

JEWISH VIEWS OF THE AFTERLIFE				
NATURE OF HUMAN BEING	STAGES OF AFTERLIFE	AFTERLIFE JOURNEY	AFTERLIFE PROCESS	RITUAL
SPIRIT יחידה חיה	4 TZROR HA-HAYYIM SOURCE OF LIFE	RETURN TO STOREHOUSE OF SOULS	SPIRITUAL UNIFICATION	YIZKOR
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AFTERLIFE JOURNEY OF THE SOUL IN ZOHAR

1) THREE LEVELS OF THE SOUL:

There are three levels that comprise the soul, and therefore the soul has three names: **NEPHESH**, **RUAKH**, and **NESHAMA**. **NEPHESH**...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:

NEPHESH 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 from their house to the grave from the grave to their house, mourning for the body" (Zohar I, 218b)

4) GEHENNA AND THE RABBINIC WORLDVIEW:

...one who visits the sick (Ned. 40a), or observes [the practice of] three meals on the Shabbat is saved from the retribution of Gehenna (Shab. 118a); If in reciting the *Shema*, one pronounces the letters distinctly, Gehenna is cooled for him (Ber. 15a); ...he who has Torah, good deeds, humility and fear of heaven will be saved from punishment [in Gehenna] (Pesikata Rabbati 50:1); ... people who study Torah will be released from torments of Gehenna (Midrash Prov. 1:5)

5) GEHENNA AS PURGATION AND PURIFICATION - "FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY"

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) SHLOSHIM AND THE JOURNEY OF THE SOUL:

In Lower Gan Eden there is a repository of all “soul garments” .. inscribed with all the good works done by a person while embodied in 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) TRANSITION FROM PERSONALITY TO SOUL:

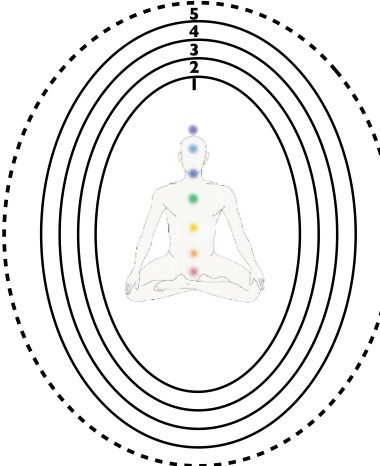
In **Lower Gan Eden** there is a repository of all “soul garments” each according to its desert. On each garment are inscribed all the good works done by a person while embodied this world; and in each case a proclamation resounds saying: this garment belongs to so and so... after which the soul of the 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).

8) 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)

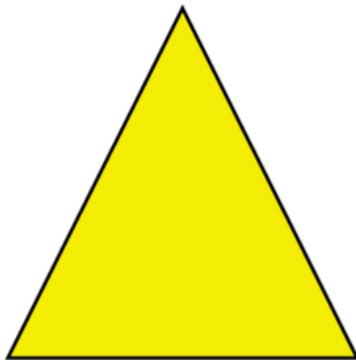
9) TZROR HA-HAYYIM - “RETURN TO SOURCE”:

...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 subernal delights. (Zohar, III, 70a)

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

DOCTRINE OF REINCARNATION/GILGUL

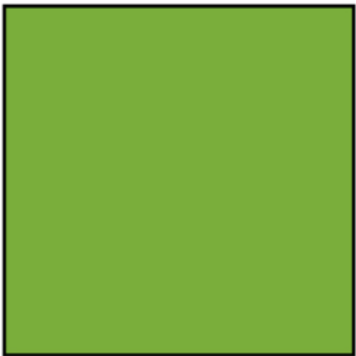


Eternal

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**Many
Lifetimes**

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Temporal

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**One
Lifetime**

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GILGUL AND REINCARNATION IN ZOHAR AND LURIANIC KABBALAH

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) HISTORICAL CONTEXT: NO BASIS FOR GILGUL IN TORAH OR HAZA”L

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” [Eccles. 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*, section 121)

3) GILGUL AS EXPLANATION FOR APPARENT INJUSTICE IN 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 R. Shimon 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).

