, while others said life was more important to think about.

Fifteen per cent of the American subjects thought the questions about death were dumb and stupid.

Eleven per cent thought the questions about death were unusual, hard to answer or unanswerable (i. e. , too personal and not vital).

Three per cent declared that the one who wrote the questionnaire must be sick, deviant, have a hang-up on death, and would be better off "hanging himself. "

Only thirteen per cent thought the questions were interesting in the sense that they made them think about life and the future.

Three comments were different from the others:

--"Death should not be feared of. I believe that when you get older, you learn to accept it without question. "

--"These questions are of no concern of yours. How should I know how and when I will die or why I would give up my life. These are morbid questions and when the time comes I think I will handle it well without dwelling on it now. "

--"I believe that war and death are too commonly related. Right now the U. S. is at war against the Soviet Union, in a manner of speaking, yet there are no dead. "

The fact that such a large percentage of the subjects declared negative attitudes toward discussing death is alarming. These comments prove a strong and overt tendency to avoid discussion and thoughts about death. The American teenagers appear more conscious of this and admit their fears, while the Israeli teenagers commented less and thus appear to be repressing their thoughts about death. Several of the remarks of the former group are aggressive and are aimed toward the investigator, e. g. , "go hang yourself, " "you'll be the cause of my death, " "you're a sick person asking all these questions, " etc.

It seems to the investigator that these comments have an importance even greater than the responses to the questions. The comments were written after answering the questions, indicating that the teenagers had been aroused to the topic and the attitudes they have were brought into the open. The questions about death forced



the teenagers to think about death openly maybe for the first time. The teenagers' comments were given voluntarily and thus they express the teenagers' free feelings and attitudes toward death which overall are negative, indicate fear of death and fear of war and, as mentioned previously, a strong tendency to avoid and repress thoughts of death.

The following attitudes toward death could be inferred from analyzing the findings of the research:

1. Death is strongly feared.
2. Death is not perceived only as a result of old age; death is a result of external causes like car accidents and illnesses.
3. Death is highly associated with war; death is being highly associated with war by the Israeli teenagers.
4. Most of the teenagers show a tendency to be secular in their attitudes toward death.
  - a) Death is viewed as the end of existence of both body and soul.
  - b) Only a small percentage reveals religious tendencies in their attitudes toward death, like a belief in the next world.

5. All the teenagers wished to live to an old age, greater than average length of life in their country. Death seems a remote possibility.

6. Teenagers have a positive and optimistic approach to life and negative approach to death and thus they prefer to suppress thoughts about it.

7. No relationships were found between the experience of death by being exposed to death of a relative and feelings about one's own death.

8. There is no difference between the attitudes toward death of those who attended a funeral and those who did not.

9. The attitudes of the American teenagers toward the course of their lives and the cause of their own death are very optimistic. The American teenager finds importance in his own desire to live and the individual's power to control his own life and its length as well as the cause of his death.

10. The attitude of the Israeli teenagers is influenced, to a very high degree, by the existing political situation in Israel. War and car accidents are considered as major causes of death. More external causes for death are taken into consideration by the Israeli teenagers.

11. Americans are slightly more religious in their attitudes toward death than are the Israelis.

12. The American teenagers associate army service with death.

13. Israeli teenagers show a greater tendency to repress death thoughts and discussions than do the American teenagers.

Israeli teenagers keep their attitudes toward death latent even after being stimulated by the questionnaire, while American teenagers bring their attitudes toward death to the open.

14. Israeli teenagers are much more exposed to death in reality by media than are American teenagers. The Israeli teenagers have all the conditions, exposure to media, political situation, number of wars, car accidents, etc., to be exposed to death to a very high degree.

## CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. The Dallas Times Herald, March, 1974.
2. Ha'aretz, March, 1974.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

In this research an attempt was made to find the attitudes toward death of teenagers in two different countries -- the United States and Israel.

As indicated in the first chapter, the importance is twofold: to discover the attitudes toward death, and to determine if teenagers in these countries differ in their attitudes.

