

1. 21 grams <http://www.snopes.com/religion/soulweight.asp>

Enter Dr. Duncan MacDougall of Haverhill, Massachusetts. The doctor postulated the soul was material and therefore had mass, ergo a measurable drop in the weight of the deceased would be noted at the moment this essence parted ways with the physical remains...

Dr. MacDougall, seeking to determine "if the psychic functions continue to exist as a separate individuality or personality after the death of brain and body," constructed a special bed in his office "arranged on a light framework built upon very delicately balanced platform beam scales" sensitive to two-tenths of an ounce. He installed upon this bed a succession of six patients in the end stages of terminal illnesses (four from tuberculosis, one from diabetes, and one from unspecified causes); observed them before, during, and after the process of death; and measured any corresponding changes in weight. He then attempted to eliminate as many physiological explanations for the observed results as he could conceive...

[O]ut of six tests, two had to be discarded, one showed an immediate drop in weight (and nothing more), two showed an immediate drop in weight which increased with the passage of time, and one showed an immediate drop in weight which reversed itself but later recurred. And even these results cannot be accepted at face value as the potential for experimental error was extremely high, especially since MacDougall and his colleagues often had difficulty in determining the precise moment of death, one of the key factors in their experiments...

### Biblical Perspectives

2. Genesis 1:26-27 (per Rashi's commentary)

And Gd said: Let Us make Man in the image and form [*tzelem* and *demut*] We have designed, and he will rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and the beasts and the entire land, and all of the crawling creatures that crawl upon the land. And Gd created Man in His image, in the image created by Gd He created him, male and female He created them.

3. Genesis 2:7, 2:20-21

And Gd formed the man, dirt from the ground, and He breathed into his nostrils the spirit of life, and the man was a living spirit... And for Man he did not find a help opposite him. And Gd settled a deep sleep upon the man and he slept, and He took one of his sides and sealed the flesh beneath it.

4. Rabbi Moses Nachmanides (13<sup>th</sup> century Spain) to Genesis 1:26

The initial creation was of male and female, including the soul. But the formation was a formation of the man, and building of the side into the woman, as would be told in the end. Therefore it said *Beriah* here, and below it said *Yetzirah*. One who is insightful will understand.

5. Talmud, Eruvin 18a

Rabbi Yirmiyah ben Elazar said: Adam had two faces... This fits the text, "He created them male and female."

### A secret in two prayers

6. Modeh Ani

I thank You, living and enduring King. You have returned into me my soul, with mercy; Your faithfulness is great.

7. Elokai Neshamah

My G-d! The soul You have placed into me is pure. You created it, You formed it, You blew it into me, and You guard it within me, and You will take it from me and return it into me in the future.

8. Talmud, Niddah 31a

G-d gives an infant *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, charm <personality>, the powers of sight, hearing, speech and locomotion, and understanding and wisdom.

9. Midrash, Bereishit Rabbah 14:11

It [*the Soul*] is called by five names: *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, *Yechidah*, *Chayah*.

- *Nefesh* refers to the Blood, as it says, "For the Blood is the *Nefesh*. (Deuteronomy 12)"
- *Ruach* is that it ascends and descends, as it says, "Who knows the *Ruach* of humanity, whether it ascends upward or whether it descends below to the ground. (Ecclesiastes 3:21)"
- *Neshamah* is the Mind...
- *Yechidah* is that all other limbs have multiples, and this is unique in the body...
- *Chayah* is that all of the limbs die, but this stays alive from the body...

Where does the soul come from?

10. Talmud, Berachot 10a

What was King David referring to, when he sang five psalms using the words, "My *Nefesh* blesses Gd?" He said them concerning Gd and concerning the Soul:

1. Gd fills the whole universe; the Soul also fills the whole body.
2. Gd sees and isn't seen; the Soul also sees and isn't seen.
3. Gd feeds the entire universe; the Soul also feeds the entire body.
4. Gd is pure; the Soul is also pure.
5. Gd sits in a room inside rooms; the Soul also is in a room inside rooms.

11. Don Isaac Abarbanel (15<sup>th</sup> century Spain), Maayanei haYeshuah 10:6

Clothing honours a person and leads him before the great, and when clothing is dirty and stained then, 'Go away, impure, they declare,' and people cannot go before kings without removing the stains by washing and purifying them via great blows and wringing. So, too, a person's deeds are the garb of his soul, in which he appears before the Universal King. Therefore he must have good deeds, as the verse states, "At all time, your garb should be white."

12. Rabbeinu Yonah (13<sup>th</sup> century Spain), Shaarei Teshuvah 4:1

With physical illness, sometimes an illness lightens and most of the affliction heals, but the body is not cleansed of it other than by drinking bitter potions and suffering the pain of withdrawal from desirable foods. So, too, the soul may be ill from a great transgression, and even though most of the illness will be healed and the multiplicity of aspects of punishment will leave once one repents and G-d retreats from His wrath, still, the soul will not be cleansed of the illness and her sin will not be fully forgiven until the sinner has suffered...

Then how do we sin?

13. Genesis 6:5

And Gd saw that Man's evil in the land was great, and the entire *yetzer* of the thoughts of his heart was only evil, all day.

14. Genesis 8:21

And Gd said to Himself: No longer will I curse the land because of Man, for the nature of Man is evil from his youth, and no longer will I strike all life as I have done.

15. Talmud, Succah 52b

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: One's *yetzer* rises over him daily and tries to kill him, as Psalms 37 says, 'The wicked one sees the righteous one and wishes to kill him.' Were Gd not to aid him, one could not defeat it; Psalms 37 continues, 'Gd will not abandon him in his hand...'

They taught in the yeshiva of Rabbi Yishmael: If you encounter this degraded being, pull him into the study hall.

16. Talmud, Succah 52a

What is this eulogy? Rabbi Dosa and the Sages disagreed: One said, "For Mashiach ben Yosef, who has been executed." The other said, "For the *yetzer hara*, which has been executed."