

TIKVAT SHANI

JUDAISM: RELIGION OR WAY OF LIFE?

Translated from the original Hebrew by
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Selections from
SHA'AR YOSEF

A MONOGRAPH BY
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Nefesh, Neshama, and the 613 Mitzvot



Reincarnation in Jerusalem



Reincarnation in Tzefat

TIKVAT SHANI

INTRODUCTION

This monograph is devoted to discussing the Judaic concept of *Nefesh* (soul). Prior to delving directly into this topic, some additional concepts are introduced to facilitate understanding of the major theme.

Laws of Nature

There is a tendency to believe that this world is governed by laws of nature without any specific direction or supervision, and that the world evolved into existence on its own millions of years ago.

The following questions present a major challenge to this viewpoint:

- Where did the first force, which caused the existence of the universe, come from?
- How did something come from nothing? Or, to put it more simply, who created nature?

By way of analogy, consider someone who presents us with a beautiful painting and claims that it was not created by a human artist. Rather, it emerged through “chance” by a bottle of ink and blank paper being placed on a table, and a passing cat knocking over the ink onto the paper — thus creating this picture. Surely we would view such a person as mentally deficient (1). If so, when considering the magnificent and marvelous picture of the universe, with its inanimate and living entities, why do we tolerate the notion of self-evolution without a Creator? (Incidentally, in this analogy with the cat, even if such an “accident” were feasible, the question arises as to where the ink and paper came from.) (2)

Indeed the world operates according to laws of nature, but this nature must have a Creator who possesses the ability to modify the laws which He created. It is logical to assume that the power of this Creator is not physical because physicality implies limitation, a characteristic which cannot be attributed to the Creator of the universe (3). Likewise, the Creator cannot be described in terms of a physical image. As humans we are not capable of fully understanding Him due to our physical bodies which limit our senses to perceive only material matter. Nevertheless, as previously stated, we are logically compelled to believe in His existence.

The Creator is diversely referred to by the prophets as: “G-d of the Universe”; “King of Nations”; “King of Israel”; “G-d of Israel”; “Lord of the Earth”; “Creator of Heaven and Earth and all its Contents.” He oversees all His creatures—ranging from the smallest insect to the largest animal—while subjecting the world to the laws of nature, which operate along consistent principles (4), and to the influence of the galactic stars.

Referring to Him in her prayer, Hannah exclaimed “G-d causes death and gives life, He lowers people and lifts them up. He impoverishes and makes wealthy, etc.” (5). Although these phenomena appear natural, it is G-d who created and directs nature. Therefore, if He wishes He can alter nature for the sake of His beloved followers as in: splitting the Red Sea for our forefathers in the desert (6); providing the Mana from heaven as their food (7); splitting the Jordan River (8); destroying the Jericho walls (9); and so on. Furthermore, any person who manifests true faith in His existence and prays to G-d in a time of need, will be assisted by Him — often contrary to natural laws. Examples of the latter include Shimshon (10), Menashe (11), etc. To this very day, G-d is described as close to all who call upon Him with sincerity (12).

G-d created man with four physical elements (energy sources): fire, air, water, and earth (13). According to the biblical text (14) man was created in the image and form of G-d. The question arises, based on our previous discussion, how can G-d be characterized as possessing a physical image or form? However, the true meanings of the text is that the Creator imbued man with His wisdom and instilled in him a spiritual component beyond the four physical elements. This spiritual aspect is referred to (*Genesis 2:7*) as the “soul” of life — “Man became a living soul”. Through this soul he became differentiated from all animals, and was charged with dominating all creation. As we state in our prayers “Man is no different from all animals since all is trivial (15) except for the pure soul,” which constitutes our uniqueness and spiritual essence.

Recognition of the Creator

Adam — being the first creature to possess wisdom, unlimited potential, and free will — recognized the powerful force which created him. This knowledge of the Creator was vivid and undisputed, comparable to a man who always sees the king, clearly recognizing him and his image. However, after Adam sinned and ate from the *etz hadaat* (tree of knowledge) his body became an increased physical entity, and was transformed to also possess

knowledge of evil and negativity (16). At that point the nature of his prior knowledge of the Lord had escaped him. While *intellectually* he still endorsed the definite existence of the Creator, it fell short of the recognition one has for a friend whose *image* is also known. Thus, he remained “naked” from his previous recognition. This is the meaning of the text, referring to Adam and Havah (Eve) after the sin — “They knew that they were naked” (17).

Subsequently, people became limited in the extent to which they recognized their Creator. As long as they were bound to their physical bodies, the capacity to know G-d was limited to mere *intellectual* knowledge of His existence. However, since a purpose of creation is for mankind to *fully* and *clearly* recognize the nature of the Lord, death was decreed upon all people. After death, when people are separated from their bodies, they gain the capacity to know G-d on a higher spiritual plane. This is corroborated by the meaning of the text, “no man can see me and live”(18). Seeing refers to *understanding* which is seeing in the “mind’s eye,” since the eye is a camera which transforms the image to the mind. In short, while physically alive man cannot fully comprehend G-d, but after death he can.

The basic knowledge and belief in the existence of G-d was transmitted by Adam to his children and so on down through the generations. They all understood G-d as the Creator, according to their own capabilities. This was very consistent until the generation of Enosh, who erroneously followed the influence of the stars, and deemed them as deities (19). They deserted the belief in one eternal G-d who created the world and its contents.

The only ones who maintained the original authentic belief was Noach (Noah) and his sons. Therefore, when G-d was angered by the evil actions of that generation He sought to destroy all humankind, with the exception of Noach and his family. He instilled in Noach a deep internal feeling state known as *ruach hakodesh* (20), the holy spiritual state through which Noach foresaw the emergence of the great flood and the need to build an ark in order to be rescued. Indeed he built the ark, and after the flood his family constituted the only survivors. It is through them that the entire world was populated. However, they did not recognize the Creator, with the exception of Shem (Noach’s son) who transmitted this legacy to Ever, his great grandson (21).

They attempted to teach this faith to the larger population, but the masses were more attracted to belief in the planets of the galaxy, whose influence was perceived by the physical senses (according to the accepted astrological wisdom of the day). They worshiped the planets through

various physical forms, which are referred to as “*elohim acherim*” (22), alternative deities. Thus, the teachings of Shem and Ever were not adhered to until the time of Avraham, our forefather. Avraham examined all the forms and stars which people worshiped in his day, and concluded that they too are creatures, and that there must exist a supreme designer. He adopted the viewpoint of Shem and Ever and went to study Torah under their tutelage. Following a period of his own development, Avraham began to assemble large groups of people, and imbued them with a belief in the existence of a true Creator (23).

As a student in the school of Shem and Ever, Avraham had not only achieved a clear recognition of the world’s Creator and inventor of nature, but also the *purpose* behind His creating our world as well as the spiritual worlds. As noted above, this knowledge was originally transmitted by Adam, who manifested this awareness by virtue of being the most wholesome and integrated creature. Avraham had written books on this topic, discussing the development of all the spiritual worlds, from the highest emanation through our physical world, and all that they contain (24).

This knowledge was transmitted by Avraham to his beloved son, Yitzchak (Isaac), who in turn passed it on to his sons, Yaakov (Jacob) and Esav. However, Esav chose to limit his activities to hunting and related physical matters, and neglected this area of study. As such, this knowledge remained in the province of Yaakov, who also wrote a book on this topic (25). Yaakov transmitted this spiritual knowledge to all his twelve sons, who willingly accepted it.

The twelve tribes taught the subject to their children and so on to future generations where it remained for approximately 130 years. During their enslavement in Egypt most of this knowledge was forgotten, due largely to the extremely harsh labor required for building the Egyptian cities (26). As a result, this knowledge only remained among one tribe, the children of Levi, who were exempt from the Egyptian enslavement. They clung to it with the same passion which they received from Yaakov. Thus, Moshe (Moses) who was a Levite, learned to recognize the creator of man and the universe. Through this knowledge Moshe elevated himself, and reached high levels of prophecy. The power of this prophecy propelled the redemption of the Jews from Egypt, and led to their designation as a nation — thereby obtaining the Torah, its commandments, and inheriting the Land of Israel.

CHAPTER 1

THE NATURE AND ESSENCE OF THE SOUL

In everyday parlance we are accustomed to saying that a person has a soul. We also tend to utilize such expressions as: "Departing of the soul," "Depth of the soul," "He is hurting to the bottom of his soul," and so on. These phrases are routinely employed without any notion as to the essence of the soul, and where it resides in the human body. Is it in the head? heart? feet?

Judaic teachings espouse the viewpoint that man, like all of creation, was formed with four physical elements (energies): fire, air, water, and earth. However, this accounted only for man's corporeal structure — his flesh, blood, and bones. What remained lacking was the life force, the spirit which activates the nervous system and drives all physiological functions, through which man is transformed from a mere form to a living body which moves, talks, and behaves. At the time of creation, this force known as *Nefesh*, was injected in man through attachment to the purest component of his blood (a total of 87 grams). It is this *Nefesh* which activated his brain and converted him to a "living" human.

To this very day, the genetic make-up of the human sperm encompasses a composite of the elements of fire, air, and water (1). When the sperm flows with force, these elements combine with a component of the soul which keeps them alive, preventing the sperm's demise, and eliciting formation of a fetus. However, this cannot be accomplished without the fourth element, earth, which is necessary for creating a human body. This element, earth, exists in the woman's egg, found in the follicle, and contains the hormone estrogen. When the male sperm and female egg unite at a specific temperature, these four elements combine and direct the formation of a fetus. It protects the embryo until it obtains the requisite 87 grams of blood, after which the *Nefesh* attaches to it with greater intensity — developing the fetus,

infant, child, adult, and staying with him until death.