In analyzing the findings, one is able to see clearly that teenagers do not like to discuss and to think about death. Unlike the Biblical approach which relates that an integral part of living is dying and one has to face death and accept this fact of life, the teenagers in this research preferred to avoid the subjects and repress thoughts about it.

An explanation of this tendency to avoid and repress the subject is fear of death and it is supported by the subjects' avoidance response and negative commentary. A very strong fear and anxiety of death exists among the teenagers of these two modern countries. The American teenagers are more open in revealing their attitudes and show optimism in their outlook on life. When commenting on the subject of death, the Americans are extremely outspoken and aggressive. This

response shows that the subjects feel threatened by thinking or being forced to think about death. The passive reaction of the Israeli teenagers indicates a tendency to repress thoughts and discussion of death. Yet, the Israeli subjects are realistic to a very high degree regarding the causes of death. In comparison to the American teenagers, the Israeli teenagers fear war as a cause of death to a higher degree.

The Israeli teenagers read more newspapers, devote more time to reading them; and among friends and adults, as well, politics is the topic discussed most. Discussing politics for an Israeli means projecting on the future. The interaction between foreign affairs and local affairs is highlighted. Israeli politics involves relations with the Arab nations, existence within a hostile world and Israel's own security, army and expectations of war. From the subjects' responses, one learns that 80 per cent of the Israeli teenagers discuss the former topics every day of their lives. Only 6 per cent of the Americans do so. This indicates that different life styles have a strong impact on the formation of attitudes toward death.

The political reality in the state of Israel, Israel's existence in a hostile Arab world, and its survival through four wars forces the Israeli teenager to be more realistic in his attitudes toward death. The Israelis are brought up knowing the strong connection between the fate of their state and their own fate. A war involves each indi-

vidual in Israel. Thus, an Israeli teenager would give a high consideration to war as a cause of death.

The tendency of the American teenager to be optimistic and to believe in the power to control his own cause of death is a reflection of what he has been taught all his life. The army service is voluntary, the United States is involved in wars which are not vital to its existence, and often without having to send soldiers to maintain its national existence. A teenager in the United States knows that his life is not dependent on the political relations of his country with other countries, as they are now. The possibility to live with total avoidance of war makes the American teenagers very optimistic in their approach to life. There is nothing wrong with this approach if it does not cause the teenagers in the United States to be detached from reality. From the responses given to the questions in this study, one gets the impression that American teenagers are detached from reality and are highly protective of their feelings toward life and death. The Americans' tendency to be very optimistic on the one hand, and on the other hand to avoid discussing death and its realistic causes, does not reveal as realistic an approach as Israeli teenagers.

It is the conclusion of this research that both major tendencies are inappropriate: the Israeli orientation to be over-realistic regarding causes of death and giving a very high consideration to war as a cause

of death, and the American tendency to be over-optimistic and detached from reality by avoiding common causes of death. Both Americans and Israelis tend to avoid death by repressing thoughts and discussions about it, though the Israelis do so to a higher degree.

The importance of being able to cope with death was discussed in the previous chapters. Every normal and healthy person fears death, but in teaching about it, one can achieve an ability to face his ultimate end with dignity and strength of mind. Studying the different philosophies concerning death that exist within different cultures and religions, modern concepts of death, customs, causes of death and so forth will enable each person to form an attitude toward death which will be optimistic as well as realistic and will enable him to help himself and others to cope with death and meet it when necessary with dignity. One cannot control circumstances like war, but one could be prepared to face it. One cannot prevent car accidents, murders and cannot control in a democratic society the fashion in which the media presents death by different causes. Yet proper education can restore the damage done by the media and dim the negative impact of unfortunate life-taking incidents. It is vital that people will learn to cope with death, because it is a part of their life, because it is the living ones who have to meet the death of their loved ones and to cope with it.



It is the opinion of the investigator that only through schooling is it possible to achieve the goal of teaching youngsters appropriate outlooks on life and death and prepare them to meet death. Special courses should be offered in every school dealing with the life cycle. These courses should discuss the treatment of death in the literature and in the media, the philosophy of death as perceived by different religions, the customs of bereavement in different cultures and the individual's personal feelings about death. At the end of such a course the student should be able to discuss openly his own feelings toward death and project life in a better way. At this point, the student should be able to help others overcome fear and anxiety of death and enjoy life in that light.

