



ISSUES IN JEWISH THOUGHT

FUTURE WORLDS

— a personal view

SECOND SERIES

By Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks MA (Cantab)

Booklets in *this series*:

Israel and the Jew
Explaining Suffering
The Chosen
Future Worlds
The Place of Doubt

United Synagogue Youth and Community Services
Publications Division

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Foreword

Orthodox Judaism has long accepted and even encouraged the questioning mind. As Rabbi Emanuel Rackman, President of Bar Ilan University has put it:—

“A Jew dare not live with absolute certainty, not only because certainty is the hallmark of the fanatic and Judaism abhors fanaticism, but also because doubt is good for the human soul, its humility, and consequently its greater potential ultimately to discover its Creator.”

(“One Man’s Judaism”)

The problem for the modern Jew is not that he has questions but that he does not know where to find the answers. It is in the spirit of Rabbi Rackman’s advice that Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks in this series “Issues in Jewish Thought” provides a route map for the journey to greater understanding. The booklets are brief and to the point, providing an introduction to Jewish thinking on each of the issues treated. The booklets should be particularly useful in forming the basis of an adult education programme or a study or discussion group at local synagogues. We are fortunate in having in Rabbi Sacks, a teacher who combines breadth and depth of learning with great clarity of exposition.

This series is part of an ambitious programme of publications on which the United Synagogue is embarked and in which Rabbi Sacks, holder of the Sir Immanuel Jakobovits Chair in Modern Jewish Thought at Jews College will play a prominent part. This is the second volume in the series and a third is being planned.

The programme also includes plans to produce a substantial series of practical guides to Judaism, the first volume being on Shabbat, and more basic pamphlets of instruction in Jewish ritual and practice. Through this range of publications it is hoped that members of the United Synagogue will increase their understanding of and strengthen their commitment to traditional Jewish values and practices, and thus enrich their experience of Jewish living.

Leslie Wagner

Chairman, Adult Education
and Publications Committee



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United Synagogue Youth and Community Services

One tension dominates religion: the conflict between the ideal and the real. Almost by definition, to have a religious viewpoint is to be convinced that the here-and now, the world as we directly experience it, is not all there is or all that matters. Firstly there is an ideal of happiness which conflicts with our frequent experience of suffering, physical and emotional. Then there is an ideal of justice which seems at odds with the frequent victories of power over right. Deepest of all, perhaps, is our fear of death: a conflict between our sense of an enduring world and our knowledge that at some point we will cease to be part of it, between our ideal of permanence and the reality of our future non-existence. Lastly, and peculiar to Judaism, comes the tension between the first promise to Abraham — of land, blessing and posterity — and the historical fact that such a state of affairs has so far only occasionally, fragmentarily and briefly been realised.

There are three possible responses to so acute a discrepancy between what is and what ought to be. The first is to abandon the ideals. The second is to convince oneself that those ideals are at present genuinely in existence, and that what seems to be real is merely an illusion. This is one of the great motivations of mysticism. The third is to keep hold of both ideal and reality, and to have faith that the ideal will become real — at another time, or in another place.

The Jewish response, with few exceptions, is the third. And this gives great weight to *the future* as the point of reconciliation where fact and vision meet.

We believe in Divine justice. At the same time we are aware of good people who suffer, of martyrs whose very faith leads to sacrifice, of people who die before their time. “Is this the Torah and this its reward?” (Menahot 29b). Our answer lies less in argument than in anticipation. Somewhere they will enjoy what they merit. The Talmud tells of Elisha ben Abuya who lived through the brutal period of the Hadrianic persecutions, during which many of the sages were killed. “He saw the tongue of Hutzpit the interpreter being dragged along by a pig. He said: The mouth that uttered pearls licks the dust!” He became a heretic. His grandson, R. Jacob, formulated the view that “there is no reward for the commandments in this world”. Justice will not be evident until the time of the resurrection of the dead. The rabbis commented: Had Elisha ben Abuya known of R. Jacob’s interpretation, he would not have sinned. (Kiddushin 39b). Grandfather and grandson both saw injustice. The difference between them was one of perspective. R. Jacob saw the present in the context of eternity.