This *Nefesh* contains spiritual organs and veins parallel to the physical body. Each spiritual organ is attached to its physical counterpart (2). It functions similarly to an electrical current, generating energy for the entire body. Although the soul is located throughout the body, it has pivotal bases — without which the body could not exist.

This is different from the absence of soul in an arm or leg, due to amputation, since the body can still exist without them. However, with its absence at the pivotal bases, it cannot be united whatsoever with the body. There are several such bases for the various components and levels of soul. The base for *Nefesh* is the liver, for *Ruach* it is the heart, and for *Neshama* it is the brain.

When not connected with the physical body, the soul is capable of powerful sensations. It can perceive events taking place thousands of miles away, and may even sense futuristic events. The soul comprehends the *essence* of all spiritual states, and all that happens within them. Its union with the body imposes restrictions upon it in accordance with the physical limitations of the body.

In potentiality, if the body was capable, the soul would teach it to walk and talk at birth. In actuality, the weak features of the body limit the potential impact of the soul. As the physical body develops, the soul's potentiality continues to be actualized.

This spiritual soul which activates the body is known as *Neshama*. Due to its highly spiritual nature it cannot be integrated with the physical elements, just as water and fire do not merge. Rather, it becomes enveloped in a thin body — comprised of the purest component of human blood and the *lowest* part of the soul (relatively speaking). This body is referred to as *Nefesh*. Therefore, at times, the higher level of soul, *Neshama*, is also referred to as *Nefesh*, as stated in connection with the creation of Adam: "And He blew into his nostrils a *Neshama* of life and the man became a living *Nefesh* (3).

This composite of *Nefesh* was dubbed by the early Greek philosophers as "hylo" — namely, the element containing all other elements, which cannot be seen due to its transparency (4). Through this force the human body becomes capable of seeing, recognizing, and feeling physical phenomena as well as attaining higher level spiritual functions such as knowing and remembering.

Ultimately, this *Nefesh* is transformed into 5 spiritual components, according to the following levels, in ascending order: *Nefesh*, *Ruach*,

Neshama, *Chaya* and *Yechida*. They do not enter the person at once, but rather in a graduated sequence.

As previously indicated, *Nefesh* is the lowest spiritual level, which unites with the greatest physical component of the body — the purest 87 grams of blood. *Nefesh* is also present in every living creature. In fact, at some level it also exists in plants and even inanimate objects. As a life force, it maintains the intactness of a hard rock (preventing its disintegration into dust), and also promotes growth in plants. (It is likely that it is *Nefesh* which integrates the electrons, protons, and neutrons in atoms — the basic particles of matter.) However, in humans it is more developed than in other living creatures. The human-animal parallel is elaborated upon in various scriptural verses (6).

Ruach is the second level of soul, which humans can acquire by elevating their character and exercising self-control over such mundane pleasures as excessive food, money, etc. However, the body and *Nefesh* can exist without this level; indeed most humans only possess the level of *Nefesh*. Nevertheless, the person who develops the level of *Ruach* is fortunate to acquire a complete comprehension of the essence of physical and spiritual worlds in more perceptible modes. Above *Ruach* is the level of *Neshama*, which is only accessible to people who demonstrate even higher levels of self-control and holiness. (This level cannot be acquired without studying our holy *Torah*.) (7) As *Neshamah* enters the body and unites with *Ruach* and *Nefesh* it elevates the person to greater appreciation of the secrets of the universe, which are revealed to *Neshamah* while still united with the body.

These integrations of *Neshamah* with *Ruach* and *Ruach* with *Nefesh* occur only when a person is sleeping. This is the intent of the text in *Iyov* (Job) which states: “My *Nefesh* longs for you at night while the *Ruach* within me will be aroused” (8).

An even higher level of soul is *Chaya*. Recognition and comprehension of creation and the Creator at this level is as clear as that possessed by Adam immediately following his sin. Due to the intensity and power of *Chaya* it does not enter the physical body, but envelopes it as a spiritual cover and stimulates the high level of development. The term used by kabbalists to define this state is “*Or makif*,” the encircling light.

Yechida is the fifth and highest level of soul. The person who merits its achievement is transformed to a state of enlightenment comparable to the level of Adam *prior* to his sin (see Introduction above). Such a person can never die, since death was decreed as a consequence of the sin (9). Most

people require a total separation of body and soul in order to be capable of such enlightenment. Once people reach this level in their lifetime, it is pointless for them to experience death.

Very few people since the beginning of time were able to reach this level. Among those few was Chanoch, the son of Yered, who ascended with his body to the world of the angels, as it is stated, "And Chanoch clung to G-d, and he disappeared because G-d claimed him" (10). Similarly, the prophet Eliyahu (Elijah) reached this level and ascended to the sky in a storm (11). Likewise, our sages (12) describe a woman who achieved this state and did not require death — namely, Serach the stepdaughter of Asher, son of Yaakov, our forefather (13).

The soul is divided into many small components. In general terms, although everyone possesses *Nefesh*, individuals vary in the specific components of *Nefesh* which they possess (14). An individual's personality and behavior determines the number of parts that the soul will merit to acquire.

CHAPTER 2

DYNAMICS OF THE SOUL

As previously stated, when the soul unites with the body, its remarkable powers are restricted in accordance with limitations of the body, which serves as a tool of the soul. Nevertheless, once people are ready, the soul enlightens them with its spiritual force. Therefore, people who avoid mundane social interactions and trivial pursuits can achieve some significant spiritual enlightenment — for example, revealing the hidden past and predicting the future.

On a higher level, people who reach “soul elevation” through song and joy — authentic ecstasy, as opposed to frivolous happiness (1) — can acquire knowledge of the Creator’s intentions and actions (if they possess *Neshama*). This level is referred to as *nevuah*, prophecy. Therefore, when the prophets wanted to receive prophetic revelations, they elevated their souls through Torah study, song melodies, and musical instruments (2). For example, in reference to the prophet Elisha it is stated, “As the musician was playing the melody, the spirit of G-d dwelt upon him.”(3)

At times when a person is in a peaceful state of sleep and inner tranquility his dreams will reveal events which are destined to materialize. The underlying basis for this process is that when the soul is in a relaxed state it stimulates brain waves which transcend the present existence, thereby revealing mysteries and personal secrets. This is the meaning of the Biblical text, “Through a dream will I speak to him” (4). It should be emphasized that this is possible only in relaxed sleep, for in usual sleep (and sometimes even in relaxed sleep) dreams are stimulated by gases from the digestive system, as a function of foods the person ate (5). These gases flood the brain waves, resulting in frivolous dreams. This is what Shlomo HaMelech (King Solomon) was referring to when he said that “most dreams are of meaningless content.”

When a person is immersed in a specific subject and falls asleep, he/she can also achieve a modest insight through truth-revealing dreams. This is implied by a specific verse (7) in Iyov, "In the vision of a night's dream, when slumber fell upon the people then will He reveal . . ."

Sometimes during sleep the soul departs from the body, though it remains connected to it through a thin "spiritual" knot, and floats through the atmosphere above distant lands. It may encounter familiar people and return to the body. Upon awakening, the person will interpret this perception as part of a dream. A person who reached the level of *Ruach* can actually command his soul, during sleep, to explore any desired place, including the upper worlds. The details of this phenomenon will be elaborated upon at a later point.

The soul is also capable of becoming sick, which means that it is not optimally integrated with the body. This may be due to depression from overstimulated nerves, or from engaging in studies beyond one's cognitive capacities. Alternatively, it can be caused by deprivation of normal development during childhood. Another possibility, common among many people, is that during childhood they experienced emotional trauma in a particular area of development.

They may have been normal in all other dimensions, but in one or several specific areas they were emotionally fixated. Consequently, at an older age, these people will experience psychological limitations and symptoms in spheres related to the specific fixation (8).

The electrical energy which the soul generates when connected to the body is activated according to the development of the brain waves, which provide the brain with energy to control the entire body. (Since the soul is distributed throughout the body, the electrical waves stimulate all components of the brain, each of which is parallel to a particular body organ and controls a specific physical function.) It is therefore possible to determine an individual's personality or pathology from electrodes which measure brain waves (EEG recordings). Other means of assessment and diagnosis include graphology (handwriting analysis), palmistry, etc. which are beyond the scope of this discussion.

CHAPTER 3

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Shlomo HaMelech (King Solomon) stated, “And man returns after death to the earth, but the spirit will return to G-d who gave it to him” (1). These words capture the essence of the Jewish perspective on the eternity of the soul.

It is a well known chemical principle that matter can never be destroyed. For example, burned wood is converted to charcoal, another form of matter. Likewise, after death the human organism disintegrates, and each of the four elements of which it is comprised returns to its source. Since most of the human body is composed of earth, the Biblical text asserts that “you are earth and to earth shall you return” (2). Similarly, the other elements return to their origins, with the exception of a small bone in the human neck which remains forever. It is a composite of all four elements, and provides the nucleus for resurrection of the dead, a topic which cannot be addressed at this point.

Judaic teaching views eternal life not merely as an extension of physical life, but as the ultimate purpose. Prior to the development of a person, *Nefesh* is separated from *Ruach*, and *Ruach* is separated from *Neshama*, *Chaya*, and *Yechida*. The only way *Nefesh* and *Ruach* can unite is through human actions, carried out within the context of free will. Therefore, the soul (*Nefesh*) enters the human body for a pre-determined, fixed time period (3), in order to earn the privilege of uniting the five spiritual forces into one entity. (However, it is possible for this pre-determined time to be shortened or expanded.)