A course about the life cycle should answer the needs of the students. One cannot use the same course outline for American students and Israeli students. As shown in the study, the Israeli attitude differs from that of the Americans as a result of being brought up in different environments, different cultural settings and being exposed to different ideas.

A course on men and death for Israelis should emphasize the bright side of life. It should brighten the Israeli's outlook on the grim side of reality (e. g. , war) and help the students to bring their fears of death out into the open. The Israelis are rarely exposed to

any religion other than Judaism. Educating the people with the mourning and the philosophies of death of the different minorities living in Israel, such as the Moslems and the Christians, might help the Israeli teenager to understand death better. The bibliography offered to Israeli students should not place as much stress on heroism in war. One grows up to believe that those who fight and die in a war are heroes. The Israeli teenager should learn that their fear of war is natural and common. A confrontation with these common feelings such as fear of war will enable the Israeli teenagers to bring their own fears out into the open.

The American teenager is very optimistic and avoids the grim aspects of reality when projecting on his own life and death. It is assumed that exposure to death through television made the American teenager "tough." As a result he became dulled to death and specifically to the external causes of death such as car accidents, war and murder. Being exposed to the many crime-dramas and movies about wars place the external causes of death as contrary to natural death; in the category of fiction, "It happens in the movies, but it cannot happen to me." The curriculum of a course on life and death for American teenagers should analyze the way death is described by the media and by works of fiction and non-fiction. The main objective would be to help American teenagers become more alert and more

aware of death and its different causes. The course should offer reading material illustrating the dignity of death, whether it be from natural or from external causes, and it should encourage the students to think and talk about the reality of death and its causes. It is the practice of some schools to invite a religious figure--a priest, a minister, or a rabbi-- to speak to the students about death. This attempt is hardly enough and most often the instructor will concentrate only on the problem of dying patients.

The need for an innovative program within educational institutions on the life cycle --life and death--is most urgent and vital. It is hoped that educators, psychologists and sociologists in both Israel and the United States will view the results of this research as evidence of the real need and will thereby recommend a program of study concerned with death and the experience of death.

## APPENDIX I

### Questions Presented to Israelis

1. גיל \_\_\_\_\_ 2. כחה: \_\_\_\_\_ 3. מגמה: \_\_\_\_\_
- מין: זכר \_\_\_\_\_ נקבה \_\_\_\_\_
4. באם הינך חבר בחנועת נוער, כמה שנים הינך חבר?
5. האם בכוונתך לשרת בצבא? כן \_\_\_\_\_ לא \_\_\_\_\_ לפני או אחרי לימודים גבוהים?  
האם הינך מפחד/ת משרות צבאי? למה?
6. כמה עתונים הנך קורא/ת (כל יום)? אף אחד \_\_\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_
7. כמה מזמנך מוקדש לקריאת העתונים ליום \_\_\_\_\_ לשבוע \_\_\_\_\_ ?
8. איזה סוג ספרים אהובים עליך - הרפתקאות, מדע בדיוני, רומנים, ספורים קצרים וכיו"ב ?
9. ציין/י שמות שלושה ספרים שקראת לאחרונה  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. אלו מצורים בעתון אח/ה מעדיף/ה לקרוא ?
11. אלו נושאים עולים לדיון או לשיחה כשאת/ה עם חבריך בני-גילך?
12. אלו נושאים מצויים בשיחה עם מבוגרים ממך - הורים, קרובים חברים מבוגרים, שכנים וכיו"ב?
13. ממה הינך מפחד ביותר ? א. \_\_\_\_\_  
ב. \_\_\_\_\_  
ג. \_\_\_\_\_

14. האם נכחת פעם בלוויה ? כן \_\_\_ לא \_\_\_

אם כן, מה הייתה קרבתך למנוח ?

בת/בן כמה היית כשנכחת לראשונה בלוויה ?

