

# **KABBALISTIC JOURNEY OF THE SOUL**

## **BIRTH, DEATH, AFTERLIFE & REINCARNATION IN JEWISH MYSTICISM**

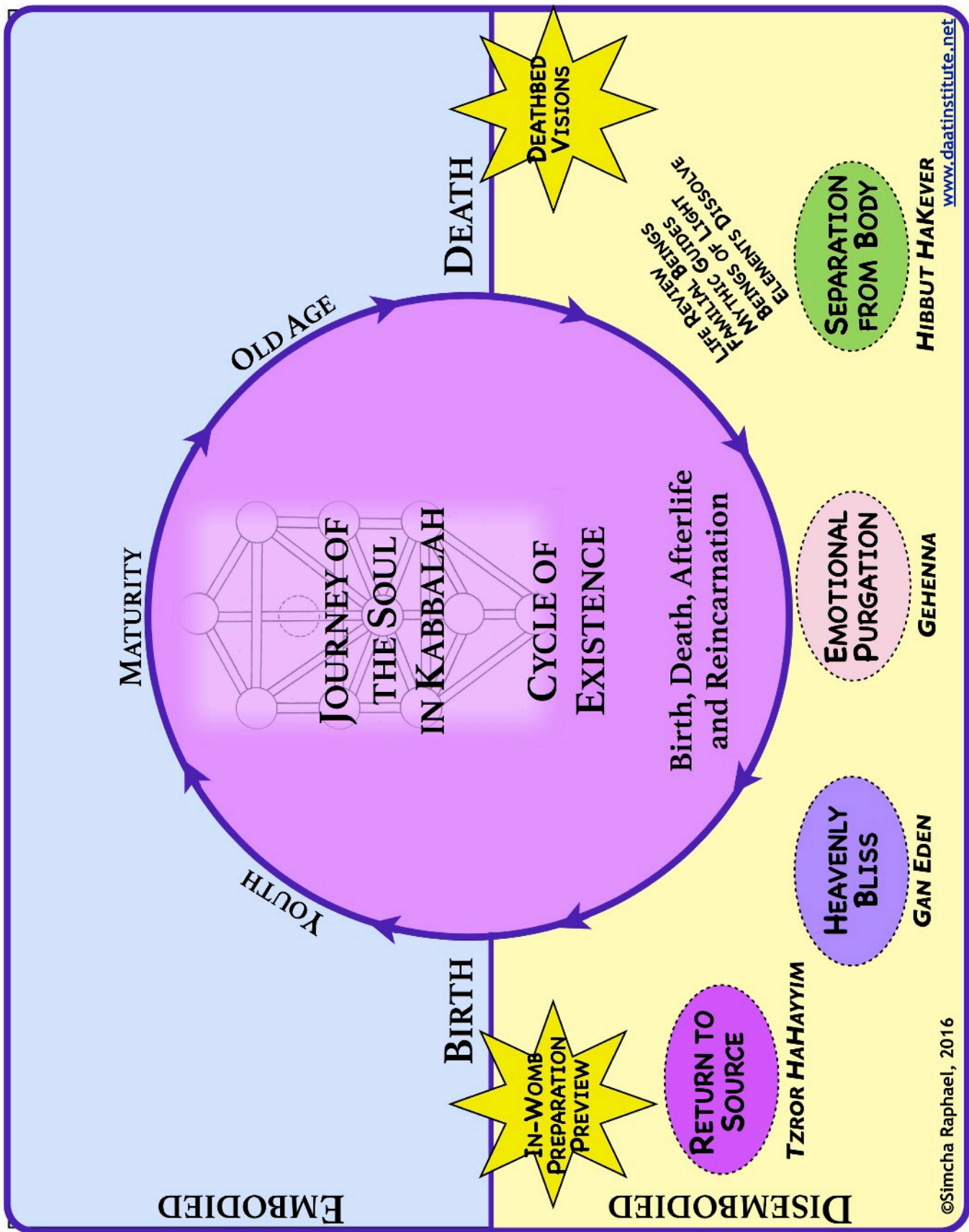
**REB SIMCHA RAPHAEL**



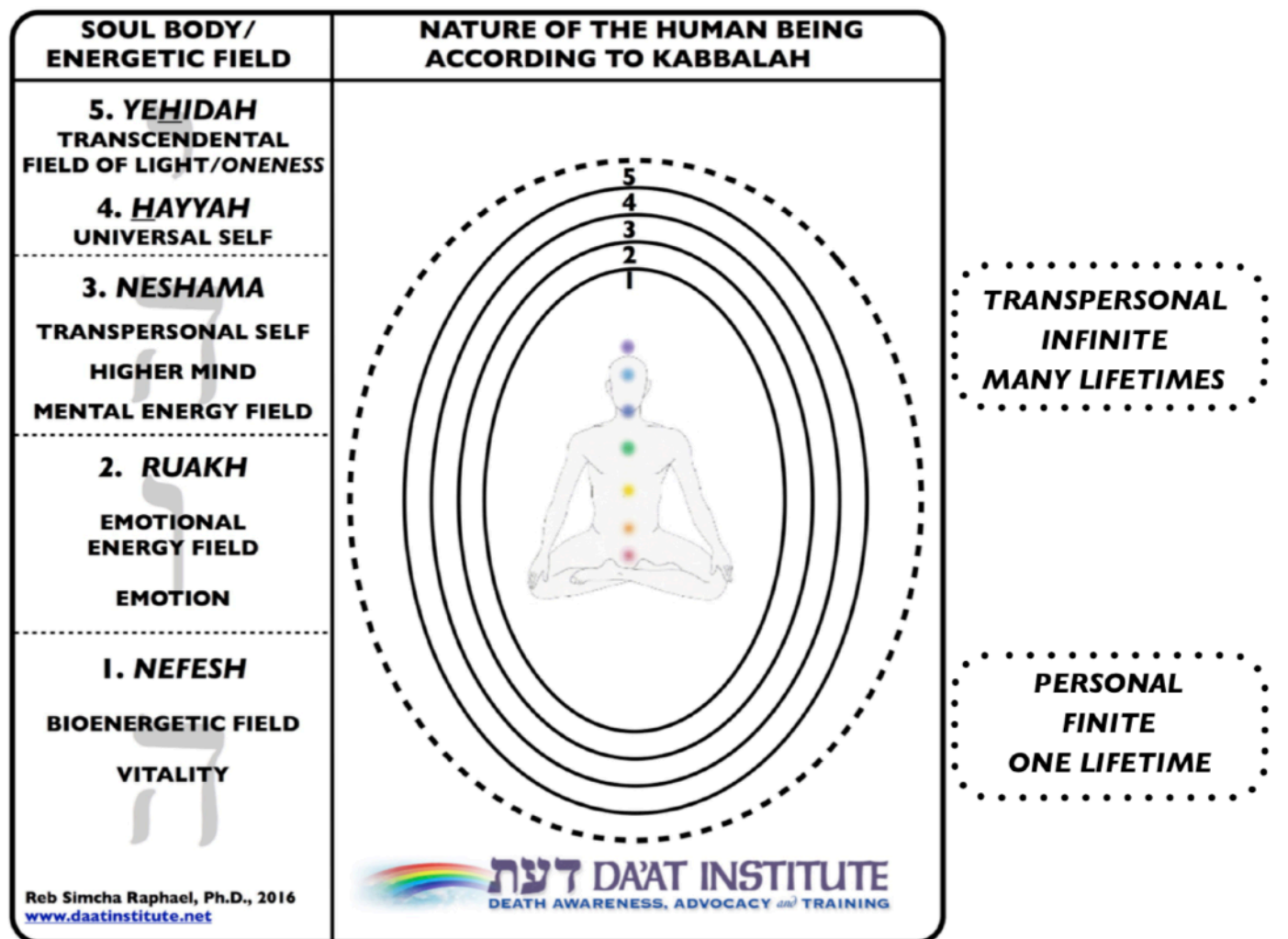
**OMEGA**

**OMEGA INSTITUTE WORKSHOP**  
**OCTOBER 19-21, 2018**

 **דעת DA'AT INSTITUTE**  
DEATH AWARENESS, ADVOCACY *and* TRAINING



# NATURE OF THE SOUL AND THE IN-WOMB EXPERIENCE



## 1. THREE LEVELS OF THE SOUL:

There are three levels that comprise the soul, and therefore the soul has three names: **NEFESH**, **RUAKH**, and **NESHAMA**. NEFESH...is the lowest of all. RUAKH is the [power of] sustenance, which rules over NEFESH and is a higher level than NEFESH, sustaining it throughout as is fitting. NESHAMA is the highest [power of] sustenance, and rules over all, a holy level, exalted above all. [Zohar I, 205b].

*"The day you were born is the day G-D decided the world could not exist without you" - Rabbi Nachman of Breslov*

## 2. PRE-EXISTENCE OF SOULS:

It has been taught: **The souls of all humanity even before they came down into the world, were engraved before God in the firmament, in the precise form that they were to assume in this world; and everything that they learn in this world they already knew before they came into the world....** This is the meaning of "That which is, has already been; and that which is to be, has already been" (Ecc. 3:15). [Zohar III, 61a-61b].