We believe in the Divine promise to the Jewish people. Yet at times during the exile it must have seemed as if we had been tossed to the

winds of cruellest chance. In one of the most audacious and heart-breaking of all rabbinic interpretations, the school of R. Ishmael read the verse from the Song at the Red Sea, "Who is like You amongst the gods?" to say instead, "Who is like You amongst the dumb?" (Gittin 56b). How could God be silent while His Temple was being burned? Again the answer lay in the future, in the Messianic hope. While his colleagues wept seeing the devastation of Jerusalem, R. Akiva laughed. If the worst predictions were coming true, did that not make it certain that the other visions of the prophets would come to pass as well? (Makkot 24a-b)

We believe in future worlds because *faith would be impossible otherwise*. Refusing both to jettison our ideals and to ignore the factuality of evil and exile, we create a tension that can only be resolved by *something happening*. We cannot accept that this life is the only one, because we know that life has not always been fair. We cannot accept that history will simply be, for the Jewish people, an endless continuation of the past. For we cannot let ourselves settle for so little. The end of days is dictated by the relentless pressure of faith. Our certainty in the ideal future is not a *scientific belief* that it could not be otherwise, but a *moral conviction* that God would not allow it to be otherwise.

THE BASIC THEMES

Without that certainty, we could not live in the present. But while Judaism gives weight to the future, it does so in many ways and along different dimensions. The Messianic age, *Gan Eden* and *Gehinnom*, the resurrection of the dead, the day of judgement, the world to come — these are our future worlds. What they will be like, when and where they will occur, and how they are related to one another, are questions to which there is a more bewildering variety of answers than any others in Jewish faith.

To minimise confusion, therefore, we must distinguish at the outset three fundamentally different ideas.

The first is a belief about the *future history of the Jewish people*. The return of Jews to the land of Israel, the recovery of its sovereignty, and the rebuilding of its spiritual institutions, especially the Temple, are the core of the idea of the *Messianic age*. This future is firmly located in space and time. We know where it will happen, if not when; and we know that it has not happened yet.

The second is a belief about the *soul after death*. The souls, at least of the righteous, are immortal. Where they go is usually designated by the sages as *Gan Eden*. This is not, except metaphorically, the garden once lived in by Adam and Eve. For neither it, nor its counterpart *Gehinnom* (the abode of the souls of the wicked) are in the dimension of space at all. Only physical things have a location, and the soul is not physical. Not everyone agreed on this, as we shall see. Nonetheless, *Gan Eden* represents a belief about individuals, not about the nation; about souls, not about bodies; about the future, in the sense of after-life, not in the sense of something that has not yet happened. It exists now, but not here. It is therefore quite unrelated to the Messianic age.

The third belief is in the *resurrection of the dead*. It stands somewhat between the other two. Like the Messianic age, it will happen on earth at some time in the future. But like *Gan Eden* it is essentially related to the immortality of human existence. "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2). At some stage after the Messianic age has begun, the dead will revive; that is, their souls will be reunited with their bodies. It may be that only the righteous will be resurrected, and that the punishment of the wicked will be that they never live again in bodily form. It may alternatively be that both righteous and wicked will revive and be judged. Or it may be that resurrection has two phases: the bringing back to life of the righteous in the Messianic age, and of everyone else at some later stage prior to the final retribution. Each view has its adherents within the Jewish tradition.

Unlike the Messianic concept, which is historical, and the afterlife of the soul, which is metaphysical, the resurrection is straightforwardly miraculous.

Missing from this analysis is the fourth concept to be found throughout the rabbinic literature: the *world to come*. The reason is that properly speaking it is not a separate idea at all. But what it refers to is the subject of disagreement. Maimonides straightforwardly identifies it with what the sages called *Gan Eden*, that is, the domain of the immortal soul. Others like Saadia Gaon and Nachmanides identified it with the period of time subsequent to the resurrection of the dead. Either way, it belongs to one of the previous three themes.

Each of the three is the resolution of a particular tension. The Messianic concept reconciles the promise with the reality of Israel's national existence. *Gan Eden* removes the distance between man and the spiritual, between his sublime aspirations and his physical limitations. The internal conflict between the two elements of his being — "Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the earth and

breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Bereishith 2:7) — is resolved when "The dust returns to the earth as it was, but the spirit returns to God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). The resurrection answers to the demands of justice. It is then that those who suffered undeservedly receive their reward, whilst those who prospered in their wickedness have their sins visited upon them.

Each, then, is a necessary belief, in the sense not only that it is taught by tradition and counted amongst the fundamentals of faith; but that, were it not so, the most serious crisis would arise within our views of the world.