15. האם הינך מאמין/ה בעולם הבא ?

16. מי הם האנשים הנערצים עליך ביותר ( חיים או מתים ) ?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ .2 \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ .4 \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_ .6 \_\_\_\_\_

17. מה זה מוות ?

18. האם לפי מיטב זכרונוך, מישהו מחבריך הטובים, קרובים או משפחה שבאמת אהבת,

מה (מכל סיבה שהיא) בעשר השנים האחרונות? כן \_\_\_ לא \_\_\_

אם כן, אנא ענה/י על השאלות הבאות:

מה הייתה קרבת המשפחה      גיל הנפטר      סיבת המוות

1.

2.

3.

19. עד איזה גיל ברצונך לחיות?

האם את/ה חושב/ת שתחיה/י עד גיל זה? למה?

20. חארי/י בקצרה את המהלך והמאורעות העיקריים של החמש-עשרה עד עשרים שנה

הבאות של חיך, כפי שהם מצטיירים לך.

21. האם את/ה חושב/ת שמהו עלול להפריע למהלך זה? מהם הדברים העלולים להפריע?

22. מה לדעתך יגרום למוחך? (אנא, מנה את כל האפשרויות העולות על דעתך ברגע

זה.)

23. מה לפי דעתך קורה לאנשים כשהם מתים ?
24. איך זה משפיע על האנשים הקרובים להם ( החיים ) ?
25. האם את/ה מפתח/ת ממלחמה ? נמק/י.
26. באם יש לך הערות בנוגע לשאלות ולנושאים שהוצגו בשאלון זה, אנא , כתוב/י אותם להלן.

תודה רבה

APPENDIX I

(Translation)

North Texas State University

Department of Sociology

QUESTIONNAIRE

You are kindly requested to answer the following questions with all sincerity and honesty. The questionnaire is anonymous and your privacy will be protected. If you have any further remarks, please add them at the provided space at the end of the questionnaire. Please answer the questions in the space designated, or place a "v" by the correct answer.

1. Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Grade \_\_\_\_\_
  3. What is your major? \_\_\_\_\_
  4. If you are a member of a youth movement, name the number of years you have belonged. \_\_\_\_\_
  5. Do you intend to serve in the army? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
  6. Before or after higher studies? \_\_\_\_\_
- Are you afraid of army service? Why? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

6. How many newspapers do you read every day? None \_\_\_\_\_  
1 \_\_\_\_\_  
2 \_\_\_\_\_  
3 \_\_\_\_\_

Per week? \_\_\_\_\_

7. How much of your time is dedicated to reading the newspapers

Per Day \_\_\_\_\_ Per Week \_\_\_\_\_

8. What kind of books do you like to read - adventures, science-fiction, novels, short stories, etc?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

9. Name three books you have read lately.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. What are the columns you like to read in the newspaper? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. What subjects are raised for discussion when you are with friends your age? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. What subjects are common in a conversation with older people -



parents, relatives, older friends, etc? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13. Of what are you most afraid:   A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_

14. Have you ever been present at a funeral?   Yes \_\_\_\_\_   No \_\_\_\_\_
- How old were you?

15. Do you believe in the next world? \_\_\_\_\_

16. Who are the people you most admire (alive or dead) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

17. What is death? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

18. To the best of your recollection, did any of your best friends, relatives, or family, that you really loved, die (from whatever cause) in the last ten years?   Yes \_\_\_\_\_   No \_\_\_\_\_

If positive, please answer the following questions:

What was your relationship to the deceased? \_\_\_\_\_

Age of deceased \_\_\_\_\_

Cause of death \_\_\_\_\_

19. To what age do you want to live? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you think you will live to this age? \_\_\_\_\_

- Why, or why not? \_\_\_\_\_
20. Describe briefly the current and main events of the coming fifteen to twenty years of your life, as you can see them. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
21. Do you think something will disturb these trends? \_\_\_\_\_  
What are some of those things? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
22. What do you think will be the cause of your death? (Please mention all the possibilities that occur to you at this moment) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
23. What do you think happens to people when they die? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
24. How does death affect the people who are close to those who die? (Those who remain alive) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
25. Are you afraid of war? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
Explain. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

26. Further remarks (related to the questions or subjects raised  
in this questionnaire) \_\_\_\_\_

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Thank you.