### 3. EMBRYO TAUGHT TORAH IN WOMB:

R. Simlai taught: A light burns above the head of a fetus in the womb and it looks and sees from one end of the world to the other, as it is said, *"then his lamp shined above my head, and by His light I walked through darkness."*(Job 29:3)... and it [the fetus in the womb] is also taught all the Torah from beginning to end [Talmud Niddah 30b]

### 4. FORMATION OF THE EMBRYO/FETUS: MIDRASH YETZIRAT HA-VLAD -



What is the mystery of the Formation of the Embryo? In the hour when man is in service of his bed with his wife the Holy Blessed One beckons God beckons the angel in charge of souls - מלאך הממונה על רוחות - and says, 'Bring me a certain spirit which is hidden in GAN EDEN, whose name is So-and-so.' . . . Immediately the soul comes before the Holy Blessed One and bows down and prostrates itself. The Holy Blessed One places it against its will into a drop of seed, and the angels come and causes it to enter the womb of its mother. He posts there two angels who guard him that he should not fall out, and they put a burning candle upon his head. And he looks and can see from the beginning of the world to its end.

And in the morning the angel takes the soul (spirt) and leads him into GAN EDEN and show the righteous who sit in glory. The angel then says to the soul, 'These people whom you see there were formed like you in the womb of their mother. They went forth into the world and observed the laws and ordinances of the Holy Blessed One. If you will do like them, after your death you will be rewarded with this exaltation and glory. And if not, your end will be to go to the place which I am about to show you.

And in the evening the angel takes the soul (spirt) and leads him into the GEHENNA, and shows him the wicked whom the angels of destruction beat and smite with rods of fire. They cry, 'Woe, woe!' but no mercy is shown them. The angel then says to the soul, "Do you know, my child, who these are that burn?' 'No,' it replies. The angel answers, 'These were formed of the same origin as you. They went forth to the world and did not observe the laws and ordinances of the Holy Blessed One. Therefore they have come to this place of punishment. Therefore be not wicked but righteous.

The angel guides the soul from morning until evening, and shows it every place which his [her] foot will tread, and the place where it will be buried. After this... he places it back again in its mother's womb and sustains the child in the womb of its mother for nine months.

At the end of that time the same angel says 'Come forth, for the time has come to go forth into the world.' The angel touches him under the nose and puts out the candle over his head, and bring him out against his will, and he forgets everything he saw.





## DEATHBED VISION AND THE DYING PROCESS IN KABBALAH

## I. IS ONE'S DEATH PRE-DETERMINED:

When one's appointed time draws near, proclamation is made concerning him for thirty days, and even the birds of the heaven announce his doom; and if he is virtuous, his coming is announced for thirty days among the righteous in Gan Eden. We have learnt that during those thirty days his soul departs from him every night and ascends to the other world and sees its place there, and during those thirty days the man has not the same consciousness or control of his soul as previously (Zohar I, 217b).

## 2. DEATHBED VISIONS - SUPERNAL VISION:

When a man lies [on his deathbed] and judgement rests upon him decreeing that he should leave this world, he is granted an additional supernal spirit that he never had before. And when this dwells with him and cleaves to him, he sees what he has never been worthy enough to see throughout his life, because the additional spirit has now been given to him. And once this has been granted him, and he sees, he departs from this world (Zohar I, 218b).

### 3. DEATHBED VISIONS - ANCESTRAL GUIDES - FAMILIAL BEINGS:

R. Shimon said: 'Have you seen today the image of your father? For so we have learnt, that at the hour of a man's departure from the world, his father and **relatives gather round** him, and he sees them and recognizes them, and likewise all with whom he associated in this world, and they **accompany his soul to the place where it is to abide**. (Zohar I, 218a).

#### 4. DEATHBED VISIONS - MEETING MYTHIC BEINGS - ADAM:

When a [person] departs this world... [s]he sees many strange things on his way & meets Adam, the first man, sitting at the gate of Gan Eden, ready to welcome all who have observed commands of their Master. (Zohar, I, 65b)

## 5. DEATHBED VISIONS - MEETING MYTHIC BEINGS - VISIONS OF *SHECHINAH*, ANGELS:

...it has been taught: The time of a person's departure is the great day of judgment, for the soul is separated from the body, and no one leaves the world before seeing the Shechinah (Zohar, III, 88a)...And with the Shechinah there come three ministering angels to receive the soul of the righteous (Zohar I, 98a *Midrash ha-Ne'elam*).