If a person merits it, by accomplishing the purpose and mission for which he was created, and acquiring at least the level of *Neshama*, then upon leaving the body at death, his perfected soul will ascend to worlds higher than those occupied by angels. The soul will enjoy the pleasures of knowledge and pure wisdom of above, known as the *upper gan eden*. The

physical body, which is but a clothing for the soul, remains in *this world* after death, either as a whole *or* in disintegrated form until *techiyat hameitim*, resurrection of the dead. At that time, all the elements will reunite, and the person will then live forever. He will be able to experience all the spiritual delights with his renewed body. The person will achieve the heights of Adam prior to the sin, thereby integrating all five levels of soul discussed above.

It is pertaining to this time period that the following prophecy was written: “And the land shall be filled with the wisdom of G-d like water covers the sea bed” (4). During this period people will reach levels of *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshama*, *Chaya*, and *Yechida* within their physical bodies, and obtain an understanding of the higher spiritual forces. Furthermore, during this time the following prophetic verse will likewise be realized: “Death will be eradicated forever, and G-d will erase tears from all faces” (5).

Although previously stated that the actualized soul ascends and partakes of the spiritual joy of the higher worlds, this refers to the level of *Ruach* and above. *Nefesh* per se, due to its integration with physical matter (through the 87 grams of the purest blood, as previously discussed), upon its departure from the body enters the *lower gan eden* — a land of “physical spirituality” similar to our earth. It enjoys the physical abundance and beauty in the form of trees, flowers, etc. In addition, it maintains a telepathic connection with its *Ruach* and *Neshama*, receiving from them higher spiritual wisdom.

If someone was not successful in achieving a high spiritual level during his existence in this world, his soul may be subject to any number of experiences following death. A general principle to keep in mind is that a negative action can never erase or even dim a positive behavior. The reverse is likewise true — that a good activity cannot eradicate a negative one. It follows, that people who performed good deeds and achieved the levels of *Ruach* or *Neshama*, and at a later point had committed a sin, the levels of soul which they achieved are not taken away from them. Rather, they become damaged through spiritual blemishes which block their light and dampen their eyes from experiencing the powerful spiritual forces which reside within them. After death, these people must undergo a spiritual cleansing that will eliminate these blemishes in order to regain the powerful capacity to shine. The soul then qualifies for entry into the *lower gan eden* to experience its merited rewards.

The nature of this cleansing is referred to as the *lower gehinom* (Hell). Since *Nefesh* also responds to physicality due to its integration with physical matter (through the pure blood), it will sense the pains from this cleansing

just as a live person experiences bodily pain. These pains are not meant to revenge negative activities, but rather to repair the soul. People can also cleanse their souls through various means while still living in this world. This cleansing process is referred to as *teshuvah* (repentance, or more literally “return”).

All the above is at the level of *Nefesh*, but the *Ruach* and *Neshamah* of the sinner, due to their greater spirituality, cannot be cleansed in the same manner. They ascend to the *higher gan eden* along with their defects. These defects interfere with their ability to enjoy the rays of the spiritual light and impede the capacity to acquire the high levels of spiritual knowledge. The result is a kind of suffering analogous to a person who is among friends who present excellent answers on an exam, while he is embarrassed by his ignorance. This pain experienced by *Ruach* and *Neshama* is known as the *upper gehinom* (6) and is necessary for specific time period depending on the extent of their defects. Eventually, the *Ruach* and *Neshama* become acclimated to their setting and begin to comprehend and sense the joys of spiritual knowledge and light which surround them; they return to the existence of the *upper gan eden*.

The cleansing processes just described, both in the *upper gehinom* and in the *lower gehinom* are limited to individuals whose sins are classified as being “between man and G-d.” In other words, they were righteous in relation to their fellow humans, but in matters pertaining exclusively to G-d’s commandments their actions were a mixture of positive and negative. However, individuals whose behavior toward fellow humans was negative, and they had not sought forgiveness from their victim, will have to return to this world through a reincarnation of their soul, as will be discussed at a later point.

WHAT IS A JEW?

People cannot reach the level of *Ruach*, and certainly not *Neshama*, unless they observe the 613 commandments of the Torah, which a Jew is obligated to perform. Non-Jews, who are not obligated to observe the Torah, can therefore never reach these levels unless they go through a process of conversion and subsequent observance of the commandments. Those who do not seek to convert can still reach high spiritual levels, but only within the limits imposed by the realm of punishment *Nefesh*. Their souls (*Nefesh*) are also subject to rewards and punishment as a function of their actions in this world. However, since their punishment is limited to a cleansing of the

Nefesh (similar to the *Nefesh* of Jews), their rewards cannot be equivalent to that of Jews. This is line with the limited spiritual capacities associated with their lack of *Ruach* and higher levels.

Our sages have taught that righteous non-Jews have a share in the “world to come”. This means that after they die, their *Nefesh* ascends to a fantasy world where they imagine themselves experiencing the ultimate physical pleasures, similar to people who dream that they are in a state of physical ecstasy. Through this process they will achieve contentment, as they are not capable of recognizing the joys of higher spiritual levels due to their lack of *Ruach* and *Neshama*. This differential between Jews and non-Jews is reflected in the Biblical verse: “And if you will listen to me and adhere to my commandments you will become the chosen ones from amongst all the nations. You will become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (7). Similarly, in our holiday prayers we convey our gratefulness through the phrase, “You have chosen us from amongst all the nations.”

CHAPTER 4

THE REINCARNATION OF SOULS

The soul of a person who committed an impropriety against a fellow human, even if he was righteous in other respects, must be reincarnated in order to perform a *tikun*—i.e., correct his actions and appease the victim of his wrongdoing (if he failed to achieve atonement during his lifetime). At times the victim must also return to this world for purposes of accepting the appeasement; alternatively, it may be sufficient for the *tikun* to be directed to the victim's heirs. During *tehiyat hameitim* (resurrection of the dead), the reincarnated soul will be divided among the various bodies which it occupied in this world.

While all the bodies will rise during *tehiyat hameitim*, their spiritual level will depend upon the components of soul which existed within them. Only under unusual circumstances will a body not be resurrected. Examples include people who had not borne children due to laziness, or other isolated reasons. Unfortunately, in these cases, once the soul leaves the body at death, it is as if the soul never appeared in this world, and the body will never be resurrected. However, such a soul will return to this world in a new body; thereby receiving an opportunity to re-start the process and advance itself.

A reincarnated soul which had not progressed toward its mission of correction receives a third and last chance to be reborn. If on this occasion there was absolutely no progress toward correction it loses its privilege for existence as an independent entity. It may be transformed to become a component of another soul, whose ways in this world were positive. This is inherent in the prophet's statement that a "sinning soul shall die." The secret of the three maximum opportunities provided to an individual soul which has manifested no progress is implied in the following verse (1): That G-d manifests His kindness to a person two or three times." However, if a soul demonstrated even the slightest progress, it can undergo unlimited reincarnations. Non-Jews also have opportunities for reincarnation. Even

more so, it is possible that a Jewish soul will be reincarnated into a non-Jewish body, and vice versa (2).

This significant phenomenon of reincarnation can be invoked to resolve numerous questions and apparent contradictions concerning issues of faith, reward and punishment, suffering of the righteous, and contentment of the wicked. According to Judaic tradition, no new souls have descended to this world during the last 2,000 years (approximately). We are all reincarnations of souls which previously existed within other bodies. We have returned to correct sins conducted during an earlier existence — sins directed toward G-d and/or fellow humans. The victims of our wrongdoing may have likewise returned with us through a reincarnation (3). It is possible that even highly righteous people are reincarnated, for purposes of *enhancing* their good deeds and /or guiding others toward proper behavior (4).

IBUR: APPENDING A SOUL

An individual who was basically righteous during his lifetime, but on occasion failed to perform a particular virtue, or neglected to conduct a needed favor for a friend when he had the opportunity to do so, may not fully realize his true potential in *gan eden* until he actually conducts the virtue or favor. To rectify this condition it is not necessary for the soul to be reincarnated. However, it floats in space and waits for an opportunity to select an individual who is about to perform the particular virtue or favor. It enters the body of this person (in the course of his sleep) and remains with him until he performs the required activity, thereby achieving a corrected status. It then ascends to its optimal level in *gan eden*, as determined by its behavior in this world (5).

Alternatively, there exist individuals whose sins and behaviors were extremely negative. Prior to achieving complete cleansing through the mechanism described above, their souls will need to enter a living creature and suffer according to the degree of spiritual damage which emanated from their actions. The following is a quote from Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, the great 16th century Kabbalist of Tzefat (Safed), known as the “Ari”:

“If one fed animal corpses to Jews, he will be reincarnated in the form of a tree leaf. His punishment will consist of being thrust back and forth by winds without any respite. When the designated time period arrives, the leaf will fall to the ground and wilt away. This will be experienced by the soul as an authentic death. If someone had committed a premeditated murder, he will be reincarnated in the form of water. A man who seduced a married

woman will be reincarnated into a grinding mill. If she seduced him, he will return in the form of a donkey” (6).

DIBUK: INVASION BY A SOUL (POSSESSION)

There are certain sins which, in order to be corrected, eventually will require soul reincarnation into the body of a person. However, prior to reincarnation the soul may be required to float aimlessly in the atmosphere of the universe without any respite. This creates a state of tension and restlessness known as *kaf hakelah* (hell torture, or more literally the “hollow of the sling”). This was the intent of Avigayil who stated, “And my master’s soul shall be bound with the living, with the Lord our G-d, while the soul of thy enemies shall be wrapped in the hollow of the sling” (7). Such a soul is desperate to find respite from its predicament, and may at times become successful by entering a human body to obtain rest. Through this “invasion” the “host” person becomes emotionally overwhelmed to the point of becoming schizophrenic. The soul will not leave until it is time for a reincarnation, which may rectify its spiritual damage from the previous life.