4) GILGUL IN ZOHAR, GUADALAJARA, SPAIN, C. 1290 CE

Truly, **all souls, must undergo transmigration**; but men do not perceive the ways of the Holy One, how the revolving scale is set up and men are judged every day at all time, and how they are brought up before the Tribunal, before they enter into this world and after they leave it. They perceive not the many transmigrations and the many mysterious works which the Holy One accomplishes with many naked souls, and how many naked spirits roam about, in the other world without being able to enter within the veil of the King's Palace (*Zohar* III, 99b).

5) GILGUL FOR THE SAKE OF FULFILLING MITZVOTH I

R. 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) GILGUL FOR THE SAKE OF FULFILLING MITZVOTH 2

The primal shape of humanity corresponds to the mystical shape of the Godhead... **Everything in the individual, each of the 248 limbs and 365 sinews,** corresponds to one of the supernal lights, as these are arranged in the structure of the *Shi'ur Komah*, the primal shape of the highest manifestation of God. A person's task is to bring his or her own true shape to its spiritual perfection, to develop the divine image within. **This is done by observing the 248 positive and 365 negative commandments of the Torah,** each one of which is linked to one of the organs of the human body, and hence of one of those supernal lights. Whoever fulfills the Torah properly makes the body into a dwelling place for the *Shekhina*. But a person must undergo *gilgul* for every limb that does not become a 'Throne for the *Shekhina*' - that is, for every commandment that a person fails to observe or prohibition that one transgresses (Gershom Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, p. 219)

7) GILGUL AS PURIFICATION OF SIN [FOR SCHOLARS OF TORAH]

"The fires of Gehenna have no power over scholars learned in Torah" Chag. 27a, Thus a righteous person who learns Torah . . . is not punished with Gehenna

The sins of a righteous person who learns Torah must be cleared so that they will be able to enter Gan Eden. Thus, there is no rectification for that person except reincarnation. For every sin which one does not atone through suffering during one's lifetime, and for which one cannot go to Gehenna to receive their due punishment, they will require another reincarnation to rectify it. (*Sha'ar HaGilgulim*, Winston trans, p. 113)

8) NESHAMA KLALIT - GILGUL FOR THE "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)

9) HOLOCAUST PAST LIVES:

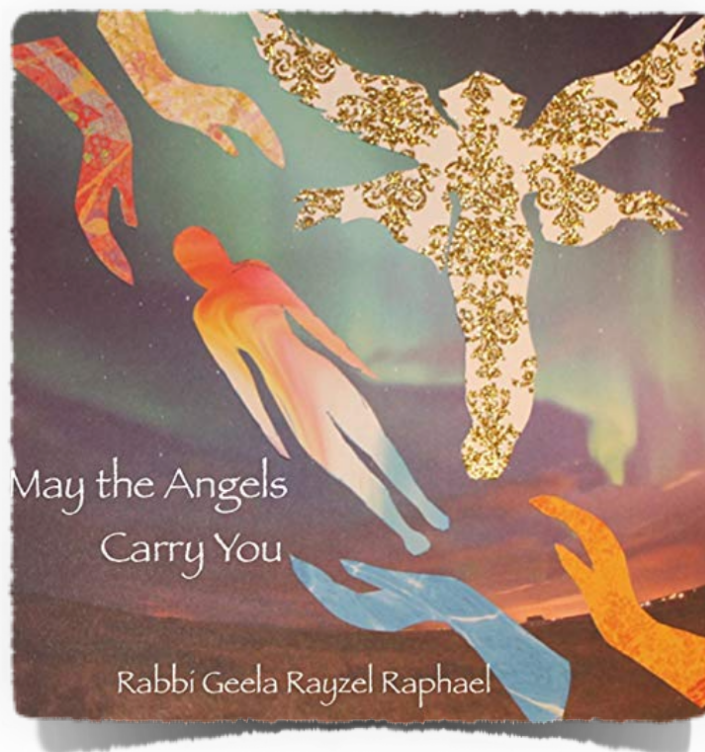
When I thought about my past life in Holocaust, I somehow sensed that I had been adolescent Jewish girl between the ages of twelve and fifteen. Over the years, I have had many dreams in which I was a young girl. Now I also realized that I had carried internalized feelings of inferiority from that life 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