## 6. DEATHBED VISIONS - LIFE REVIEW

...when God desires to take back a man's spirit, all the **days (s)he has lived in this world pass in review** . (Zohar, I, 221b)



## **7. DEATHBED VISIONS - LIFE REVIEW/JUDGEMENT**

Angels are assigned to every human being. And every day they record his deeds, so that everything he does is known to the Holy Blessed One, and everything is put down on his record and marked with a seal. When a man is righteous, his righteousness is recorded; when a man does wrong, his wrongdoing is recorded. Accordingly, when a righteous man arrives at the end of his days, his recording angels precede him into heaven singing his praise... But when a wicked man dies, a man who did not bring himself to turn in repentance to God, the Holy Blessed One, says to him: "Let your soul be blasted in despair! How many times did I call upon you to repent, and you did not." (Pesikta Rabbati, 44:8)

## **8. DEATHBED VISIONS - MYTHIC VISIONS OF THE ANGEL OF DEATH**

A person lifts up their eyes and sees the walls their house in a blaze of fire that emanates from inside him/herself. Then he/she sees the Angel of Death in front of him/her, covered with eyes, clothed in fiery garments... His/her spirit moves through every part of the body and asks leave, like someone asking his friend for permission to go to another place... person man is afraid and tries to hide, but he cannot. When they see it is impossible, they open their eyes, look upon him the Angel of Death, and then surrenders body and soul (Zohar III, 126a-127a).

## **9. DISSOLUTION OF ELEMENTS:**

..we have learnt that on the dread day when a man's time comes to depart from the world, four quarters of the world indict him, and punishments rise up from all four quarters and four elements fall to quarreling and seek to depart each to its own side. (Zohar I, 218b).

Life depends on the interaction of four basic elements: The essence of earth is flesh, the essence of water is bodily fluid, the essence of fire is bodily heat and the essence of air is breath. The dying process begins with the dissolution of these elements.

[First] the element earth dissolves and is absorbed by the element water. This is accompanied by the inner experience that...everything is falling apart from great floods and earthquakes. You will not be able to stand because your strength is fast disappearing...





In the second phase, the element water dissolves and is absorbed by the element fire... you will experience the sensation that the entire universe has been flooded with water. During this time, those around you perceive that your face and lips are rapidly drying up. You will also feel extremely thirsty.

When the third element, fire, dissolves into the element air you... will experience the sensation that everything around you is burning. During this time the heat from your body will do away.

[Finally] the element air will begin to dissolve into consciousness itself. When this happens, you will have the... experience that all phenomena in the universe are being blown away by the winds of a great storm. You will hear a grinding roar like that of a thousand thunders [and] ... the external air or breath will be extinguished.

*[Lama Lodru, Bardo Teachings - Tibetan Way of Death and Rebirth, pp. 3-5]*

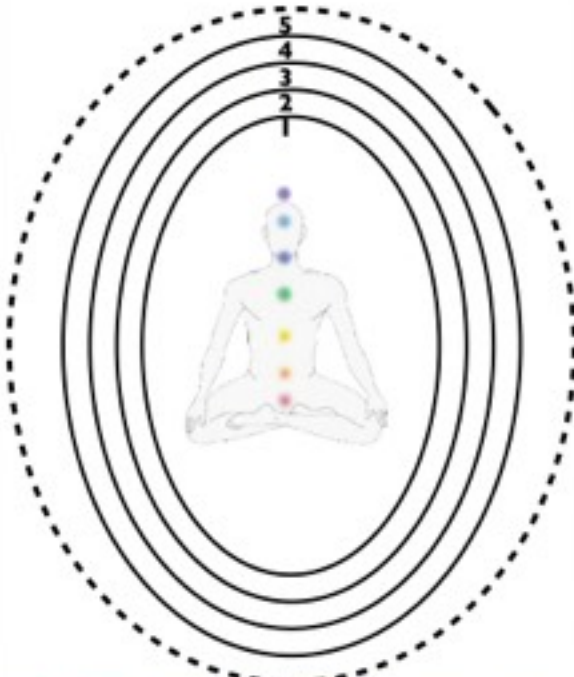

# STAGES OF THE AFTERLIFE JOURNEY IN KABBALAH

JEWISH VIEWS OF THE AFTERLIFE			
DIMENSION OF HUMAN BEING	AFTERLIFE STATE	PROCESS OF AFTERLIFE	RITUAL
 <b>SPIRIT</b>	<b>TZROR HA-HAYYIM</b>  <b>SOURCE OF LIFE</b>	<b>SPIRITUAL UNIFICATION</b>	<b>YIZKOR</b>
 <b>MIND</b>	<b>GAN EDEN</b>  <b>HEAVENLY BLISS</b>	<b>INTELLECTUAL CONTEMPLATION</b>	<b>Yahrzeit</b>
 <b>EMOTION</b>	<b>GEHENNA</b>  <b>EMOTIONAL PURIFICATION</b>	<b>EMOTIONAL PURGATION</b>	<b>KADDISH</b>
 <b>BODY</b>	<b>HIBBUT HA-KEVER</b>  <b>PANGS OF THE GRAVE</b>  ANCESTRAL GUIDES MYTHIC BEINGS LIFE REVIEW DISSOLUTION OF ELEMENTS	<b>PHYSICAL SEPARATION</b>	<b>SHIVA</b>