It should be emphasized that this form of punishment is reserved only for individuals who died without repentance. People who truly experience remorse over their wrongdoing will have their sins forgiven and will essentially be “cured”. This is reflected in various prophecies which convey that G-d does not desire the death of the wicked, but prefers their reversing their ways and meriting life.

Reincarnation is not *explicitly* stated in the fundamental Judaic texts, such as the Bible, Talmud, and Rabbinic Midrashim. Its primary source can be traced to the *Zohar (Book of Splendor)*, the major kabbalistic work, which overtly discusses soul reincarnation. The *Zohar*’s authorship is attributed to Rabbi Shimon Ben Yochai, who was amongst the *tanaaim* (contributors to the *Mishnah*, which was codified almost 2,000 years ago) and a student of the famous Rabbi Akiva.

Since the *Zohar* was recovered from oblivion approximately 800 years ago, numerous Jewish scholars have questioned its authenticity and challenged its contents. Although they may have been exposed to notions of reincarnation through the oral tradition, they denied the phenomenon. They espoused that after death a person’s soul is treated exclusively in the upper spiritual states, without ever returning to our physical reality. However, when the great kabbalist of Tzefat, Rabbi Yitzchak Lurya (the “Ari”), authenticated the source of the *Zohar*, the voices of the skeptics were quieted.

Although it is not the purpose of this monograph to relate anecdotes, in order to elucidate the phenomenon of reincarnation, a story from the book entitled *Minchat Yehudah*, is paraphrased as follows:

“In the year 5679 (1919) on Friday the 5th of Av, I was riding on a train to the town of Bakuba near the city of Babylon. I was a guest in the home of Rabbi Reuven Nisim David Kassab. On *Shabbat* he requested that I accompany him to the home of Moshe Shasha Cohen, to provide comfort over the recent death of his only child, Menashe, who was killed the previous week by robbers who came to steal his money. Ultimately, they didn't steal anything, but just committed the murder. Menashe, who was killed did not leave any children.

Upon entering the home of Moshe Shasa Cohen, I found him crying alongside his wife. Both were approximately 70 years old at the time. They asked if I can provide some insight as to why their son was killed. Assuming their son was a reincarnation, and worthy of death based on his actions in a previous life, they inquired as to why *they* merited such suffering at this point. In order to ease their pain I promised to conduct some further research and attempt to provide answers to their questions.

The following week, on the 9th of Av during recitation of *kinot* (lamentations over the destruction of the Temple), I dozed off and saw a vision of a child who traveled from the city of Babylon to the town of Bakuba. He carried a sum of 100 gold coins intended for business use, for the purpose of supporting his elderly parents whom he left in the city of Babylon. Upon reaching Bakuba he rented a room in a hotel. An old man had sensed that this youth possessed 100 gold coins, and was determined to rob him. Age and frailty precluded his independently committing the robbery; he therefore revealed his intention to a young Jewish thief. They agreed that the young thug would steal the coins while the elderly man would stand guard as an accomplice. In return, the old man would receive a portion of the loot.

They obtained a key to the youth's hotel room, and at night, as the youth was sound asleep, they approached the room. The young thug opened the door, and immediately thrust a knife through the sleeping youth's heart, instantly killing him. As he was searching for the gold coins, a large group of guests suddenly arrived at the hotel. Out of fear for their lives, the thieves escaped without having taken the coins. In the morning this child was discovered dead in his room, with no signs of his killer. They buried the youth, and sent the 100 coins to his parents to the

city of Babylon. This youth was an only child to his parents, and was providing for their financial support in their later years. People were afraid to rent the hotel room in which the murder was committed, and it remained sealed for many years.

The murdered youth's soul went up to the heavenly court and sought revenge. He demanded justice in the form of "measure for measure"—that: he should get killed without having his money taken; he should be supporting elderly parents; and should not leave any heirs behind. The court asked whether he wished to forgive the murderer for his actions, which he refused to do. It was decreed that his demands for justice must be met, and the heavenly court set a process in motion to insure its fulfillment.

After the old thief died, he was reincarnated into the body of Moshe Shasha Cohen mentioned above. He lived in the city of Babylon and did not have a child until the age of 50. At the age of 50 he traveled with his wife to the city of Bakuba and sought to register in the aforementioned hotel. It turned out that this evening the hotel was booked and the only available lodging was in the closed room in which the murder was committed. This room was neglected, and not modernized like all the other hotel rooms, since it was not being rented anyway. However, the innkeeper decided to rent it to Moshe Shasha Cohen and his wife, thinking that they were not aware of the murder incident, and would therefore not object. He proceeded accordingly and offered them the room for lodging.

That night the murdered youth was summoned to the heavenly court which advised him that it is time for the soul which committed the murder to be reincarnated, unless he is willing to forgive him. Since he refused to forgive, he was told to descend to this world and stand by the door of the hotel room in which he was killed. He did so, and waited until the couple was engaging in sexual intercourse. At that point the soul of the young thug who committed the murder appeared but was afraid to enter the semen of the man. But—the murdered victim's soul kept hitting the murderer's soul and demanded that it enter within this union in order to be reborn and receive its punishment. It had to acquiesce against its will and was conceived to be come the son of Moshe Shasha Cohen who was killed 20 years later in a robbery attempt, without having his money stolen.

I visualized the above while dozing off during *kinot*. This sequence of events was revealed to me in visual form, not just as an oral

story. It felt as though I was seeing the unfolding of the events from beginning to end. I wrote these words to Moshe Shasha Cohen of the town of Bakuba in response to his questions.”

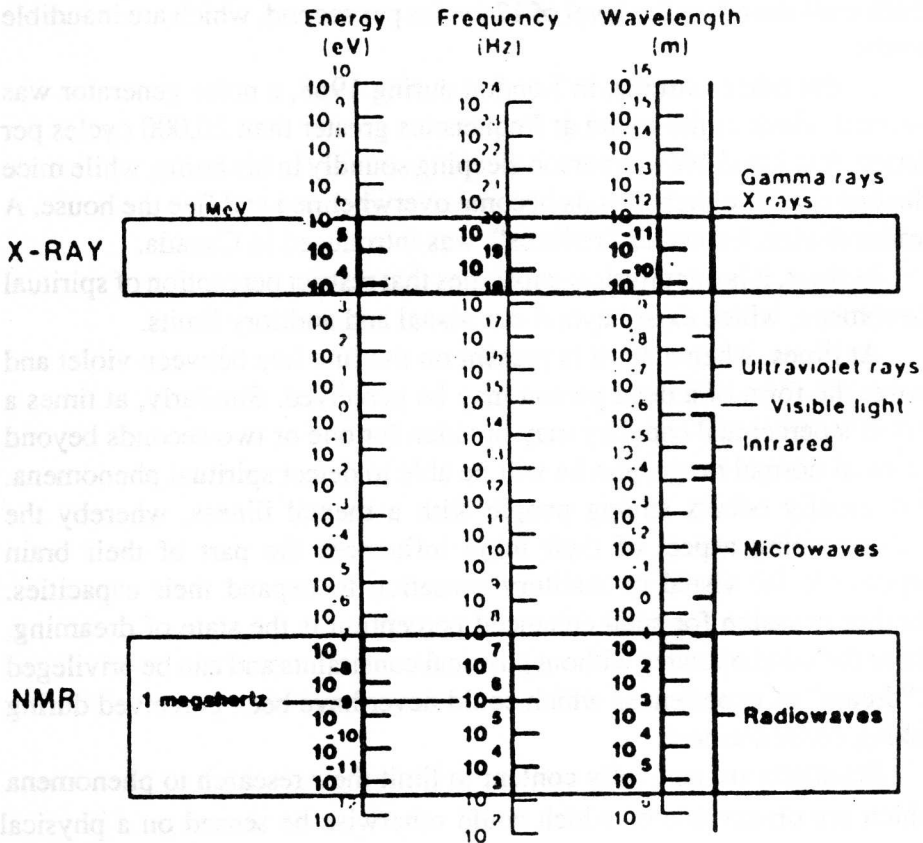
CHAPTER 5

SCIENCE AND THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

It is well known that our five senses are limited to a fixed range of perception, beyond which no perception can take place. For example, our sense of vision operates by the eye photographing an object in its path and imprinting it on the brain, where it becomes converted into an observable entity. The normal eye cannot capture anything below the murkiest color red nor above the brightest and purest color violet.

The following table of the electromagnetic spectrum illustrates the limitations of visual perception:

ELECTROMAGNETIC WAVES



Recent findings with infrared photography have enhanced our knowledge of this fascinating world. However, they do not pertain to the topics in this monograph, which are generally concerned with phenomena in the realm of ultraviolet and beyond.

In Russia, Semyon Davidovich Kirlian had invented a camera which captures ultraviolet rays (1). Soviet scientists who specialize in parapsychology and related disciplines have established an Institute for Bio-information, and have been successful in capturing the "aura", a spiritual energy which activates the body (bio-plasma).

Nevertheless, using a regular camera, there are individuals who have photographed very clear pictures of spirits of people who have long died. (For greater details refer to the book by Tom Paterson of England entitled *Spiritual Photography*.)

Likewise, our capacity of sound perception is limited. The frequency range for audible sound is from 16 to 20,000 cycles per second (or hertz, Hz).