THE BIBLICAL EMPHASIS

But any reading of the Torah immediately reveals a curious disproportion. Whereas the Messianic age, if not by name then by content, is recognisable throughout the words of the prophets, and is attested, says Maimonides, by "every verse of the Bible", there are a few explicit references to the resurrection. And as for the world to come, R. Johanan — the leading authority of his day — was of the view that there was no mention of it all. "All the prophets prophesied only about the Messianic age," he said, "but as for the world to come, 'No eye has seen, Oh God, but You' (Isaiah 64:3). (Berachot 34b).

There seem to be two reasons. The first lies in the nature of the beliefs themselves. Moses and the prophets addressed the people, or spoke on behalf of the people, as a whole. Their concern was with national survival. The Messianic concept is national in a way that the other two are not. Whereas most religions had and have beliefs about the afterlife, the Messianic idea is peculiar to Judaism. Christian messianism, for example, evolved into a belief of a quite different order and became a doctrine about the condition of man as such. Our own Messianic hope, by contrast, remains the belief in the immortality of *Am Yisrael*.

Nowhere can this be seen more clearly than in the famous vision of Ezekiel: "I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. . . And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them, and skin covered them. . . And breath entered them. They came to life and stood up on their feet — a vast army." (Ezekiel 37:2-10). Here is as explicit a vision of the resurrection as we could find; yet Ezekiel does not understand it as such at all. He is told, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel" (37:11).

The dead coming back to life is only a metaphor of exile and return, of the revival of the nation when hope seemed lost. R. Judah said, "In truth, it was a parable" (Sanhedrin 92b). Ezekiel's concern here is not with the question of individual justice which underlies the idea of resurrection, but with the rebirth of the people of Israel.

The second reason is a more active refusal, on the part of Biblical Judaism, to be preoccupied with death. "You must choose life," says Moses (Devarim 30:19). "What gain is there in my blood if I go down into the pit? Will the dust praise You? Will it proclaim Your truth?" asks David (Psalm 30:10).

Any concern with individual life after death in the time of the Bible would have bordered on a complex of pagan beliefs and practises. Ancestor worship, the cult of the dying god, and the association generally of the gods with death, were anathema to Judaism. "To paganism death was an introduction to the divine or demonic realm. . . In Egypt the dead were identified with Osiris, the dying and reviving god; the mysteries of Adonis and Demeter-Persephone have a similar purpose: through death man becomes god." (Kaufman, *The Religion of Israel*, p.315). The Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh tells of the hero's quest for immortality, which is essentially a longing to join the gods. Gilgamesh is told: "When the gods created man, they let death be his share, and life they withheld in their own hands."

The insistence on life, in the Torah, is therefore far from obvious, and constitutes a major element in the battle against primitive mythological beliefs. Isaiah speaks scathingly of those who "sit among the graves and spend their nights keeping secret vigil" (65:4). The Torah forbids, as "repulsive", the use of incantations, mediums, oracles, and the attempt to communicate with the dead (Devarim 18:11). Saul disobeys the command and consults a witch at Endor who summons up the spirit of the dead Samuel (I Samuel 28). However we interpret the event, it contains its own condemnation: "Why do you consult me, now that the Lord has turned away from you?" (28:16). Death and contact with it constitute the most severe form of impurity in the Torah. To enter the Temple, one had to be purified from its effects. Even some of those who performed the purification rites became unclean and had to be purified in turn. The declaration to be made about the second tithe included the assertions "I have not eaten it while in mourning. I have not separated any of it while unclean. I have not used any for the dead." (Devarim 26:14).

It is not, then, that the afterlife and the possibility of resurrection are doctrines which entered Judaism at a late stage and from the outside. There are scattered references to them throughout the Torah. Urbach

writes: "There can be no doubt that in various passages of the Bible — in almost all its parts — there are to be found figures of speech and similitudes that recognise the possibility of the resurrection of the dead and the power of God — and even of the prophets — to revive the dead." (The Sages, p.652). Elijah and Elisha both perform this miracle (I Kings 17-24; II Kings 4:18-37). It is, rather, that not until the ideas were purged of their pagan associations were they publicly taught as acceptable to Jewish faith.

The fact that the prominence of these beliefs is not a constant throughout Jewish history has given rise to a number of misinterpretations. Not only has it been suggested by critics that they are foreign borrowings which do not belong to classical Judaism, but at another level it is sometimes argued that the afterlife becomes important only at times of tragedy and that therefore it is promoted not because it is true but because it is comforting.