Simcha Raphael, 2014



**דעת DA'AT INSTITUTE**  
 DEATH AWARENESS, ADVOCACY AND TRAINING

SOUL BODY/ ENERGETIC FIELD	NATURE OF THE HUMAN BEING ACCORDING TO KABBALAH	STAGES OF AFTERLIFE JOURNEY
<b>5. YEHIDAH</b> ONENESS  <b>4. HAYYAH</b> UNIVERSAL SELF  <b>3. NESHAMA</b> HIGHER MIND MENTAL ENERGY FIELD  <b>2. RUAH</b> EMOTIONAL ENERGY FIELD EMOTION  <b>1. NEPESH</b> BIOENERGETIC FIELD VITALITY	 	<b>4&amp;5. TZROR HA-HAYYIM</b> RETURN TO SOURCE OF LIFE  <b>3. GAN EDEN</b> HEAVENLY BLISS  <b>2. GEHENNA</b> EMOTIONAL PURIFICATION  <b>1. HIBBUT HA-KEVER</b> PANGS OF THE GRAVE DEATHBED VISION: ANCESTRAL GUIDES MYTHIC BEINGS LIFE REVIEW DISSOLUTION OF ELEMENTS

## I. THREE LEVELS OF THE SOUL:

There are three levels that comprise the soul, and therefore the soul has three names: **NEPESH**, **RUAKH**, and **NESHAMA**. **NEPESH**...is the lowest of all. **RUAKH** is the [power of] sustenance, which rules over the **nephesh** and is a higher level than [the **nephesh**], sustaining it throughout as is fitting. **NESHAMA** is the highest [power of] sustenance, and rules over all, a holy level, exalted above all. (Zohar I, 205b)

## 2. THE POST-MORTEM FATE OF THE SOUL:

**NEPESH** remains in the grave until the body is decomposed and turned into dust, during which time it flits about in this world, **seeking to mingle with the living** and to learn of their troubles; and in the hour of need it intercedes for them. ...it **wanders about the world** and **beholds the body which was once its home** devoured by worms and suffering the judgement of the grave [**Hibbut Ha-Kever**] (Zohar, II, 141b-142a)

...the **RUAKH** is purified in **Gehenna**, whence it goes forth roaming about the world and visiting its grave...**After twelve months the whole is at rest**; the body reposes in the dust and the soul is clad in its luminous vestment (Zohar I, 226a- 226b).

[after death], the **NESHAMA**...ascends at once to her place, the region from whence she emanated [**Upper Gan Eden**], and for her sake the light is kindled to shine above. She never again descends to earth. (Zohar I, 226a- 226b).



### 3. HIBBUT HA-KEVER/PANGS OF THE GRAVE:

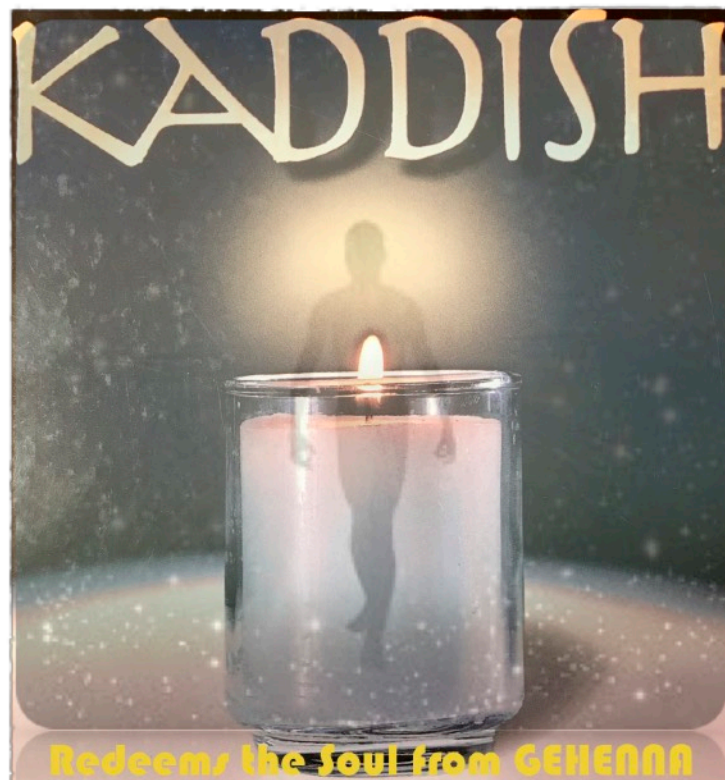
Rabbi Yehuda said: "for **seven days** the soul goes to and fro from his house to his grave from his grave to his house, mourning for the body" (Zohar I, 218b)

### 4. THE BARDO OF BECOMING

In the Bardo of Becoming - *Sipai Bardo* - one awakens in a mental body created by your past karma but which will be rid of all the infirmities you may have had in your past life. In this state you possess all the senses of the body but you are invisible to human beings and are able to read their minds. In this state, persons do not realize they are dead at first and return to their families and try to communicate with them. Angry and frustrated the mental body may hang around for weeks. .