Dogs, due to their superior capacities of perceiving sounds from 7 cycles per seconds, are utilized by armies of the world through whistles which emit sounds at the level of 12 cycles per second, which are inaudible to man.

At the other extreme, in London during 1968, a noise generator was invented which emits sound at frequencies greater than 20,000 cycles per second. It is inaudible to a person sleeping soundly in his home, while mice who can perceive such sounds become overwhelmed and flee the house. A similar device, known as "rodness", was introduced in Canada.

In short, it is our physical capacities that restrict perception of spiritual phenomena, which exist beyond our visual and auditory limits.

At times, when a spirit is present on the fine line between violet and above, the form of a dead person may be perceived. Similarly, at times a person's perceptual capacity may broaden for one or two seconds beyond the usual normal range, and he will be able to detect spiritual phenomena. This usually occurs among people with a mental illness, whereby the nonfunctioning aspect of their mind influences the part of their brain responsible for visual or auditory sensation to expand their capacities. Another occasion for such enhanced perception is the state of dreaming, where the mind operates without physical constraints and can be privileged to "dream" of experiences which could never have been perceived during waking consciousness.

Scientists are generally content to limit their research to phenomena which are observable or which could otherwise be sensed on a physical

plane. Since the soul and its activities are spiritual in nature, and are not experienced directly by our physical senses, it took a long time for science to begin paying serious attention to spirituality. However, in recent times, especially after the establishment of the Society for Psychical Research in 1882 in London, various theoretical explanations of spiritual phenomena were forthcoming. Over time, this research was directed to dozens of spiritual phenomena, as distinct from the physical body.

At this point two of these fundamental topics, controlled soul projection and reincarnation, are briefly discussed.

Controlled Soul Projection

Relatively few authors have devoted their attention directly to this topic. Representative research includes the work of Eileen J. Garrett, a known "medium", who along with other parapsychologists of New York, studied this phenomenon. They even experienced several projections, and reached specific conclusions in their research.

Incidentally, a hypnosis subject during a trance, when asked about a specific place or house, can often project his spirit to the requested location, observe what is happening, and then report on numerous details. An anecdote was related about the son of a professor who was hypnotized in London, and was asked about the activities of his father who was in New York at the time. He conveyed extraordinary details which were later confirmed. Another anecdote was reported about a girl who, under hypnosis, "traveled" to her parents home which was located in another city, and was asked to describe the activities she saw. The phone rang, and it was her father on the line who inquired about her well-being. When asked for the basis of his call, as they had just talked the previous day, he mentioned that he had just noticed her image in the house and was concerned if anything happened to her or if his imagination was just playing games on him.

Jewish mystics employed soul projection quite often, particularly for purposes of gaining specific information. It is well known that Rabbi Yitzchak Lurya of Tzefat (the "Ari") utilized it frequently, as did his student Rabbi Chayim Vital (as mentioned in *Sefer HaChezyonot*). On several occasions Jerusalem Arabs have seen his image above the Temple Mount, within the Mosque of Omar. When asked about this, he responded that according to Jewish law it is prohibited today to directly enter the Temple Mount, but since he needed to enter to obtain specific knowledge, he projected his spirit to acquire the necessary information.

It is appropriate to conclude this topic by relating a story which appeared

in the book *Yamim Noraim*/(High Holidays) by S.Y. Agnon, paraphrased as follows:

“The holy brothers, Rabbi Elimelech from Lizinsk and Rabbi Zusha from Anipoli, used to roam through the world posing as door-to-door beggars. One year on the eve of Yom Kippur they arrived at a particular city and entered the synagogue. They were dismayed when no one invited them to join the pre-holiday meal. Suddenly, a young gentleman approached them, asking, “Have you eaten today?” When they said “no”, he offered them cake and whiskey, for which they were overjoyed. The following year, the brothers returned to the same city, and the same gentleman invited them for the pre-Yom Kippur meal.

They again appeared during a third year, and no one invited them to eat. Assuming that the same gentleman would appear, they waited. When they noticed that he would no come anymore, they decided to project their spirit throughout the world to search for him. After searching, they could not locate him. One brother suggested, “Let us look for him in the upper worlds.” They again searched and could not locate him. Suddenly they saw him standing at the top of a church tower. One brother remarked, “Since through him we were fortunate not to fast on the eve of Yom Kippur during the previous two years, let us do him a favor and get him out of there.” They proceeded to do so through psychokinesis—having used mind power to transmit messages that aroused feelings of regret and a desire to return to Judaism.”

In summary, this phenomenon demonstrates the nature of the soul and its capacities, transcending the limitations usually present during its attachment to the body.

Reincarnation of Souls

A great deal was written on this topic, including debates among Jewish scholars as to the authenticity of this phenomenon, as indicated above. Some Jewish thinkers have taken the position that belief in reincarnation contradicts the principle of reward and punishment for human action in this world. One of the better known skeptics was Rabbi Yehudah Aryeh of Modena who published a large volume on this topic *Ari Nohem*, so-called since he roared like a lion against the believers in reincarnation. However, in his later years he reversed his position and endorsed belief in reincarnation due to a particular personal experience.

As a physician (trained in Italian universities), Rabbi Yehudah Aryeh was once caring for a sick child who was six months old. Suddenly, the child

got up and recited “Shema Yisrael...” and died. The Rabbi/Doctor was startled as to how the child acquired knowledge of this verse. He was not at ease until he reached the only plausible conclusion that it could only have happened through the child having been a reincarnated soul.

We also have responsa from Rabbi Asher (the Ro’sh, one of the major Talmudic commentators, who lived approximately 700 years ago) who presented various sources and positions which endorsed or refuted the belief in reincarnation. He concluded that although there is no explicit Talmudic evidence requiring belief in reincarnation, there likewise does not appear any contradictory evidence. Thus, if this belief was transmitted through the generations it should be accepted. Finally, during the Kabbalistic era of Tzefat (the 1500’s) when the *Zohar* gained widespread acceptance, belief in reincarnation was endorsed by the major Rabbis, kabbalists, and leaders, as previously discussed.

In recent years secular scholars have likewise begun to accept reincarnation, and have engaged in hypnotic practices which encompass techniques of “past life regression.” Among the first was Edgar Cayce of New York (2) and Morey Bernstein of London (as described in his book, *The Search for Bridey Murphy: A New Age Classic*). These techniques are currently in vogue and have received a great deal of attention in the popular media.

The book by Carl G. Jung (a student of Freud, the father of psychoanalysis) entitled *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* and the Italian journal entitled *Couriera Della Serra* (1968) contain discussions of a two year old wonder child, Antonio Morbata, who demonstrated knowledge of geography of the entire planet. They concluded that this could only be explained through reincarnation.

Extensive work on the topic of reincarnation was conducted by Professor Ian Stevenson of the Department of Psychiatry, University of Virginia College of Medicine. For example, in his book, *Twenty cases suggestive of reincarnation*, he provides scientific evidence for reincarnation. Similarly, the German quarterly journal on parapsychology entitled *Der Wissenschaft Grenzgebiete* (The Limits of Science) describes cases of reincarnation.

Incidentally, Freud’s theories regarding the etiology of neurotic behavior as due to unconscious motives related to traumatic events, were already stated by Rabbi Yitzchak Lurya (the “Ari”) in his book *Sha’ar HaGilgulim*.. The Ari added that traumatic events from a previous life can likewise influence behavior in the current incarnation. Therefore, the Ari’s primary disciple, Rabbi Chayim Vital, had an intense fear of knives. In a

previous life he was stabbed to death.

Among the Druse not only was endorsement of reincarnation common, they also lived and experienced it. For example, many of them knew details of their previous existence, and transmitted this knowledge to “family members” of their previous life. They would visit their homes and refer to their names from the previous incarnation including, “father”, “mother”, etc. (See the book by M. Klausner entitled “*HaDruzim VeGilgul Neshamot*” (The Druse and Reincarnation) (3).

The conclusion emanating from this monograph is: Our teacher Moshe is authentic and the Torah is authentic. Those who observe it can fulfill the ultimate mission of creation as well as earn the privilege of eternal life.

NOTES

Introduction

1. *Chovot Halevavot (Duties of the Heart)*, Shaar Hayichud, 6.
2. See *Genesis Rabbah* 1:12.
2. Rambam, *Hilchot Yesodei Hatorah* 1.
4. This was similarly stated by Rabbi David Nieto in his book, *Mateh Dan*. His views were endorsed by the Chacham Tzvi in his responsa.
5. *I Samuel* 2.
6. *Exodus* 14.
7. *Ibid.* 16.
8. *Joshua* 3.
9. *Ibid.* 6.
10. *Judges* 15.
11. *II Chronicles* 33.
12. *Psalms* 145.
13. Rambam, *Hilchot Yesodei Hatorah* 4: Ramban, *Genesis* 1:1; Ari, *Etz Chayim* 42:1.
14. *Genesis* 1.
15. *Ecclesiastes* 3, with the remainder being part of the text in the daily prayers.
16. *Genesis* 3.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Exodus* 33:20
19. Rambam, *Hilchot Avodah Zarah* 1.
20. Based on the Ari, *Sha'ar Ruach Hakodesh I*; Ruach HaKodesh is more than mere sensation; it is hearing a voice like one's own from a distance telling him all this, similar to an echo when talking into a valley.
21. Rambam, *Hilchot Avodah Zarah* 1:2; See also Rashi, *Genesis* 25:23.
22. Rambam, *Ibid*; See also, Rambam, *Guide For the Perplexed*.
23. Rambam, *Ibid*.
24. Rambam, *Ibid.* (Avraham's book, *Sefer Yetzirah* (Book of Creation), provides the basis for the secrets of Jewish mysticism. It is available today and is at times published with annotations by Rabbi Akiva, the Tana who died in the year 143 C.E.).

was relied upon greatly by scholars of the *Zohar*.