APPENDIX II

North Texas State University

Department of Sociology

QUESTIONNAIRE

You are kindly requested to answer the following questions with all sincerity and honesty. The questionnaire is anonymous and your privacy will be protected.

1. Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
2. Grade in school \_\_\_\_\_
3. Preference of courses at school: (Check the area you prefer)  
Humanities \_\_\_\_\_ Social Studies \_\_\_\_\_  
Biology \_\_\_\_\_ Mathematics or other  
Sciences \_\_\_\_\_  
Art \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_
4. Are you a member of a youth movement or organization? \_\_\_\_\_  
Name the organization \_\_\_\_\_
5. What do you think about serving in the army? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you intend to serve in the army? \_\_\_\_\_

7. If Yes, before or after college? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Are you afraid of serving in the army? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How many newspapers do you read every day? None \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
1 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_
10. How much time do you dedicate to reading newspapers? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. What happens to people when they die? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Name 3 books you have read lately: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. What newspaper columns do you like to read (politics, crime, sports, education, art, etc.?) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. Have you ever noticed obituaries in the paper? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Do you read them? \_\_\_\_\_
15. What subjects do you usually discuss with friends? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
16. What are you afraid of mostly? \_\_\_\_\_
17. What subjects do you usually discuss with your parents or other older people? \_\_\_\_\_
18. What are the topics you discuss at meetings in the youth organization? \_\_\_\_\_

19. Have you ever been to a funeral? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
20. Did any of your relatives, friends, etc. die in the last 10 years?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
What was the cause of death? \_\_\_\_\_  
How old was he or she at the time? \_\_\_\_\_
21. How long do you want to live? \_\_\_\_\_
22. Do you really think you will live up to this age? Explain, please.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
23. What are the major events, as far as you can imagine them, for the next 15 to 20 years of your life? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
24. Do you think something might interfere? \_\_\_\_\_  
What is or are these things? \_\_\_\_\_
25. What do you think will be the cause of your death? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
26. Are you afraid of war? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
27. What is death? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
28. What are the circumstances under which you would be willing to give up your life? Give an example. \_\_\_\_\_

- 
- 
29. Please write down any comments or thoughts you might have, regarding any of the topics raised in this questionnaire. \_\_\_\_\_
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

Thank you.

APPENDIX III

Obituaries from Ha'aretz - March, 1974

במלאות שנה לפטירתו של יקרנו

## ישראל ערמוני

ז"ל

נקלה לקברו להתייחד עם זכרו ביום ראשון כ"ט סיון תשל"ה 8.6.75 בשעה 5.00 אחה"צ בבית העלמין בהרצליה.

המשפחה המתאבלת

במלאות שנתיים לפטירתו של בעלי, אבינו וסבנו  
האהוב והבלתי נשכח

## ראובן קרמר

ז"ל

תיערך אזכרה ביום ראשון, כ"ט בסיון תשל"ה (8.6.75), בשעה 4.30 אחרי הצהריים, בבית העלמין בקרית שאול. תחבורה תצא משד' דוד המלך 13, ת"א, בשעה 4.00 אחה"צ.

המשפחה

חברת ארוז קירור  
מנהליה ועובדיה

עומדים נדהמים וכוואבים עם  
פטירתו בטרם עת של

## מנחם אבוש

ז"ל

ומשתתפים בצער המשפחה  
ובית „צרכן“.

במלאות שנתיים להלקח מאתנו יקירתנו האהובה  
והבלתי נשכחת

## פרומה רובינסקי

ז"ל

תקיים אזכרה ביום ראשון, כ"ט בסיון תשל"ה (8.6.75), בשעה 4.00 אחרי הצהריים, בבית העלמין בקרית שאול. נפגשים ע"י השער.

