

Judaism and the Afterlife

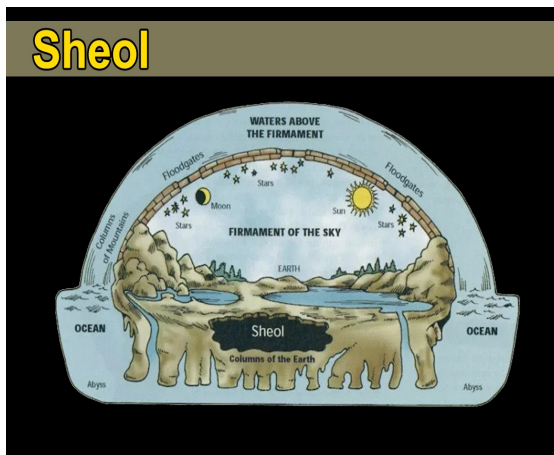
Jews concentrate on living in this life rather than spending time considering the afterlife. God has given life and only he will decide when life should end. What Jews must ensure is that the way in which they live in this life, keeping the MITZVOT will equip them for whatever the life to come is like. The MISHNA says “This world is like the lobby before the OLAM BA-HA. Prepare yourself in the lobby so that you may enter the banquet hall.” They believe the ways of God are too mysterious for humans to understand so they shouldn’t bother trying.

OLAM HA-BA the life to come

Judaism calls the afterlife OLAM BA-HA a term also used by Jews for the Messianic age which some Jews believe in. Jews see this world as a pale reflection of Olam HA-BA, as the TALMUD says “This world is like the eve of Shabbat and the Olam HA-BA is like Shabbat”

There are a range of views in Judaism about what the afterlife is like because there are no specific mentions of it in the TORAH.

The Torah mentions a place called SHEOL where one goes down to after death but what it is like and who goes there is unclear.



Jewish belief about the resurrection of the body after death

One Jewish belief about the resurrection of the dead is that Olam Ha-BA will only happen after the resurrection of the dead and all those who have lived a good life would be given an additional life.

Maimonides believed that the dead would be resurrected and would die a second death and only then would their souls enjoy a bodiless existence in the presence of God.

Some Jews believe the resurrection of the dead will happen during the Messianic age.

Others believe the resurrection will follow the Messianic age.

Some believe that only the righteous (those leading a good life) will be resurrection.

Others believe everyone will be resurrected and a day of Judgement will follow.

Some Rabbis say however that a day of Judgement isn't needed as this happens every year during the festivals of ROSH HASHANAH and YOM KIPPUR.

Different beliefs about the ORTHODOX and REFORM

Jewish attitudes towards the afterlife

Orthodox Jews believe in some form of resurrection which is stated in orthodox Jewish daily prayers and at funerals but refer to the soul being SHEKHINAH in the presence of God. This influences the attitudes of Orthodox Jews in regards to not allowing cremation or allowing organ transplants as the body has to be resurrected whole.

Reform Jews have rejected the idea of a bodily resurrection but some believe that the soul lives on after death but don't know where. Other reform Jews believe that people live on through their actions and good deeds. Reform Jews will therefore cremate their dead.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= ao4u1FuIOM>

Glossary

OLAM HA-BA— the world that is to come, the afterlife.

ROSH HASHANAH—the Jewish new year

YOM KIPPUR—The day of Atone-ment

TALMUD—explanation of the Torah made up of the MISHNA and GEMARA.

SHEOL— The name given to an afterlife mentioned in the Torah.

MITZVOT—the laws or duties laid down for Jews in the Torah.