26. *Exodus* 1.

Chapter 1

1. Ari, *Etz Chaim*. 42.
2. Ari, *Sha'ar HaMitzvot*, beginning and elsewhere.
3. *Genesis* 2:7.
4. Ramban, *Genesis* 1:1; Ari, *Etz Chayim* 42.
5. Ari, *Sha'ar HaGilgulim*, Introduction 1.
6. *Ecclesiastes* 3.
7. *Zohar*, *Leviticus* 25b.
8. Ari, *Sha'ar HaGilgulim*, Introduction 3.
9. *Ibid.*, Introduction 31.
10. *Genesis* 5.
11. *II Kings* 2.
12. *Sefer HaYashar*, Parshat Vayigash.
13. As mentioned in *Numbers* 26.
14. Ari, *Sha'ar HaGilgulim*, Introduction 1.

Chapter 2

1. *Song of Songs* 2.
2. *I Samuel* 10.
3. *II Kings* 3:15.
4. *Numbers* 12.
5. *Shvilei Emunah*.
6. *Ecclesiastes* 5.
7. *Iyov* 33.
8. Freud and his students in various books.

Chapter 3

1. *Ecclesiastes* 12.
2. *Genesis* 3.
3. *Babylonian Talmud*, *Baba Batra* 11a.
4. *Isaiah* 11:9.
5. *Ibid.* 25:8.
6. See *Sefer Chasidim* 530.
7. *Exodus* 19.

Chapter 4

1. *Iyov* 33:29; See Ari, *Sha' ar HaGilgulim*, Introduction 4.
2. Ari, *Sha' ar HaGilgulim*, Introduction 22.
3. See Chapter 5 below, and the booklet *Chemdat Shani* by this author.
4. *Zohar, Leviticus* pg. 88; Ari, *Sha' ar HaGilgulim*, Introduction 8.
5. Ari, *Sha' ar HaGilgulim*, Introduction 3
6. Ari, *Sha' ar HaGilgulim*, Introduction 22.
7. *I Samuel* 25.

Chapter 5

1. Kirlian photography. See Kirlian, Semyon D. & Valentina H. "Investigation of Biological Objects in High Frequency Electrical Fields", *Bioenergetic Questions—and Some Answers*. Alma Ata, USSR, 1968. See also White, Rhea A. *Kirlian Photography Bibliography*, Parapsychology Sources, 1987.
2. Numerous books were written about him, such as *Edgar Cayce: Sleeping Prophet*, by Jess Stearn. There exist approximately 30,000 anecdotes of reincarnation, healing, prophecy, dream interpretation, and clairvoyance—which he performed or conveyed. Cayce had utilized auto-hypnosis to enter into a trance. During this state he was able to determine the source of an illness and articulate a precise diagnosis, employing accepted Latin terminology. He offered medical advice to people, and even wrote prescriptions, in Latin, while in this hypnotic state—despite never having studied medicine or Latin. Protocols and accounts of his activities are preserved in the Archives in Virginia Beach, and are subjects of study by psychologists, physicians, and scientists.

One incident is related by Margot Klausner regarding a prescription which Cayce had written for a patient, which could not be filled since it was discontinued by the manufacturer. Upon hearing this Cayce entered a trance, and with his spirit "saw" the last remaining bottle in a pharmacy of that city. He was able to precisely visualize the bottles's location, as being in the lower drawer of a medicine cabinet, under a pile of old newspapers. Indeed that is exactly where it was found.

Incidentally, Cayce identified the lost continent of Atlantis (which is mentioned by Plato in his writings, and also hinted at by our sages; see Rashi, *Genesis* 6:4) in the area of the Saragasso Sea,

east of the Azores Islands.

3. The following constitute additional illustrations of the phenomenon of reincarnation.

a) A number of years ago an electrician was brought to the clinic of Dr. Cosanila of Rome, for having been stricken by electricity. The entire medical team employed everything at their disposal in attempting to revive him. After all their efforts failed, the physician decided to utilize the "principle of countershock". He attached electrodes to the back and chest of the patient, and introduced a current of electricity through his heart. The result was immediate. After a three-hour clinical death, the patient was revived and stated with relief, "I'm glad to have awakened. I was in the midst of a frightening dream." What did this clinically dead person "dream"? The following was his account, as written by Dr. Cosanila:

"I recall that the second I touched the electrical wire, I felt as if I was engulfed by flames. However, as strange as it may sound, I did not experience any pain. At that second, it sequentially passed by my eyes...No! It appears that I saw it all concurrently, the picture of my entire life...No! I really did not *see* anything; it was as if I relived my entire life. Then, something really strange happened. I suddenly found myself in my house, with my wife serving lunch, and the children sitting around the table. I spoke to them, but they apparently did not hear me. Not only did they not respond; they behaved as if I was not even present.

The situation upset me greatly! With one quick move, I tossed all the plates onto the floor. I grabbed the picture on the wall, and threw it down. In great anger I left the house, and I don't know how, but I suddenly found myself here. I stared at my body which lay on the operating table. This sight frightened me to the point where it awakened me. I am sure that this was all a nightmare."

Dr. Cosanila, who was also a well known Italian parapsychologist, did not take the position that it was a "dream". Rather, he claimed that during the three-hour period in which the patient was considered clinically dead, he actually existed in an altered state—transcending physical life as we know it. How did he confirm this view? He remembered the dishes which the patient broke in his "dream" as well as the picture which he threw down. Without hesitation, he jumped into his automobile and rushed to the home of the patient. His wife, being unaware of her husband's whereabouts,

mentioned to the doctor that about two hours prior to his arrival the dishes suddenly flew off the table, and a large picture fell off the wall.

b) Another famous incident concerns an Indian girl, Shanta Davi, which was extensively verified by parapsychologists. Shanta was a healthy and merry child, who in no way stood apart from the thousands of other girls her age. When she reached five years of age something unusual happened. Suddenly, without any impetus, she began to talk about a small and obscure city, located approximately 500 miles from New Delhi. Initially her parents ignored this “babbling.” However, when she started to describe her life in this city—her husband, their 15-year old son, and the jewelry box which she hid before her “death”—her concerned parents took her to doctors and clergy. They all agreed to help them get to the root of this situation.

Without mentioning anything to the child, they took her to the city which, incidentally, she had never been to before. As they approached the city, the girl began to describe specific buildings and various landmarks which she recognized. She guided them without any hesitation through the center of the city as well as esoteric paths in its northern section, which was a tree-top community. With great excitement, she proceeded toward one of the homes. The servant who opened the door was stunned to hear this unfamiliar child address him by his name, and request to see the landlord and his son.

At first, the forty year old man refused to believe that this five-year old child, whom he had never seen, was actually his wife who died five years ago. Both the man and his son were overwhelmed by the details which the little girl described. However, it was the “jewelry chest” which ultimately convinced them (as well as the doctors and clergy who accompanied her) that soul reincarnation was the only explanation for the events.

During her life, her husband bought her a great deal of jewelry which she stored in an expensive chest. She hid it in a safe place which was only known to her. Due to her sudden death, she could not reveal the hiding place of this chest; consequently, her husband and son never located the expensive gems. One can imagine their surprise when they observed this unfamiliar child striding confidently past the bedroom, moving an arm-chair, and with the help of scissors removing a large pavement, under which the jewelry chest was exposed.

During the 1930's this incident swept parapsychology research as well as the popular media like a storm. It turned out to be one of the major topics during the convention of the British Society of Parapsychology. However, despite the strong evidence provided by this incident and the testimony of credible witnesses, there were those who felt that it could just as well be explained through "soul possession" (*dibuk*). They argued that rather than being a reincarnation, the soul of the dead woman invaded the body of Shanta when she was five years old, thereby causing this personality transformation.

c) Finally, another anecdote concerns Governer Battista and his wife, who resided in Rome. They were enamored by their daughter, Blanche, and were sufficiently wealthy to provide her with a Swiss nanny. This nanny who came from Switzerland's French district, had taught Blanche the French language as well as French songs. The child was especially fond of one of those French songs.

When Blanche became afflicted with diphtheria, her doctors attempted everything at their disposal to save her life. Unfortunately, their efforts failed and the child died.

Three years later, Mrs. Battista became pregnant. During the fourth month of her pregnancy she experienced a combination of a dream/vision. According to her account she was totally awake when Blanche suddenly appeared and exclaimed in her childlike voice, "Mommy, I'm returning."

The excited mother was not successful in convincing her husband of the authenticity of her experience. However, when the baby was born (in February, 1906) he agreed to name her Blanche, just as their first daughter. Nine years following the death of the first Blanche, at which time the second Blanche was approximately six years old, something unusual happened. The following is a paraphrasing of the father's account, as documented in the Archives of the British Society of Parapsychology in "The Problem of Rebirth":

"I was sitting with my wife in my study, when our ears caught a melody coming from Blanche's room. This was late at night, and we were certain that the child was asleep. However, upon entering her room, we found her sitting on the bed singing merrily in perfect French—the particular bedtime song which the first Blanche had loved. We froze from sheer shock! My wife had never sung this song to her, and nowhere in the entire Rome could she have

heard this melody, which was only known to residents of Switzerland's French district.

"Who taught you this song?", I asked Blanche. "No one, I just know it", she responded, and continued to sing joyfully.

