

# Life After Death: Perspectives on the Soul

*Source Sheet by Rabbi Federgrun*

*Kaddish Konnections | Vancouver Torah Learning Centre*

1. Why isn't the afterlife discussed in the Torah?
2. Why should we discuss it if it isn't a priority in the Torah?

3 Answers

1. The Vilna Gaon (18th Century) and Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi (12th Century, Spain)

"And I will place my dwelling among you" "I will be a God to you, and you will be my nation"

1. Rav Sadiah Gaon and Nachmanides  
Is there a need to mention it?

3. Maimonides (12th Century Spain)

"A person should not say that I am following the commandments to receive reward"

## The Soul Immediately After Death and Mourning

1. Nachmanides: Why mourn? Isn't it better for the soul?
2. The Different Levels of Mourning: The first 3 days after death, the last 4 days, the 30 day period, the year of mourning, the Yahrzeit
  - A. The Judgement of the Soul (The Alter from Kelm, 19th Century)  
Learning for the soul, Yizkor
  - B. The Experience of the Soul (Zohar)  
The mourning of the soul itself, and the transition to its new home

## Heaven, Hell, The Next World, and the Days of Mashiach

Can we really know what it is?  
Can we sell our rights to the next world?  
When is the next world?

1. **Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1** .א  
 (1) All Jews have a share in the World to Come, as it says, (Isaiah 60:21), “Thy people are all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.” These have no share in the World to Come: One who says that [the belief of] resurrection of the dead is not from the Torah
- משנה סנהדרין י'א'**  
 (א) כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא, שְׁנֵאמַר (יִשְׁעִיָּה ס) וְעַמְּךָ כָּלָם צְדִיקִים לְעוֹלָם יִירָשׁוּ אֶרֶץ נֶצֶר מְטַעֵי מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶי לְהִתְפָּאֵר. וְאֵלֹהֵי שָׁאִין לָהֶם חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא, הָאוֹמֵר אֵין תְּחִיַּת הַמֵּתִים מִן הַתּוֹרָה,
2. **Berakhot 34b** .ב  
**And Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: All the prophets only prophesied** with regard to the change in world order in the end of days **with regard to the days of the Messiah. However, with regard to the World-to-Come, which exists on a higher level, it is stated: “No eye has seen it, God, aside from You.”**
- ברכות ל"ד ב**  
 ואמר רבי חייא בר אבא אמר רבי יוחנן כל הנביאים כולן לא נתנבאו אלא לימות המשיח אבל לעולם הבא עין לא ראתה אלהים זולתך
3. **Nachmanides (Shar Hagmul)** .ג  
 It is a clear matter that the World to Come that is mentioned in all places is not the World of Souls where one receives reward immediately after death. Rather, it is a world the G-d will create in the future after the Days of the Messiah and the resurrection.
4. **Maimonides, The Laws of Repentance** .ד  
 (1) The hidden good in store for the righteous is, life in the World to Come, which is a life connected with no death and a kind of good connected with no evil; such as is described in the Torah: "That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest prolong thy days" (Deut. 22.7), which was traditionally deducted to mean, "That it may be well with thee" in a world which is entirely good; "and that thou mayest prolong thy days"—in a world existing forever; and this is the World to Come. The reward of the just is, that they will acquire the sweetness thereof, to be in such goodness; and the punishment of the wicked is, that they will not share in such life, but will suffer excision and eternal death. And, whosoever does not earn such life, is to be dead, without coming to life forever; for he is severed from life by his iniquity and goes to oblivion like a cattle...  
 (2) The World to Come harbors neither body nor aught of a concrete form, save only the souls of the righteous divested of body as are the ministering angels. Inasmuch as it harbors no concrete forms there is no need there for eating, drinking, or other of the bodily necessities of the sons of man in this world; neither will any of the many things which happen to bodies in this world come to pass there, as, for instance, sitting down, standing up, sleep, death, sadness, mirth or the like. Thus did the ancient sages say: "In the World to Come there is no eating, no drinking, and no family life, save that the righteous are sitting, graced with garlands upon their heads, and indulge in feasting upon the luminousness of the Shekinah"



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