### 5. GEHENNA - PURGATION

There are **five kinds of punishments in Gehenna**, and Isaiah saw them all.... He entered the **2nd compartment**, and he saw two men hanging by their tongues; and he said, "O You who unveils the hidden, reveal to me the secret of this." He answered, "These are the men who slandered, therefore they are thus punished." He entered the **3rd compartment**, and he saw there men hanging by their organs. He said, "O You who unveils the hidden, reveal to me the secret of this." And He answered, "These are the men who neglected their own wives, and committed adultery with the daughters of Israel." (*Keitzad Din Ha-Kever*, 1-3).



## 6. TRANSITION FROM PERSONALITY TO SOUL:

In **Lower Gan Eden** there is a repository of all “soul garments” each according to its desert. On each garment are inscribed all the good works done by a person while embodied this world; and in each case a proclamation resounds saying: this garment belongs to so and so... after which the soul of the person in Gan Eden is clothed in such a garment, so as to become a replica of person’s personality whilst in this world. This takes place not less than thirty days after a person’s death...for the first thirty days there is no soul that does not have to undergo some type of purification before entering Gan Eden.. (Zohar II, 210a).

## 7. GAN EDEN:

**Gan Eden** has two gates of carbuncle, and sixty myriads of ministering angels keep watch. Each of these **angels shine like the radiance of the heavens**. When the righteous person approaches, angels remove from him the clothes in which he had been buried, and clothe him with eight robes of the clouds of glory, and place upon his head two crowns, one of precious stones and pearls, and the other of gold, and they place eight myrtles in his hand and praise him. And they lead him to a place full of waters surrounded by 800 species of roses and myrtles. (*Masekhet Gan Eden*, 1-2)

## 8. TZROR HA-HAYYIM - “RETURN TO SOURCE”:

...that holy celestial abode which is called "the bundle of the living" [**tzror ha-hayyim**], where that holy superior grade called the super-soul regales itself with the supernal delights. (Zohar, III, 70a)

**KADDISH** © Rabbi Geela Rayzel Raphael

**CHORUS:** *Yitgadal v’yitkadash sh’may rabba. [2X]*

I integrate your legacy;  
Treasure your memory;  
What I have learned from you;  
I’m left with your love.

**CHORUS**

I come to You in grief  
Walk in humility  
Grateful you have been with me  
I’m lifted by your love.

**CHORUS**

We rise to praise Your name  
All our waking days.  
Where you have guided us  
We walk in your love.

**CHORUS**

Create a path for peace  
To live in harmony  
For us and all the world  
Bless us with love.

**CHORUS**



# **HAMAKOM YINACHEM ETCHEM**

## **CHORUS:**

*HaMakom yinachem etchem  
HaMakom yinachen etchen  
HaMakom yinachem etchem  
B'toch sha'ar avlei tzion v'yerushalayim.*

In times when we are troubled  
By losses we must face  
The soul will bleed  
As we grieve  
Sorrow cuts its own pace.

**CHORUS:**

We'll miss their smiles, touch, and smell  
The hands we once held  
Love lives on  
With memories strong  
Spirit dances beyond the veil.

**CHORUS:**

May you be comforted on your journey  
May you feel what you need to feel  
Let seeds be planted  
Of hope and consolation  
May you find the time to heal.