I do not know what conclusions the researchers will arrive at. I can only confirm that the details which I presented are accurate, and convey exactly what transpired. My own conclusion is that the souls of the dead return to be amongst us."

JUDAISM: RELIGION OR WAY OF LIFE?

Judaism should not be perceived as *dat*. The notion of *dat* is conveyed in the scriptures as law or commandments. For example, in the *Book of Esther* (3:15) it is stated, “and the legislation was passed in Shushan”. In a secular context, the term *dat* is commonly translated as “religion.” The connotation of “religion” is generally limited to a belief system, which does not demand much of its adherents. As simply a religion, Judaism would not require the observance of 613 precepts.

In fact, most non-Jewish religions require relatively little of their constituents. Even Islam, which contains such stringent requirements as a month-long fast, includes only a limited number of precepts—which, in totality, do not encompass the broad scope of daily living.

If Judaism were merely a religion, it would suffice to require belief in G-d, perhaps the fast of Yom Kippur, and some additional isolated commandments. Adopting this viewpoint, many secular Jews proclaim their Jewish identity as limited to “believing within their hearts.” Implicit in this ideology is that faith and feeling are the only essentials of Judaism, similar to other religions. In reality, however, Judaism is *not* a religion; rather, it is a “way of life.” Therefore, its precepts span the entire gamut of daily living, and include regulations pertaining to bathroom behavior.

The Instruction Manual: An Analogy

By way of analogy, let us consider someone who buys a relatively sophisticated piece of equipment such as a washing machine. Along with the purchase, the individual receives an instruction manual containing do’s and don’ts pertaining to its operation. Details include specific directions for various clothes, types of detergents to use, which to avoid, how to clean the machine, etc.

Clearly, the owner is free to do whatever he/she wishes with the

machine. However, the manufacturer who prefers to see the machine operable, encourages the purchaser to follow the directions in the instruction manual. Adhering to these instructions is not a “religion.” It is sound advice in order to insure the appropriate functioning of the equipment and increase its optimal utilization for as long a period of time as possible.

If a person does not follow the manufacturer’s instructions, and presses the wrong button he/she will likely get a ruined wash. Likewise, there may be detergents which clean extremely well, but are not advisable since their chemical properties may, over time, ruin the machine. In the short run, these individuals may even experience a better wash but eventually the equipment will malfunction due to rust or other factors resulting from the inappropriate chemicals. Thus, complying with instructions is best viewed as a “way of life” for the machine rather than a “religion.”

When considering more complex equipment, such as a car, the requirements are even more detailed. For example, the operating manual includes information on the kinds of gasoline and oil to be used, the amount of air to be put in the tires, etc. When it comes to a computer, a small instruction booklet is not sufficient; the operating manual may be volumes, covering the sophistication appropriate to the computer’s complexity. Is the human being not a sophisticated machine which requires a book of instructions for a “way of life?” Are we less complex than washing machines, automobiles, and computers which break down if not treated appropriately?

We are all “*datim*” (religious) when it comes to belief in physicians, who advise what to eat, when, and how much. Obviously, it is not always easy to adhere to physicians’ orders, especially when they are very restrictive. For example, people who are on a special diet, and are in the company of others who eat freely, must exercise great self-control not to eat many tempting foods. Although they will derive immediate pleasure from such foods, the long-term consequences are damaging. While their trials are difficult, the belief in the physicians’ orders, and personal concern for their future health generate sufficient willpower and strength to succeed. Once again, the physician’s prescriptions do not constitute a “religion” but represent the necessary “way of life.” This is true for the specialist and even more so for the general practitioner whose directions are more comprehensive — incorporating advice on appropriate nutrition, exercise, sleep, etc. It is in our own best interest to follow this advice in order to prevent illness and promote health.

Generally speaking, inventors are best suited to recommend optimal use of their inventions. They possess the most complete and accurate

knowledge concerning the structure and function of their product. Physicians will often err due to the fact that they did not create the human body, and their knowledge of its functioning is necessarily limited. They merely study the finished product through dissection, laboratory analyses, treatment of pathologies, etc. It follows that only our Creator knows precisely what is good and bad for us.

In extending the analogy, it is logical to deduce that just as non-adherence to manufacturer or medical instructions does not result in immediate damage, likewise the punishment for violation of G-d's precepts does not occur immediately following the behavior. A person is given appropriate time to repent and modify his/her actions. If repentance was not achieved, the punishment may be meted out in this world, but most often it is reserved for the world following death.

Body and Soul

Sometimes it is necessary for the soul of a sinner to be reincarnated to this world, and it may receive its punishment at that time. This follows from the fact that man is not merely a physical body; indeed his true essence is the *nefesh* or soul. The body serves as a host for the soul. Once the soul departs, death has occurred and the body is buried. A body without a soul cannot see nor hear; it cannot talk nor breathe — despite the fact that the entire physical structure may still be intact with all its organs. The reason being, that its activating force, the soul, no longer resides within it.

The soul is not a mere energy force like a generator or battery, which do not have their own essence. Rather, the soul as a spiritual entity is its own intrinsic energy source, with boundless potential. It is the body which encapsules the soul and limits it. While still in the body, the soul preserves its spiritual essence, at least to a minimal degree, often at the expense of meeting bodily needs. Therefore, when a person experiences physical pain (e.g., through beatings) his body hurts, but when he is publicly rebuked and embarrassed, the psychic pain is far greater, although his body was not touched. In the latter case it is the soul which experiences the pain, and the joy or pain of the soul is more intense than physical pleasure or pain since the soul is the root life force.

G-d created the soul, and, like all responsible designers, He provided necessary instructions for its optimal development — irrespective of its ties to the body. The Torah constitutes the prescribed “way of life” for the soul. Upon closer inspection it becomes apparent that the language of the Torah is directed to the soul, as opposed to the body which serves as a facilitative

tool for implementing the precepts. For example, consider such phrases as: “when a *nefesh* (soul) shall sin”; “to forgive the *nefesh*”; “and you shall deprive your *nefesh*”, etc. Therefore, observance of the Biblical commandments are not necessarily linked to the physical/material status of individuals. For example, someone who strictly adheres to all the dietary laws, eating only kosher food for an entire lifetime, may still experience gastrointestinal or other illnesses. On the other hand, someone else who eats pork and other forbidden foods, may remain physically healthy. Likewise, someone who observes the laws pertaining to Sabbath and all other holidays, may still suffer business losses; while someone who desecrates the Sabbath may succeed financially.

The rationale for this phenomenon is that the soul, whose spirituality was blemished, may still succeed in material matters relevant to *olam hazeh*, this world. Similarly, a spiritually sound soul may fail in material concerns. The apparently material rewards and punishments expressed in the Torah are directed to the Jewish nation as a whole, as opposed to individuals. An *individual's* success usually depends on *mazal* (fate), which is determined by one's actions in prior incarnations, and less often based on behavior in this life.

The greater the soul, the more extensive the required instructions for its maintenance and enhancement. Therefore, people of all nations whose souls are traced to Adam, who was imbued with the divine spirit (soul), received guidelines encompassing the Seven Laws of Noah. However, the Israelites merited the divine revelation at Mount Sinai, were selected as the “chosen people” (*Exodus* 19:5), and thereby achieved the higher level soul of Adam, known as *nishmat chayim* (the soul of life). Therefore, they required a more pervasive set of instructions encompassing the Torah and its 613 precepts.

Reward and Punishment

As previously stated, people who ignore the directions of a manufacturer will suffer the consequences, in the long run. Likewise, in a Judaism which is a “way of life” versus a “religion”, there are negative consequences for not adhering to the Torah and its commandments. However, these negative effects may only be felt by the soul upon its departure from the body, when it returns to its origin as an independent spiritual entity. Therefore, Judaism is perceived as liberal compared to other religious systems. Immediate physical punishment for disobeying a commandment is generally not forthcoming. Free will—to observe or neglect the command-

ments—remains entirely within the province of each individual. If someone chooses to desecrate the Sabbath or intentionally commit any other sin, even in front of the *sanhedrin* (High Court), they are not automatically authorized to punish him. The courts, however, are obliged to preserve order just like any other government, which may include “religious” laws; but it is rare that their violation results in physical punishment by the courts.

In fact, the four types of death sentences stated in the Torah—*skilah* (stoning), *srefah* (fire), *hereg* (sword), and *chenek* (choking)—only apply to someone who was warned explicitly in front of two witnesses not to intentionally commit a specific sin, along with a warning of the consequences (i.e., the mandated punishment) if he will remain obstinate and commit the sin. If the person nevertheless ignored their warning, the Torah permitted the courts to implement the specific punishment in order to prevent the public denunciation of the entire system. Since it is natural that many observers can be influenced from the actions of an individual, the purpose of the punishment is clearly articulated as follows, “all of Israel shall hear and fear, and will no longer intentionally disobey” (*Deuteronomy* 13:12). Ultimately, this serves to preserve free will, allowing him the choice to adhere to the Torah as a “way of life” for his long-term benefit. Ignoring the Torah’s instructions will eventually lead to negative consequences. So-called punishment is truly an automatic by product of non-adherence, as opposed to a kind of revenge for desecration of commandments. It is now self-evident that Judaism as a non-religion, but as a way of life, must touch on every aspect of human behavior. A physician has no personal interest as to whether a patient follows medical advice, since it is in the best interest of the patient; likewise, G-d’s directions are for our own benefit as individuals. This is implicit in several verses by the Prophet *Iyov* (35:6-8).