המשפחה

נציבות מס הכנסה ומס רכוש  
הנהלת האגף  
מנהל משרד מס רכוש חיפה  
וחבר עובדיו  
משתתפים בצערה של הברתם לעבודה

למדן סימי



APPENDIX III

Obituaries from The Dallas Times-Herald - March, 1974

# OBITUARIES

## Mrs. Eula Morgan, R. B. Holifield, 74, longtime Dallasite Kan-Tex firm head

Funeral rites for Mrs. Eula C. Morgan, 82, of 1900 O'Neal, were held Tuesday morning at Lamar & Smith Funeral Home in Dallas, with burial in Old Oak Cliff Cemetery.

Mrs. Morgan died here Sunday in a nursing home after a long illness.

Mrs. Morgan was a native of Sunset and spent most of her life in Dallas. She was a member of Tyler Street United Methodist Church and the Flora Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star.

Survivors include her sons, Dr. J. W. Morgan of Denton, Dr. Jack N. Morgan of Fairfield, Iowa; daughter, Mrs. George D. West of Gainesville; and one sister, Mrs. Rex G. Stark of Dallas.

## Alva McDowell, school employe

Alva McDowell, 70, of 601 Devonshire in Richardson, a longtime employe of the Richardson school district, died Monday in a local hospital of natural causes.

The funeral was to be at 1 p.m. today at Restland Memorial Chapel, with burial in Restland Memorial Park.

Robert Buckner Holifield, 74, of 5360 Livingston, retired president and owner of Kan-Tex Construction Corp., died Monday in a local hospital after a short illness.

Funeral will be at 2:30 p.m. Wednesday at Sparkman-Hilicrest Northwest Highway Chapel, with burial in Pleasant Mound Cemetery.

Mr. Holifield was a Dallas native. He served in the Marines during World War II. He retired as president and owner of Kan-Tex in 1969.

Survivors include his wife, Mrs. Ruth Holifield; son, Robert Holifield of Fort Ord, Calif., and daughter, Mrs. Dolores McCain of Dallas.

Survivors include his wife, Mrs. Ina McDowell; son, E. A. McDowell; mother, Mrs. Ollie McDowell; brother, Lee Otis McDowell, all of Richardson; and two sisters, Mrs.

DEATH NOTICES . . . . 940 DEATH NOTICES . . . . 940

**APPLEWHITE**  
Sara Irene, 1801 Gilbreath Cr. Survived by husband, James Applewhite, Irving; daughters, Mrs. Doris Ellis, Mrs. Sylvia Gill, Mrs. James Roark, all of Irving; Ten Grandchildren. Services 11:00 a.m. Wednesday, Restland Wildwood Chapel, with Father Terrance Roper officiating. Interment Restland Memorial Park.

**RESTLAND-LAUREL LAND FUNERAL HOMES**  
Greenville at Restland Rd. 238-7111

**BARKER**  
Willie C. (Bud), 2130 Peggy Lane, Garland. Survived by wife, Pauline Barker; son, Mickey John Barker, Garland; brother, Jack Barker, Dallas; sisters Bea Jones, Dallas, Betty Newton, Bridgeport, Tex., Vera Slaton, Mangum, Okla., Opa. Needham, Amarillo. Services 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, WILLIAMS FUNERAL CHAPEL, Dr. Carr Suter officiating. Interment Restland Cemetery.

**WILLIAMS FUNERAL DIRECTORS**  
716 W. Garland ave. 276-5000

**BAILEY**  
Mrs. Merv T., 910 Jardin. Arrangements pending.

**ANDERSON-CLAYTON BROS.**  
Mesquite 285-5489

**BLUHM**  
Flora Dean, 2761 Northaven, Dallas. Services were held Tuesday 11 a.m. CORTEZ CHAPEL, Rev. William W. Baker officiating. Interment Liberty Cemetery, Sulphur Springs. Memorials may be made to the Kane Foundation.