The historical point contravenes the evidence. But it also misses an inevitable feature of any system of ideas. In any consistent and complete world-view there are times when it is necessary to stress a particular value, and times when it fades into the background. The virtues emphasised by a country at war, for example, are not those which are constructive in times of peace. This does not mean that the country's culture changes, any more than one would argue that an individual was morally schizophrenic because he was watchful when he crossed the road and oblivious to his surroundings when he relaxed at home. The decline of national unity towards the end of the second Temple period naturally focused attention on the individual rather than on the people as a whole. The problem of the individual's fate and its justice became acute — as we saw in the case of Elisha ben Abuya. To speak about the afterlife was no longer, as it had once been, to court the worst forms of paganism. So it became at once possible and necessary to speak about such things, which had always been latent within the tradition.

It is equally misleading to think of life after death as a comforting idea. It may or may not be, depending on how sure one is of one's righteousness. The saintly R. Johanan ben Zakkai drew no consolation from it. He wept as his life neared its end, and said: "There are two paths before me, one leading to *Gan Eden*, the other to *Gehinnom*, and I do not know by which I shall be taken. Shall I not weep?" (Berachot 28b). The sages insisted on it not because it offered solace but because it was the necessary rectification of the injustices of this world. They were anxious not for their own perpetuity, but for the vindication of God.

TWO CONTROVERSIES

The beliefs in future worlds have had a colourful and troubled history. Maimonides includes, among his thirteen principles of faith, belief in the Messianic age and the resurrection of the dead. Oddly enough, though, the early rabbinic writings nowhere contain an explicit statement that denial of the Messianic vision is incompatible with Judaism, though they do just that for the seemingly less central idea of resurrection. Someone who "maintains that the resurrection of the dead is not alluded to in the Torah" has "no share in the world to come". (Mishna, Sanhedrin 10:1).

The reason for their concern with this particular belief, and its Biblical basis, lies in a major controversy between the Pharisees and Sadducees. Josephus informs us that the Sadducees held "that souls die with the bodies" (Antiquities 18.1.4).

A Mishna testifies to the fact that the dispute led to a deliberate change in the congregational responses in the second Temple. "At the end of blessings said in the Temple, they used at first to say simply, 'For ever' (*Amen* was not said in the Temple). But when the Sadducees perverted their ways and asserted that there is only one world, it was instituted that the response should be 'From everlasting to everlasting'." (Berachot 9:5). The Hebrew word for 'everlasting', *olam*, also means 'world', and the fact that it was only said once, to defend their case that there is only one world and no world to come. The controversy left a permanent mark on the prayers, for it is likely that the second paragraph of the Amidah, which mentions the resurrection no less than five times, reflects a conscious attempt to outlaw views such as those of the Sadducees.

Debates between the two groups tended to revolve around interpretations of Biblical passages, the Pharisees being anxious to prove that their traditions, although oral, were grounded in the Written Law. There are records in the rabbinic literature of several such debates between the rabbis and their opponents on the subject of the resurrection. Hence the insistence in the Mishna that one not merely believe in the doctrine but that it is "alluded to in the Torah".

It was not to be the only controversy. Rabbinic opinion on the afterlife is impossible to summarise, not merely because of the differences of opinion as to how it will be like, but because of the fundamental ambiguity, already mentioned, as to whether judgement and the world to come take place immediately after death in the realm of souls, or belong to the period after the resurrection, and hence after the Messianic age.

There was some debate about whether the soul left the body

immediately, or remained imprisoned for some time — usually taken to be twelve months — while the body decayed, during which time it could still feel pain (Berachot 18a-b; Shabbat 152b-153a). R. Eliezer was of the view that the souls of the righteous are hidden under the Throne of Glory, whilst the wicked have their souls thrown between two angels who stand at opposite ends of the world (Shabbat 152b). As for the judgement at the time of the resurrection, the school of Shammai maintained that there would be three groups. The thoroughly righteous would be inscribed for eternal life; the thoroughly wicked would be doomed to an eternity in *Gehinnom*; the intermediate class would descend to *Gehinnom* and be purged and rise again. The school of Hillel held that Divine mercy would spare the intermediate this torment (Rosh Hashana 16b-17a).

