



A GLIMPSE INTO THE AFTERLIFE

Part 2: Reincarnation

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The following are excerpts from two books by Rav Pinson; Reincarnation & Judaism: Journey of the Soul and Jewish Wisdom on the Afterlife: The Mysteries, the Myths, the Meanings.

BODY:

In its widest definition the body can be viewed as a collection of cells working in harmony to form a larger unit we call body.

But can this be the real you? More pointedly, towards which body part can we point too and accurately say that if we lose that physical property we will become less of who we are now

If you are not defined by your arms, legs, toes and fingers than why assume that you are the sum total of these individual fragments
one can still insist that indeed we are the sum total of all the parts of the body

contemplate the fact that the substance of every human beings body, even a healthy and robust one are continuously being replaced...skin, for instance is renewed every month, your stomach lining every four days, and the surface cells that actually contact food every five minutes.

from the fact that we can feel and are aware of body is the greatest confirmation that we are not body; that which can be felt is not the feeler as that which can be observed is not the observer. We cannot be that which we are conscious of.

THE ESSENTIAL SELF:

Our souls, is the unchanging that registers the changing, the continuous that observes the discontinuous, the uninfluenced that informs the influenced.

As the body's cells are constantly being modified and changing so are our emotions, thoughts and feelings, but the you within us, the essential self remains the same. The I within is eternal. Everything else comes and goes, but our 'I', the feeling of being alive, when not identified or blended with anything such as body, thought, or feeling, is always the same, never shifting and never modified.

The soul is the deeper inner Self which incorporates all levels of beingness, including the small surface i of selfhood.

It is the ultimate of all reality... The fullness of the I of the world, the Infinite is revealed beautifully in the individual finite I-ness of self... the higher self is part of the divine I, part of the reality where the knower and the known are one of the same, as the Rambam -- Maimonides 'describes' the Ultimate and Unconditional Beingness.

It is part of a reality where the experience and the experiencer the observed and the observer are one and the same...As the creator who defies and transcends three dimensional structure, the soul as well being part and an individual expression of this truth embodies the paradoxical... (*Note: R. Menasha Ben Israel: Nishmas Chayim, Maamor 2: 9*)

True, what defines us is our soul, yet another valid truth is that we are a psychosomatic being, comprised of soul and body. Part of who we are is a reflection or a result of the body we possess. On some level, we are who we are because or despite the bodies we possess... (*Body is a physical imprint of the soul. Ramchal Choker U'Mekubal, Chap 1, p. 140.*)

The body is not a prison house for the soul

The body is, at least in its natural and original form a physical expression of the spirit that animates it and gives it life.

(*The bodies of Tzadikim are holy. 111 Zohar, p. 70b.*)

"The body is like the parchment upon which the Torah scroll is written."

(*Ritvah Moed Katan 25a. Ramban Torah's Ha'adam. Inyan Keriah*)

(*R. Chaim Vital: Derush Pinimi Umakif, Derush 1–2. R. Yoseph Ergas: Mavo P'Sachim, p.126.*)

Before expression of Na'ran the soul is "potential" in life becomes "actual."

According to the Chokrim immortality is experienced when potential mind (agent intellect) achieves actuality, and thus lives on. Rambam: Moreh Nevuchim, 1:70. Ralbag Melchomes Hashem Maamor 1:5. Akeidas Yitzchak, Shar 6. Menoras HaMaor, Ner 4, 2, Part 2:3. R. Ovadyah Seforno: Kavanas HaTorah)

Yet, there is an "essence" not a pure blank sheet of paper.

Essence precedes existence, the soul is more than simply a potential.

(*Rabbeinu Bachya: Vayikra, 18:29. R. Shem Tov Ben Shem Tov: Sefer Ha'emunos, Shar 6: 1. R. Shimon Ben Tzemach Duran, Magen Avos, 3: 4, p. 87a. R. Chaim Vital: Shar HaGilgulim, Hakdamah 2.*)

Negativity is not nitzchi, "everlasting." (*Ma'avar Yavak, Maamor 3, Chapter 40, p. 314. Tanya, Chap. 25. Shenei Luchos Habris, vol 1, Beis Irr Chomah, p. 122.*)

Finite; mortal	{ Nefesh/Ruach/Neshama = Yesh – Existence (<i>B'y'ah- Hei-Vav-Hei</i>)
Infinite	{ Chayah = Ayin – Emptiness (<i>Atzilus- Yud</i>)
Includes finite & infinite	{ Yechidah = One - Unity (<i>Adam Kadmon- Kotzo Shel Yud</i>)