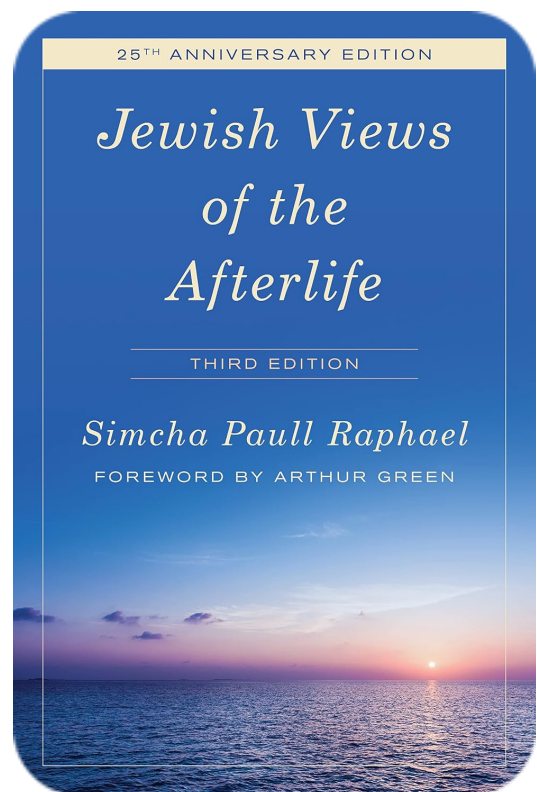
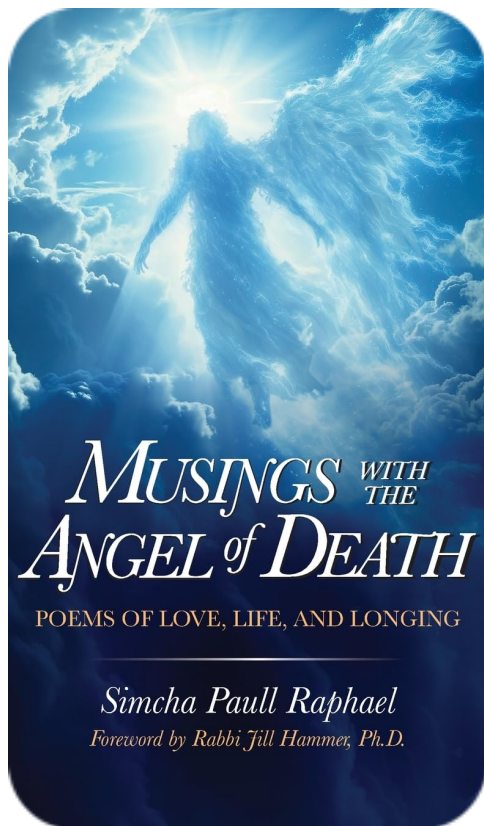
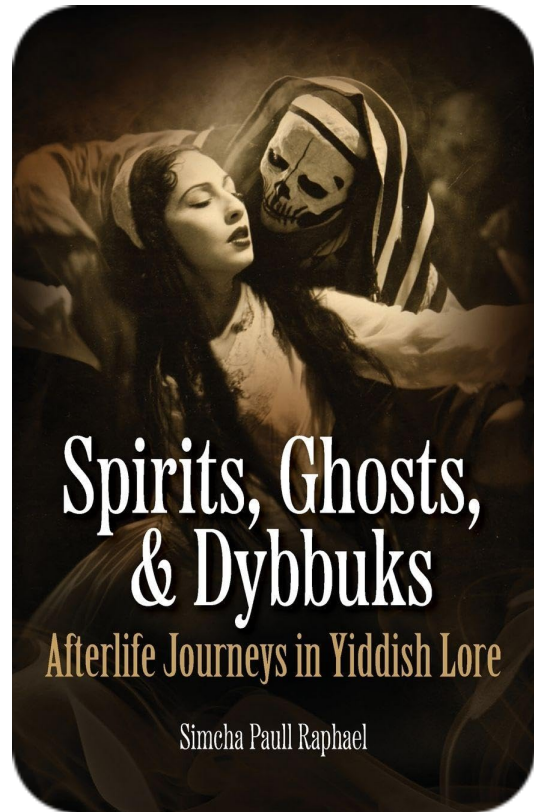
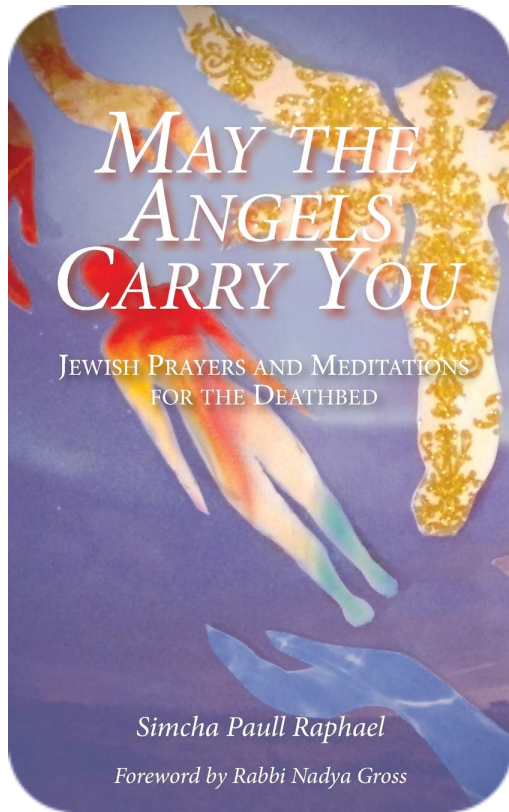
by
Rabbi Geela Rayzel Raphael

