



SOURCES

I. From the Morning Prayers - My God, the soul You have placed within me is pure. You created it, You fashioned it. You breathed it into me, You safeguard it within me, and eventually You will take it from me, and restore it to me in Time to Come. As long as the soul it within me, I gratefully thank You, L-RD, my G-d and the G-d of my forefathers, Master of all works, L-rd of all souls. Blessed are You, L-RD, who restores souls to all.

II. Genesis 1:3-29 - And God said: 'Let there be light.' And there was light. ... And G-d said ... And G-d said ... And G-d said ... et al

III. Genesis 1:24 - And God said: 'Let the earth bring forth the living creature after its kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after its kind.' And it was so.

IV. Genesis 2:7 - Then the L-RD G-d formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

V. Path of the Just, Ch. 1 (Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato d. 1740) - Our Sages of blessed memory have taught us that man was created for the sole purpose of rejoicing in God and deriving pleasure from the splendor of His Presence; for this is true joy and the greatest pleasure that can be found. The place where this joy may truly be derived is the World to Come, which was expressly created to provide for it; but the path to the object of our desires is this world, as our Sages of blessed memory have said (Ethics of the Fathers 4:21), "This world is like a corridor to the World to Come."

VI. Deuteronomy 14:1 - "You are children of the L-rd your G-d; do not cut yourselves ... for the dead". Nachmanides in his Commentary to the Torah notes that the introduction to the laws forbidding excess mourning for the dead is the statement "You are children of G-d." He maintains that this teaches us that we are, in essence, spiritual beings, and that the soul does not die, only the body. Therefore, although clearly one should mourn and cry, since the soul still exists it is inappropriate to engage in mourning practices that are excessive, like self-mutilation or permanent removal of hair, for that would be tantamount to saying that death is absolute and final and includes the soul.

VII. Gesher HaChaim 1:117 (Rabbi Y. M. Tucazinsky d. 1955) – [Based on Kabbalistic sources] Seven stages of departure: (1) Thirty days before death, the soul begins a partial separation from the body. (2) In the last hours before death, there is a further separation. (3) At the moment of death, the soul leaves the body and meets its Maker. (4) For the first three days after death, the soul is confused. It believes it will reenter the body and therefore stays closely attached to it. After three days it ceases trying to reenter the body, but remains confused. During the shivah, the first week after death, the soul goes back and forth from the grave to the shivah house. (5) Between shivah and thirty days, the soul rises in Heaven, but is closely attached to the gravesite. (6) Between thirty days and the first year, the soul rises higher in Heaven, but still returns periodically to the gravesite. (7) After one year, it stays in Heaven, except for a small part of it that remains connected to this world and its body.

VIII. Maimonides Commentary to the Mishna: "Resurrection of the dead is one of the fundamental principles in the Torah ... (Introduction to Perek Helek).

IX. Maimonides (Laws of Kings, Selections from Chapter 12):

1. Do not presume that in the Messianic age any facet of the world's nature will change or there will be innovations in the work of creation. Rather, the world will continue according to its pattern ...
2. Our Sages taught: "There will be no difference between the current age and the Messianic era except the emancipation from our subjugation to the gentile kingdoms ..."
3. There are some Sages who say Elijah's coming will precede the coming of the Mashiach. All these and similar matters cannot be definitely known ... for these matters are undefined in the prophets' words and even the wise men have no established tradition regarding these matters except their own interpretation of the verses. Therefore, there is a controversy among them regarding these matters. Regardless of the debate concerning these questions, neither the order of the occurrence of these events or their precise detail are among the fundamental principles of the faith. A person should not occupy himself ... concerning these and similar matters, nor should he consider them as essentials, for study of them will neither bring fear or love of God.
4. The Sages and the prophets did not yearn for the Messianic era in order to have dominion over the entire world, to rule over the gentiles, to be exalted by the nations, or to eat, drink, and celebrate. Rather, they desired to be free to involve themselves in Torah and wisdom without any pressures or disturbances, so that they would merit the world to come ...
5. In that era, there will be neither famine, war, envy or competition for good will flow in abundance and all the delights will be freely available as dust. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know God ... as Isaiah 11:9 states: "The world will be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the ocean bed."

X. Zohar (1: 186b): As long as a person is unsuccessful in his purpose in this world, the Holy One , blessed be He, uproots him and replants him over and over again.

XI. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (d. 1888) Commentary to the Torah, Genesis 50:2: The Egyptian believed in the transmigration of the soul and tried to protect the body from any possibility of change. The Jew believes in the soul's eternal personal existence, and surrenders the body to earthly change.