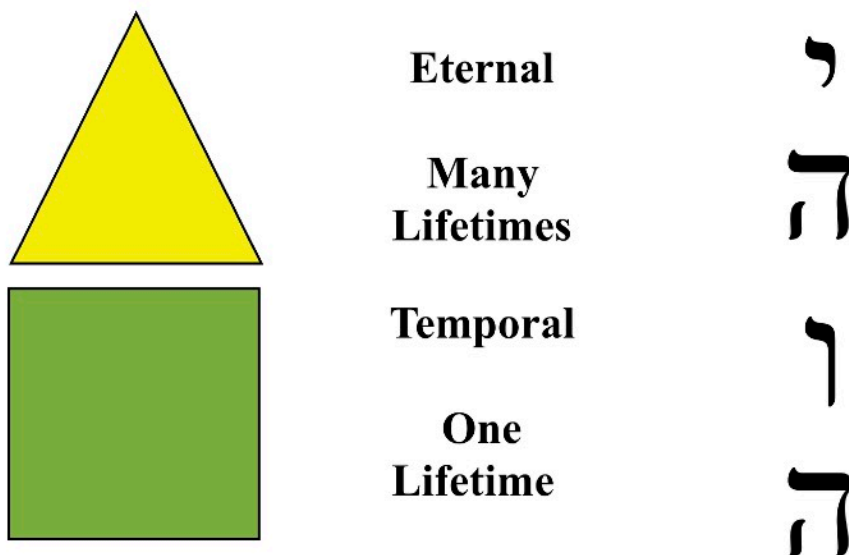
**CHORUS:**



**This song by Geela Rayzel Raphael is based upon the traditional greetings to mourners following a funeral and at a shiva house. For music see Geela Rayzel Raphael, *May the Angels Carry You - Jewish Songs of Comfort for Death, Dying and Mourning*, [www.Shechinah.com](http://www.Shechinah.com)**

# GILGUL AND REINCARNATION IN KABBALAH

## GILGUL — KABBALISTIC DOCTRINE OF REINCARNATION



### 1. GILGUL IN THE EVENING SHEMA PRAYER:

Master of the Universe, I hereby forgive anyone who angered or antagonized me or who sinned against me - whether against my body, my property, my honor or against anything anything of mine; whether he did so accidentally , willfully, carelessly, or purposely, whether through speech, deed, thought or notion, **whether in this transmigration or another transmigration** -

בגלגול זה בין גלגול אחר

### 2. BIBLICAL PROOF TEXT IN SEFER HA-BAHIR (c. 1176)

R. Meir said: What is the meaning of the verse "*The Lord shall reign forever, your God, O Zion, from generation to generation*?" [Ps. 146:10] What [does it mean] "*from generation to generation*"? R. Papias said: It is written, "*A generation goes, and a generation comes*" ([Ecc. 1:4). And R. Akiba said: [The meaning of "*A generation goes and a generation comes*" is that] it has already come. (Sefer Ha-Bahir, 121)



### 3. PARABLE OF A KING

To what is this similar? To a fable about a king who owned slaves, and he dressed them with embroidered silk garments according to his best ability. They disarranged them. He expelled them and drove his presence from them, and stripped them of his garments, and they went away. The king then took the garments, washed them thoroughly until there was no soiled spot left on them and placed them to be readily used. Then the king bought other slaves and dressed them with these garments. But he did not know whether or not these slaves were good. And here is a case where they [the new slaves] benefited from garments that had been worn previously by others and were not even new. .... (Sefer Ha-Bahir, 122)

#### **4. GILGUL - EXPLANATION FOR APPARENT INJUSTICE IN THE WORLD**

"Why is there a righteous person who has good, and [another] righteous person who has evil?" ....This is because the [second] righteous person was wicked previously, and is now being punished. Is one then punished for his childhood deeds? Did not Rabbi Simon say that in the Tribunal on high, no punishment is meted out until one is twenty years or older. He said: *I am not speaking of present life. I am speaking about what has already been previously.*" (Sefer Ha-Bahir, 195)

#### **5. REASONS FOR REINCARNATION - MITZVOT:**

"If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall work for six years; and in the seventh year he shall go out free, without liability. (Ex. 21:2) Rabbi Shimon said to them, friends [students, disciples] the time has come to reveal some mysteries concerning transmigration of souls. This applies when the soul is required to reincarnate, either because of sins, or because it had not completely fulfilled obligations in Torah and *mitzvot* while alive in this world. It is forced to come back to this world and don a body, that is be born again and finish what was imposed on it for the seventy years of the life in this world. (Zohar II, 94b)

#### **6. REASONS FOR REINCARNATION - TIKKUN (RECTIFICATION):**

It is essential that the sins of a righteous person be cleared so that s/he will be able to enter the heavenly GAN EDEN. Thus, there is no rectification for her/him except reincarnation. For every sin for which one does not atone through suffering in life, and for which s/he cannot go to GEHENNA to receive punishment, the person will require another reincarnation to rectify it. (*Sha'ar HaGilgullim*, Winston trans, p. 113)

#### **7. REASONS FOR REINCARNATION - NESHAMA KLALIT-"UNIVERSAL SOUL"**

There is a soul that is called the "universal soul" [Reb Schneur Zalman of Liadi, *Tanya*, Ch. 2 and 42]. This soul is connected to all souls, and can also reincarnate solely for the purpose of helping other souls achieve their proper elevation. A universal soul has responsibility for all souls, being that it is connected with all souls. When this "universal soul" reincarnates to help other people reach their elevations, it is guaranteed that this elevated soul will not sin and will be inclined to do only good. (DovBer Pinson, *Reincarnation and Judaism*, p. 103)