Gehinnom seems to have been thought of by at least some of the sages as a physical location. Initially, of course, it was just that: a valley south of Jerusalem known in Biblical times as the site of a cult who, in Jeremiah's words, "Built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as offerings" (19:5). For that reason, he says, it will no longer be called "the Valley of Ben Hinnom but the Valley of Slaughter" (19:6). Some of the sages continued to think of it as a place. One maintained that it had three gates, one in the wilderness, one in the sea, and one in Jerusalem (Eruvin 19a). Elsewhere its dimensions are given; "the whole world compared to *Gehinnom* is like a lid compared to a pot." (Ta'anit 10a). Strangely, its location even figures in a halachic discussion. There is a distinction as far as Shabbat is concerned between something heated by the sun and something heated by fire. The hot springs of Tiberias are regarded by one authority as 'heated by fire' because they "pass over the entrance to *Gehinnom*" and so derive their heat from hell-fire (Shabbat 39a; Maimonides was of the view that there was a straightforward geological explanation).

The resurrection gave rise to such curious questions as whether the dead will stand again, naked or clothed (Sanhedrin 90b). The full extent to which popular speculation had run riot is evident in Saadia Gaon's systematic treatment of the subject in the tenth century CE. He considers such questions as: If a man were eaten by a lion, and the lion drowned and eaten by a fish, and the fish caught and eaten by a man, from whose body would the first man be reconstituted? And: Will the earth be large enough to accommodate the sudden increase in its population? (Emunot VeDe'ot, VII). Solvable issues, says Saadia, but not, perhaps, of central spiritual significance.

It was this confusion about the afterlife, and the tendency of many to take rabbinic descriptions literally, that led Maimonides to embark on

the massive work of clarification, which resulted in his formulation of the principles of Jewish faith. And this in turn led to the second major controversy about the resurrection.

It needs an introduction. As we have seen there were two distinct strands of thought about the afterlife; one, the life of the soul after it had left the body; the other, the ultimate rejoining of soul and body together. Why was this second belief *important*? Surely it was enough to be assured that the soul was immortal?

There are two points of importance. The first is one of cultural contrast. It was characteristic of Greek philosophical culture to regard the life of the soul as opposed and superior to the life of the body. Death, at least for those who lived well, is a release into a higher plane of existence. To the Greeks it would have seemed strange to suggest as something desirable, that the soul, having reached the realm of immortality, should have to return once again to its body. But Judaism on the whole stressed that the body was not corrupt, and that the true reward of the righteous involved, in some way, their being brought back to life as persons of flesh and blood.

The second is an elementary principle of justice. The person who is punished must be the same as the person who did the wrong. And can we really say that the soul-without-a-body is the same person as the soul-with-a-body? The afterlife involves a day of judgement; and for justice to be done, human beings must be brought before the Divine tribunal as they were when they did the deeds for which they are being judged. In short: the day of judgement presupposed a resurrection of the dead, not just the immortality of their souls.

The point is made in a Talmudic passage: "Antonius said to Rabbi (Judah HaNasi): The body and soul can each escape judgement. For the body can say: It is the soul that sinned, for since the day that it left me, I lie as still as a stone in the grave. And the soul can say: It is the body that sinned, for since the day that I left it, I fly in the air like a bird. Rabbi replied: I will give you an analogy. It is like a human king who had a beautiful orchard that contained fine fruit. He placed two watchmen to guard it, one lame, one blind. . . The blind man took the lame man on his back, and together they took the fruit and ate it. The owner returned and asked: Where is the fruit? The lame man replied: Do I have feet to walk with? The blind man replied: Do I have eyes to see with? What did the owner do? He put the lame man astride the blind man, and judged them together. So the Holy One, blessed be He, will take the soul and rejoin it to the body, and judge them as one." (Sanhedrin 91a-b). The soul and the body cannot sin without one another. Therefore justice demands that they be judged together.

Maimonides saw things differently. For him, life within the body is imperfect; man's physicality is the veil screening out the light of God. And it was wholly consistent with this approach that he should have seen the life after death of the soul as the supreme good. He calls this not *Gan Eden*, as the sages had usually done, but 'the world to come'. Thus for him the world to come was not a future event ushered in by the resurrection of the dead, but something that exists now and which we join directly after our lives have ended. There is no great day of judgement after which the wicked are punished. Nor is there a hell, a *Gehinnom*. The reward of the righteous is simply that their soul survives to enjoy the immeasurable bliss of knowing God without the obstacle of the body. The punishment of the wicked is just that at death they cease to be. (Hilchot Teshuva ch.8). This is the meaning of *karet*, 'being cut off', mentioned in the Torah as the severest of penalties. "All existence is good" (Guide, III, 10). Therefore "the most severe retribution imaginable is that the soul should be cut off and not merit the afterlife." (Hilchot Teshuva 8:5). The wicked do not suffer after death, for they are not there to suffer.