The Jewish Soul

When G-d created Adam, He instilled in him divine spirit (soul) which is composed primarily of three levels: *nefesh*, *ruach* and *neshama*. They are fully explained in the accompanying monograph, *Tikvat Shani*. Briefly, *nefesh* is the lowest level and is possessed by every human being by virtue of being human. However, the levels of *ruach* and *neshama* must be earned through special virtues and soul elevation. Relatively few individuals obtained these levels after Adam. When our forefather Abraham requested that his children should be provided with the opportunity to transmit this higher level spiritual legacy, which incorporates the roots of *ruach* and *neshama*, G-d responded that it will *partly* sprout from his son, Yitzchak (*Genesis* 21:12).

Our sages explained that only *part* of Yitzchak's descendants will merit this legacy, namely Yaakov, but not Esav. This privilege was not granted freely, but was contingent upon a great deal of suffering and self-sacrifice on the part of Abraham's children, as it is stated, "And you should know that your children shall become strangers in another land, and they will be enslaved and persecuted for four hundred years" (*Genesis* 15:13). This was a necessary "cleansing" prerequisite for the revelation at Mount Sinai. At that point, they internalized the levels of *ruach* and *neshama*, and were promised to become the "chosen people" (*Exodus* 19:5).

Although G-d had selected the Jews to transmit these levels, He still loves all His creatures and manages the world with mercy and kindness. Even if the wicked require punishment, G-d is hurt by the necessity to destroy them, just as a father pities his son when hitting him for disciplinary purposes. For example, during the seventh day of Passover, we do not recite the "complete" *hallel* prayer (signifying special joy and gratitude) since the Egyptians were drowned in the sea, even though the Jews were saved by the miracle of the sea splitting. Our sages convey that G-d exclaimed to the angels who wanted to recite songs upon the splitting of the Red Sea, "My creatures (the Egyptians) are drowning in the sea and you wish to rejoice" (*Babylonian Talmud, Megilah* 10b).

Non-Jews who wish to elevate themselves to attain the levels of *ruach* and *neshama* may do so through authentic conversion to Judaism and become *gerim* (converts). Thus, this higher spiritual potential is attainable by the entire human race, and not just by Israel. The uniqueness of Jews is that they are *born* with the roots of *ruach* and *neshama* although all people can achieve them through hard work and attachment to the nation of Israel. Otherwise, the only obligation of a non-Jew is to observe the Seven Laws of Noah and their derivatives, which constitute a much smaller instruction manual—sufficient to the level of *nefesh* which they possess. Their observing these seven laws will assure them a place in the "world-to-come," appropriate to their spiritual levels.

Due to the fact that Jews encompass *nefesh*, *ruach* and *neshama*, they require a more complex and comprehensive instruction manual, including the 613 precepts. The consequences of their observance will be felt primarily in *olam habah*, the world-to-come, which is a world of souls, without physical existence. This is deduced from the verse in *Deuteronomy* (7:11) which states, "And you shall observe the laws...which I command you *today* to perform them," which is interpreted by our sages to mean that *today*, i.e., in this world, you perform, and *tomorrow*, i.e., in the world-to-come, you

will reap the rewards (see Rashi on the verse).

The soul's capacity is restricted by the limitations of the body. While the body is destined for death, the soul continues its life of eternal existence, for better or worse, depending on its achievement while bound to a body in this world. Hence, this world is referred to as *olam habechirah*, the world of free will.

This belief in the eternity of the soul was shared by early humans as transmitted by Adam, Chanoch, Noah, and others. It remained ingrained in the belief systems of the Jews but was forsaken by the other nations. Recently, however, secular science has begun to demonstrate the immortality of the soul, life after death, and transmigration of souls (reincarnation), as elaborated upon in the accompanying monograph, *Tikvat Shani*.

Antidote to Hopelessness

If someone observes a portion of the commandments while neglecting others, then the aspect of soul, which was actualized from the observance can experience the eternal light. Concurrently, components of the soul which were blemished from the non-adherence will cause great spiritual pain for the soul. At times, the non-actualized components of the soul may *solely* return through a reincarnation to rectify its actions.

In general, if a person's arm or leg is injured he doesn't deliberately hurt his other organs, on the assumption that he is already in pain anyway; on the contrary, he seeks to limit expansion of the pain. By way of analogy, it follows that a person should not endorse, a fatalistic attitude by saying that "since I already neglect some precepts, it's pointless to observe the rest." This argument is irrational and detrimental, since observing each precept restricts the potential spiritual damage resulting from its non-adherence. Each commandment nourishes a particular component of the soul, which becomes damaged if not appropriately observed. Therefore, upon entering the world of souls, it is necessarily limited in its capacity to experience the divine. Just as each scholarly book that one studies enriches one's knowledge and alleviates ignorance, each precept nourishes and enhances the spiritual soul.

Another parallel can be drawn with an individual who, for years, has never paid attention to his diet, having eaten everything without restriction. Upon consulting a physician for various ailments he is prescribed a fixed diet—more in line with naturalistic nutritional principles. Out of a motivation to heal his body, he transforms his eating patterns to conform to the

physician's advice. Despite the fact that for decades he may have ignored his diet, he will *not* take a position that it's all hopeless due to his previous long-standing neglect. A similar attitude should be adopted by the person seeking to cleanse his soul after years of immersion in sin. It is never too late to transform one's behavior for purposes of spiritual healing, and one should never adopt an attitude of hopelessness.

To further extend the analogy, we often find children who, despite having been raised by health conscious parents, grow up to reject the "naturalistic" values and consume non-nutritious and non-health foods. Usually, their motive is to experiment with alternatives, due to the boredom experienced from their habitual foods. Likewise, many children from "observant" Jewish homes, upon growing older, have rejected their family's values. There appears to be a *common* basis for rejection in the physical and spiritual spheres. While in both situations, the behavioral prescriptions are appropriate, the failure on the part of the parents lies in not transmitting the underlying rationale and explanations which are necessary for authentic internalization. Only through intrinsic motivation will adherence be permanent.

The positive conclusion from the above is that people can change their eating habits and lifestyle behaviors in order to preserve their physical health. Clearly, this is a temporary goal, as the body is destined for demise, and their greatest life extensions would be relatively limited. If so, why should they not modify their spiritual ways to insure an enhanced eternal existence?

Faith and the Holocaust

Any event, no matter how harsh, will not change a person's authentic belief system; it may only fine-tune it. For example, during the Holocaust, there were many Jews who survived the concentration camps or labor camps, but lost their entire families. As a result, some rejected G-d and the Torah, while others strengthened their faith and became even more conscientious in their abiding by the precepts and Jewish "way of life." The latter group, even in Auschwitz or other equally dehumanizing settings, took great pains to observe such precepts as *tefilin*, Sabbath, and holidays, to the best of their abilities.

Thus, it is apparent that the Holocaust did not *cause* "religious" people to become agnostic, nor did it convert agnostics into believers; rather, it reinforced people's preexisting convictions and sharpened their authentic underlying commitments. For those whose basic faith was shaky and

observance of religious commandments merely due to habit, family pressures, or the community environment, the Holocaust may have catalyzed (“caused”) rejection of Judaism. On the other hand, for people whose observance was derived from a true recognition of its spiritual underpinnings, the challenge of the Holocaust stimulated (“caused”) even greater commitment to the Torah and its precepts. This explains the diversity and extremes of religious observance among Holocaust survivors.

Relationship Between Deed and Creed

It is important to comprehend that the purpose in adhering to the behavioral laws of Judaism is *not* to demonstrate our belief in G-d; rather, it is our belief which obligates us to abide by His prescriptions. Once again extending the medical analogy, if someone does not have faith in a physician he/she will not follow his instructions. Therefore, prior to visiting a physician the person should have already established belief in his knowledge and expertise and that his medications and instructions are trustworthy. This trust in the physician transcends specific conditions of patients. It is a general prerequisite to complying with medical regimens.

A healthy person, who endorses a particular physician, would never follow a diet prescribed for other patients, simply to manifest his faith in the physician. Obviously this would constitute an irrational act. On the other hand, when the physician recommends a specific diet unique to his needs, he would immediately comply. Similarly, the mere belief in G-d as omnipotent and so forth, does not necessitate the requirement of observing 613 precepts. However, once the faith in G-d exists, and He commands *us*, in our best interest as Jews, to perform the 613 precepts, then it would be logical to comply with the advice of our Healer in whom we trust.

We frequently encounter people who are intelligent, educated, strong and attractive, who are overwhelmed by psychological disorders due to anxieties and internal conflicts—often to the point where they lose their faculties and cease all independent functioning. Observing the intensity of such suffering of the spirit, while the soul is still within the body, should arouse our concern as to how frightening it would be for the soul to be tormented after its departure from the body, i.e., during its eternal existence in the world of souls. We should take heed that the reason for this potential spiritual suffering is non-compliance with the “instruction manual” of the soul while in this world.

Jewish history abounds with large-scale persecutions by many nations. When confronted with the option of rejecting their faith or facing death, the

majority elected death. They filed into the fires of inquisitions and gas chambers with the words, "*Shema Yisroel, Hashem Elokeinu, Hashem Echad*" (Hear O' Israel, the Lord our G-d is One) on their lips. Among those who sacrificed their lives for the sanctification of G-d's name were highly educated and successful Jews in both secular and religious domains. Nevertheless, they forfeited their status and material possessions in favor of death or exile. They understood that the purpose of the Torah is *not* to promote physical health or material gains. Rather, it is a "way of life" for spiritual sustenance to promote the soul's capacity to experience enhanced eternal bliss. Dying as a Jew, with faith intact, is the preferable alternative—since an actualized soul for eternity is a loftier goal than temporary physical life in this world.