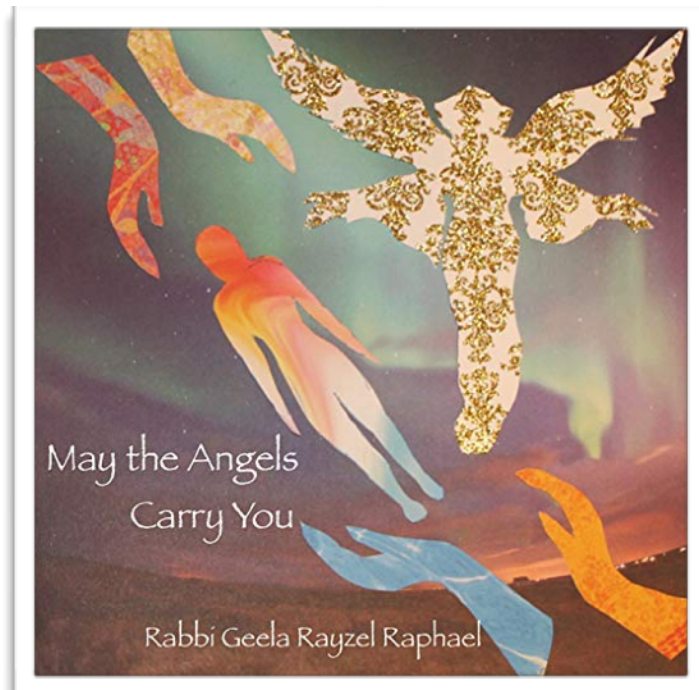
#### **8. HOLOCAUST PAST LIVES:**

When I thought about my past life in Holocaust, I somehow sensed that I had been adolescent Jewish girl between the ages of twelve and fifteen. Over the years, I have had many dreams in which I was a young girl. Now I also realized that I had carried internalized feelings of inferiority from that life into this one. Whenever I meditate on this Holocaust life, the word which comes to mind is *fear*. I am still afraid to explore that life in detail because it is so painful. But one thing I do understand now - that feeling of subhumanness is not my fault. I am free of it today, because I learned how the Nazis were playing with Jewish minds. As that young girl I had internalized their shame-based program. When I finally realized that the Nazis were game- playing with my self-esteem my whole life changed. (Yonassam Gershom, *From Ashes to Healing*, p. 111)



**MAY THE ANGELS CARRY YOU:  
JEWISH SONGS OF COMFORT FOR DEATH, DYING AND MOURNING**

**By  
Rabbi Geela Rayzel Raphael**



A collection of songs and prayers based upon the cycle of traditional Jewish liturgical moments dealing with death and loss. Heartfelt and contemplative, these various songs were recorded in response to real life events of grief and transition. Several selections are designed to support the needs of the dying and their loved ones - chants and prayers for the time of transition. Other songs can be used to console and support grieving family and friends and to provide *nichum avelim* - comfort for the bereaved. These songs can also be incorporated into funeral and shiva rituals. This collection of contemporary liturgical songs expands the repertoire for family and professional caregivers, rabbis, cantors, chaplains, members of the *hevre kaddisha*, and others involved in this holy work.

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2. **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING** to clergy, health care and mental health professionals and educators working with the dying and bereaved;
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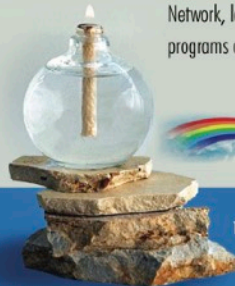
**MAY THE ANGELS CARRY YOU:**  
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### **Reb Simcha Raphael, Ph.D.**

Founding Director of the DA'AT Institute, Reb Simcha received his doctorate in Psychology from the California Institute of Integral Studies and was ordained as a Rabbinic Pastor by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi. A psychotherapist, spiritual director, and Adjunct Faculty at Bryn Athyn College in Philadelphia, he is a Fellow of the Rabbis Without Borders Network, lectures widely and leads scholar-in-residence programs on Jewish death awareness education.



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**Ordained as a Rabbinic Pastor by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, he has written extensively on death and dying and is author of *Jewish Views of the Afterlife*.**

In the final analysis, [Judaism] teaches us that between the world of the living and the world of the dead there is a window and not a wall. From earliest times, Jewish tradition has recognized that the living and the dead continue to interact in important and intimate ways. Jewish tradition teaches us to remember the dead: doing so will, in the long run, help us enhance the quality of life. Long after people die, their legacy lives on inside of us. Within the wellsprings of our infinite souls we find the window of connection between the living and the dead.

- Simcha Raphael, *Jewish Views of the Afterlife*