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. These songs and chants 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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FOR FURTHER READING



FOR FURTHER READING

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Compiled by Simcha Raphael, Ph.D., 2026

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.

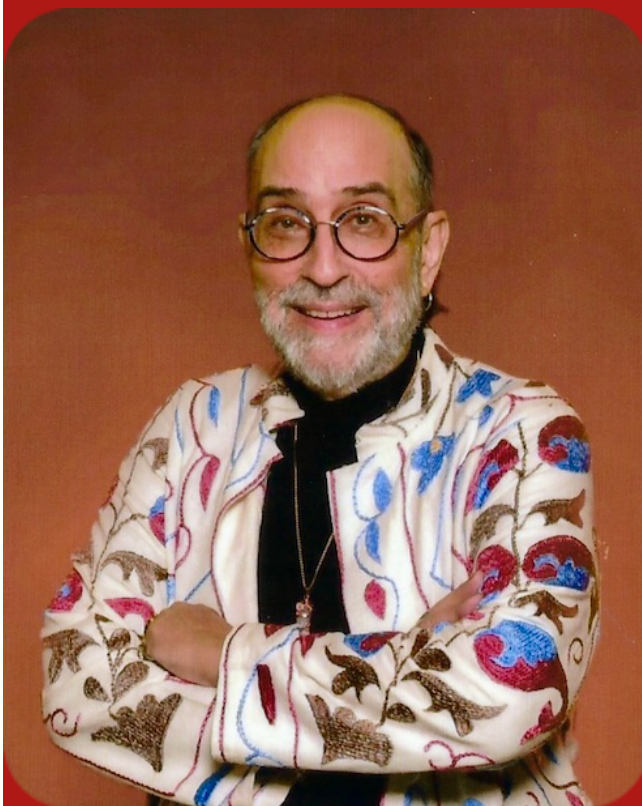
– Simcha Raphael, *Jewish Views of the Afterlife*

DA'AT INSTITUTE FOR DEATH AWARENESS, ADVOCACY AND TRAINING

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