When we couple this with his view of the Messianic age as a wholly non-miraculous phase in Jewish history, we arrive at a radical simplification. The Messianic age is the restoration of people, peace and sovereignty to the land of Israel, along with its religious institutions. The world to come is the immortality of the soul. Two rational futures, one national, one individual. This view is radical enough in itself, but what place is there, in this scheme of things, for the resurrection? It must seem a supreme anticlimax. Why should the righteous choose once again to make the descent into the body, and be to that extent separated from God? Moreover, there could not be eternal life on earth. For it is the very essence of the physical to change and decay: no *body* can live for ever. So those who will be born again at the resurrection will have to die a second time, albeit of a good old age, and resume their interrupted place in the world of souls.

Maimonides had included belief in the resurrection as one of the principles of faith, and had inserted into his law code the rule that he who denies it has no share in the world to come. Yet it is not surprising that during his lifetime he was accused of denying it, for it was peripheral to his view of Jewish spirituality. He was forced to defend himself in a long letter, the *Ma'amar Tehiyat HaMetim*. But even here he insists that the resurrection is secondary in importance to the world to come. Moreover it was bound to be a miraculous event; our faith in it is based on the Bible; so what could he say about it other than that it would happen?

There is a real division of emphasis here. For whilst we are bound to believe both in the immortality of the soul and its eventual return to the body, which is the more important idea will depend on whether we think of life on earth as the best place to discover God or the worst, Judaism allows us the choice of opinion.

All this said, two things remain. The first: "Neither the sequence of these events nor their details are fundamental" (Hilchot Melachim 12:2). *That they will be, not how they will be, is what we must believe.*

The second, and of crucial importance: We believe in the afterlife, but *we may not act on the basis of that belief*. Judaism does not believe in persecuting a man in this world to save his soul from eternal damnation. It does not believe in tolerating others' poverty on the grounds that the poor will be rich in the world to come. It will not stay silent waiting for the future when a better present is at hand. Let the world to come, come; meanwhile there is work to be done.

This is the crux of the halachic enterprise. Future worlds span the gap between the ideal and reality. Our task in *this* world is to reduce the gap that remains to be spanned. "It is not for you to complete the task," said the sages. "But you are not free to stand aside from it."

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

A survey of the rabbinic literature can be found in G.F. Moore, *Judaism*, Schocken, vol.II pp.279-286 and 377-395. Saadia's elaborate treatment is contained in books VI and VII (and the variant version) of *The Book of Beliefs and Opinions*, trans. Rosenblatt, Yale, pp.235-289 and 409-436.

Maimonides' description of the world to come is contained in *Hilchot Teshuvah* chs.8-9. This is available in Hyamson's translation of the first part of the Mishne Torah, Yale; or read the original in the *Rambam Le-Am* edition. Alternatively, selections from this and related writings can be found in English in A. Cohen, *The Teachings of Maimonides*, Ktav, pp.220-240. Relevant *Encyclopaedia Judaica* entries are *Afterlife*, *Eschatology*, *Olam Ha-Ba*, and *Resurrection*. These headings will lead you on to others.

For modern treatments, see M. Lamm, *The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning*, Jonathan David, pp.221-238, and A.J. Heschel, *Death as Homecoming*, in Reimer, *Jewish Reflections on Death*, Schocken, pp.58-73.



GLOSSARY

ARAMA, ISAAC — Spanish rabbi and philosopher, 15th century C.E. His famous commentary to the Bible is entitled 'Akedat Yitzchak'.

BET DIN — Jewish court of law.

DERECH ERETZ — Literally, 'the way of the land'. Used figuratively to mean, variously, polite behaviour, a worldly occupation, involvement in matters of secular concern.

EMUNOT VE-DEOT — '(The book of) Beliefs and Opinions', Saadia Gaon's philosophical treatise, completed in 933 C.E.

GALUT — Exile; the condition of Jews outside Israel.

