

Discussing: Death & Judgement in Judaism

Source 1: Kohelet - Ecclesiastes - Chapter 12 Verse 7:

7. And the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God, Who gave it.

ז. וַיָּשׁוּב הָעֶפְרָר עַל הָאָרֶץ כְּשֶׁהָיָה וְהָרוּחַ
תָּשׁוּב אֶל הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר נָתַןָּהּ:

Source 2: The Lubavitcher Rebbe (1902-1994)

The Lubavitcher Rebbe would often point out that a basic law of physics (known as the First Law of Thermodynamics) is that no energy is ever “lost” or destroyed; it only assumes another form. If such is the case with physical energy, how much more so a spiritual entity such as the soul, whose existence is not limited by time, space, or any of the other delineators of the physical state. Certainly, the spiritual energy that in the human being is the source of sight and hearing, emotion and intellect, will and consciousness does not cease to exist merely because the physical body has ceased to function; rather, it passes from one form of existence (physical life as expressed and acted via the body) to a higher, exclusively spiritual form of existence.

Source 3: Ethics of the Fathers – Chapter 3 Mishna 1:

1. Akavia the son of Mahalalel would say: Reflect upon three things and you will not come to the hands of transgression. Know from where you came, where you are going, and before whom you are destined to give a judgment and accounting. From where you came--from a putrid drop; where you are going--to a place of dust, maggots and worms; and before whom you are destined to give a judgment and accounting--before the supreme King of Kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.

Source 4: Ethics of the Fathers – Chapter 4 Mishna 16 & 17:

16. Rabbi Yaakov would say: This world is comparable to the antechamber before the World to Come. Prepare yourself in the antechamber, so that you may enter the banquet hall.

17. He would also say: A single moment of repentance and good deeds in this world is greater than all of the World to Come. And a single moment of bliss in the World to Come is greater than all of the present world.

Source 5: Genesis – Chapter 25, Verses 8 & 17

8. And Abraham expired and died in a good old age, old and satisfied, and he was gathered to his people.

ח. וַיָּגוּעַ וַיָּמָת אַבְרָהָם בְּשֵׂיבָה טוֹבָה זָקֵן
וַשָּׁבַע וַיֵּאָסֶף אֶל עַמּוּיוֹ:

17. And these are the years of the life of Ishmael: one hundred years and thirty years and seven years; and he expired and died and was gathered to his people.

יז. וְאֵלֶּה שְׁנֵי חַיֵּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל מְאֵת שָׁנָה
וּשְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וְשִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים וַיָּגוּעַ וַיָּמָת וַיֵּאָסֶף
אֶל עַמּוּיוֹ:

Source 6: Babylonian Talmud – Tractate Baba Metzia, page 58b

Rabbi Hanina added that all who go down to Gehinnom will go up again, except adulterers, those who put their fellows to shame in public, and those who call their fellows by an obnoxious name [Babylonian Talmud, tractate Baba Metzia 58b].

Source 7: Ezekiel – Chapter 18, verses 20-24

20. The soul that sins, it shall die; a son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, and a father shall not bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

כ. הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַחַטָּאת הִיא תָמוּת בֶּן לֹא יִשָּׂא |
בְּעוֹן הָאָב וְאָב לֹא יִשָּׂא בְּעוֹן הַבֵּן צְדָקַת
הַצַּדִּיק עָלָיו תִּהְיֶה וְרָשָׁעַת הָרָשָׁע עָלָיו
תִּהְיֶה:

21. And if the wicked man repent of all his sins that he has committed and keeps all My laws and executes justice and righteousness, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

כא. וְהָרָשָׁע כִּי יָשׁוּב מִכָּל חַטָּאתָיו אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
וְשָׁמַר אֶת כָּל חֻקֹּתַי וְעָשָׂה מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה
חַיָּה יִחְיֶה לֹא יָמוּת:

22. All his transgressions that he has committed shall not be remembered regarding him: through his righteousness that he has done he shall live.

כב. כָּל פְּשָׁעָיו אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לֹא יִזְכְּרוּ לוֹ
בְּצִדְקָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יִחְיֶה:

23. Do I desire the death of the wicked? says the Lord God. Is it not rather in his repenting of his ways that he may live?

כג. הַחֲפִיץ אֲחֲפִיץ מוֹת רָשָׁע נָאִם אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה
הֲלוֹא בְּשׁוּבוֹ מִדַּרְכָּיו וְחָיָה:

24. And when the righteous repents of his righteousness and does wrong and does like all the abominations that the wicked man did, shall he live? All his righteous deeds that he has done shall not be remembered; in his treachery that he has perpetrated and in his sin that he has sinned, in them shall he die.

כד. וּבְשׁוּב צַדִּיק מִצְדָּקָתוֹ וְעָשָׂה עוֹל כְּכֹל
הַתּוֹעֵבוֹת אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הָרָשָׁע יַעֲשֶׂה וְחָי כָּל
צְדָקָתָיו אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לֹא תִזְכְּרֶנָּה בְּמַעְלוֹ אֲשֶׁר
מָעַל וּבְחַטָּאתָיו אֲשֶׁר חָטָא בָּם יָמוּת:

Source 7: Maimonides – Principles of Faith No: 11, 12 & 13:

11. The belief in divine reward and retribution.

12. The belief in the arrival of the Messiah and the Messianic era.

13. The belief in the resurrection of the dead.