**CORTEZ FUNERAL HOME**  
3040 Stemmons Frwy. 630-5341

**BROADHURST**  
Mrs. Willie Frances, 11442 Newkirk, Dallas. Survived by husband, Philip A. Broadhurst of Dallas; four sons, Clark Broadhurst of Tyler, Texas, Steve Broadhurst of Dallas, John Broadhurst, Argyle, Texas, Jack Broadhurst of Dallas; one daughter, Mrs. Kathleen Charles of Wylie, Texas; seven grandchildren; one sister, Mrs. Shirley Critzer of Dallas; one brother, Mr. Eddie Sparks of San Diego, California. Services 10 a.m., Wednesday, RHOTON-WEILAND-MERRITT CHAPEL with the Rev. Marlin Maddox officiating. Interment Restland Memorial Park. Pallbearers: Henry Charles, Joe Evans, T. F. Genn, Rev. Carl Lambert, Rev. Parks Norris Jr., Rev. Charles Gates.

**RHOTON-WEILAND-MERRITT**  
1-35 at Crosby, Carrollton 242-5261

**COMPTON**  
Agnes M., 4301 Loneleaf, Garland. Services 10:30 a.m., Thursday WILLIAMS FUNERAL CHAPEL, Dr. Carr Suter officiating. Interment Mills Cemetery.

**WILLIAMS FUNERAL DIRECTORS**  
716 W. Garland Ave. 276-5000

**CAMPBELL**

**LESLIE**  
Artie. Survived by son, Jerry Vernon Leslie, Terrell; sisters, Mrs. Elmer Caughron, Mrs. Edith Robertson, Mrs. Elton Lewis all of Terrell. Services 2:00 p.m. Anderson-Clayton Chapel with Rev. A. J. Fineout officiating. Interment Oak Lawn Memorial Park.

**ANDERSON-CLAYTON BROS.**  
Terrell 563-6417

**LAWTON**  
Meridith C., 5650 Churchill. Arrangements pending.

**TROY SUGGS FUNERAL HOME**  
7623 Military Pkwy. 381-1109

**LUTTRELL**  
Homer Lee (Dick), 1402 S. Hampton. Arrangements pending.

**DUDLEY M. HUGHES**  
400 E. Jefferson 946-5133

**LAWTON**  
Meridith C., 5650 Churchill. Survived by son, Bill Lawton of Mesquite; sister, Mrs. Lillian McClure of Dallas; daughters, Mrs. Lillian L. Lewis, Mrs. Louise Dawdy, both of Dallas; five grandchildren. Services 11 a.m., Wednesday, TROY SUGGS CHAPEL with Rev. Jim Jordan officiating. Interment Restland.

**TROY SUGGS**  
7623 Military Pkwy. 381-1109

**SOUTHARD**  
Mrs. Edwin M. (Lorraine W.), formerly of 6852 Ponderosa Cr. presently of 915 Porter, Apt. 279, Wichita, Kansas. Survived by husband, Edwin H. Southard, Jr., Wichita, Kansas; brother, C. E. (Lefty) Williams, San Antonio, Texas. Graveside services 2:00 p.m. Wednesday, Restland Memorial Park with The Rev. George E. Luck officiating. Interment Restland. Family requests Memorials be made to the American Cancer Society.

**RESTLAND-LAUREL LAND FUNERAL HOMES**  
Greenville at Restland Rd. 238-7111

**SLAYDEEN**  
Mrs. Carrie, Presbyterian Village, Dallas. Survived by daughters, Mrs. Fred E. Timmons, Dallas, Mrs. Floyd A. Cockerham, Red Oak; 4 grandchildren, 8 great grandchildren, one great great grandchild. Services 4:00 p.m. Tuesday, Byrum Chapel, with Rev. Robert Reeves officiating. Interment Red Oak Cemetery.

**BYRUM Funeral Home,**  
Lancaster

**STRICKLAND**  
Mrs. Nina F., Rt. 3, Wills Point, Texas. Arrangements pending.

**TROY SUGGS**  
7623 Military Pkwy. 381-1109

**SHANZ**  
Theresa R., 2516 63rd St., Lubbock. Services 3 p.m., Tuesday, TROY SUGGS CHAPEL, Rev. I. W. Greer officiating. Interment Rose Lawn Cemetery, Seagraves.

**TROY SUGGS FUNERAL HOME**  
381-1109

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