GAN EDEN — Literally, 'the Garden of Eden'. Used figuratively to signify the resting-place of the soul after death.

GEHINNOM — 'The Valley of Hinnom', a valley south of Jerusalem. Used figuratively as a name for the place where the wicked are punished after death.

HALACHAH — A term signifying either a particular Jewish law, or Jewish law in general.

HASSID — 'Pious man'. Often used specifically to refer to an adherent of the popular mystical movement in Judaism initiated in the 18th century C.E. by the Baal Shem Tov.

JUDAH HALEVI — Poet and philosopher, born c.1075; d.1141 C.E.

KUZARI — Title of Judah HaLevi's great philosophical dialogue, in which he sets out, in the form of an imagined conversation between a rabbi and the king of the Khazars, his view of the uniqueness of Jewish spirituality.

MAGGID MISHNE — Commentary to Maimonides' Mishne Torah, by R. Vidal of Tolosa, 14th century C.E.

MAIMONIDES — R. Moses ben Maimon (RaMBaM), 1135-1204 C.E., outstanding rabbi, philosopher and codifier of Jewish law.

MEKHILTA — Collection of teachings from the Mishnaic period arranged as a commentary to the book of Shemot. There are two such collections, the MEKILTA DE-RABBI ISHMAEL and the MEKILTA DE-RABBI SHIMON BAR YOCHAI.

MIDRASH — A generic name for rabbinic Biblical interpretation.

MIDRASH RABBAH — Whenever there is a reference in the text to a book of the Bible, followed by the word RABBAH (e.g. SHEMOT RABBAH), the work referred to is a volume in the collection known as the MIDRASH RABBAH; a series of midrashim to the Five Books of Moses, and the five Megillot.

MISHNE TORAH — Literally, 'repetition of the Torah', and used to refer either to the book of Devarim, or to the law code of Moses Maimonides (Rambam). Whenever there is a quotation from Maimonides, whose source is indicated as 'Hilchot. . .', the reference is to one of the books of his Mishne Torah.

NACHMANIDES — R. Moses ben Nachman (RaMBaN), 1194-1270 C.E. Spanish rabbi, philosopher, and mystic. Author of a famous commentary to the Torah.

ORACH CHAYYIM — Section of the Shulchan Aruch dealing with the laws of prayer, Shabbat and the festivals. Literally, 'The Way of Life'.

RASHBAM — Acronym of R. Samuel b.Meir, c.1080-1158 C.E. French rabbi and author of a commentary to the Torah. A grandson of Rashi.

RASHI — Acronym of R. Shlomo b.Yitzchak, 1040-1105 C.E. French rabbi, author of the most famous of all commentaries to the Torah, and of the indispensable systematic commentary to the Talmud.

REBBE — Teacher; often used specifically of Hassidic leader.

SAADIA GAON — Outstanding rabbi and leader of Babylonian Jewry, 882-942 C.E. A pioneer in many fields of study, including grammar, Biblical translation and commentary, halachic codification, and Jewish philosophy.

SHECHINAH — The Divine Presence, a term usually employed to indicate the aspect of the Divine which is indwelling, rather than transcendent.

SHEMONEH PERAKIM — 'The Eight Chapters': title of the introductory treatise to Maimonides' commentary on the Ethics of the Fathers.

SHULCHAN ARUCH — 'Prepared Table'; name of Joseph Caro's law code, first published in 1564-5 C.E.

SIFRA — Halachic midrash, of the Mishnaic period, to the book of Vayikra.

SIFRE — Halachic midrash, of the Mishnaic period, to the books of Bamidbar and Devarim.

TALMUD — 'Study' or 'Learning': the name given to the composite work of the Mishna (compiled by R. Judah HaNasi, early 3rd century C.E.) and the exposition and elaboration of it, the Gemarra. There are two such works, the Babylonian Talmud (Talmud Bavli), and the Jerusalem Talmud (Talmud Yerushalmi).

TUR — Full title — Arba-ah Turim, 'Four Rows': the name of the halachic compendium written by R. Jacob ben Asher, c.1270-1340 C.E.

TZIDDUK HA-DIN — Vindication or acceptance of the Divine judgement. In a more specific sense, the name of the prayer said at a funeral (S.P.B. 424-5).

YALKUT SHIMONI — Anthology of midrashim, usually attributed to 13th century C.E.

ZOHAR — 'Splendour': major work of Jewish mysticism, mainly arranged as a commentary to the Torah.