

The Anatomy of the Soul

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There seems to be much confusion in Christendom as well as Messianic and Nazarene Jewish circles in regards to the Soul. By and large just as Christianity believes in the Triune nature of the Godhead, it also believes in the triune nature of mankind, created in His image. Christianity has a simple saying in an attempt to explain the Trichotomy of ones being: "I am a Spirit who lives in a Body and posses a Soul." It is said that the Soul mediates between the Spirit and the Body. Judaism too has a Trichotomistic view of ones being but bypasses in a way the body.

There are three main arenas of the Soul and they are:

The Nefesh which is the lowest, basest realm of being that is said to reside in the blood, so in a way this includes the body "For the life is in the Blood (Deut. 12:23)." This part of the Soul is sometimes called the Animal Souls and is mainly concerned with survival, eating, sleeping, procreating etc. This part of the Soul deals with instinctual things. This is the part of the soul which is capable of sin. It can be said this is a type of instinctual consciousness.

A second component to the Soul is called **The Ruach** in Hebrew and is usually translated as "Spirit." The Ruach is the second level of the Soul and duels with the Nefesh for moral and rational dominance and are the mediators between the Neshamah and the Body. The Neshamah should rule our being and communicate to the Nefesh and Ruach what the Body should do. This realm of the Soul mainly deals with our mental functions and emotions. It is said in Jewish mystical literature that the Nefesh should be the throne upon which the Ruach sits.

To use an analogy from old cartoons; the Ruach can be seen as the angel upon the right shoulder and the Nefesh can be seen as the devil upon the left shoulder, both whispering in ones ear to trying to get the person to do what it suggests. You can also view the Ruach as the Good Dog and the Nefesh as the Bad Dog and which ever one you feed the most will be the strongest and when they get loose and fight one another, who wins our determines on which one received the most attention and care. It doesn't necessarily mean that the Nefesh is all bad, for it is the part of us that, "Fights or Flees" when we are confronted with danger, but it is also the part that tries to make us

grumpy because we are hungry or tired, or selfish when we don't get our own way. The Ruach tries to reason with the Animal Soul (Nefesh) and say, "Hey, calm down dinner is at six, you can wait till then, in the mean time you have no excuse for being nasty!"

The third and highest realm of the soul in the Hebrew is called **The Neshamah** which is considered the Divine Spark, the part of the Soul that was made in the Image and Likeness of God. This part of the Soul is pure, untainted and untouched by sin. This is the part of the Soul referred to in the Prayer Siddur when we Jews recite upon waking:

"I gratefully thank you oh Living and Eternal King for You have returned my soul (Neshamah) within me with compassion, abundant is your faithfulness."

And later it says: "My God the soul (Neshamah) you 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 the Time to Come..."

It is said that the Neshamah leaves the body during sleep, because the Sages say sleep is 1/60th of death, and resides in the realm of angels and demons and that a righteous Soul who follows Torah will be with the angels and those who are unrighteous are assailed and troubled by demons. The only way one can protect their Soul is by walking in the Torah during ones waking hours. This is why the above prayers are said upon waking. It is during this time of sleep it is prophecy can come through dreams.

Because English doesn't have a designation between Nefesh and Neshamah and translates both of them as "Soul" it is hard to know in the English translation of Scripture which one is being discussed unless you know Hebrew or understand well the context of the passage dealing with the word "Soul." Sometimes the word "Ruach" translated as "Spirit" is also sometimes translated as "Soul" in the English.

In Genesis 2:7 Tells us that God breathed life into us. God breathed all Three parts of the soul within us and it was the Nefesh that fell during the Fall. The Neshamah was the Divine spark of God that was made in the image of God that was left untainted by the Fall in the Garden of Eden. The Ruach tries to bring rationale to the primal instincts of the Nefesh.

This is where I differ slightly from what has been described above. I believe that the word Ruach and Neshamah are essentially the same because Ruach and Neshamah in Hebrew have similar meanings, Ruach is Wind, Breath and Spirit and Neshamah is Wind, Breath and Divine Inspiration. In making distinctions I would say that the Ruach is what the Neshamah is called before it is awakened and the Nefesh is “saved” or “regenerated” and redeemed by the blood of Yeshua Ha Moshiach (The Messiah) and the infilling of the Ruach Ha Kodesh (Holy Spirit), that the Ruach is actually latent within an individual until the regeneration occurs via the Holy Spirit (Ruach Ha Kodesh) and the Nefesh is transformed.

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. - Gen. 2:7

As one Rav I once knew put it; the Gof (Body), or as he actually said, “mud hut,” plus the Ruach (Spirit), together equals a Soul.

The Nefesh (Soul) activates and animates the Body and the regenerated Nefesh mediates between the Neshamah (Spirit) and the Body.

The Greek word for the Gof/Body is “Soma.” The Greek word for Nefesh/Soul is “Psyche,” where we get such words as Psychic, Psychological, etc. The Greek word for Neshama/Spirit is “Pneuma,” meaning “breath” and is where we get words such as pneumonia, which is an illness dealing with the lungs and one’s capacity and ability to breath.

According to Some Jewish legends we have a Neshamah, a Divine Spark, it is believed our souls were preexistent basking in the Pure Light of the En-Sof (God) before being assigned to a body. Legend says that our soul is male and female and it is split apart and the male is assigned to one body and the female to another and that this is your soul mate that you are supposed to find and marry in this world, thus completing yourself. According to the Zohar the only way for people to find their soul mate is to walk the path of Truth (Torah).

I like this one Jewish Legend that explains why we have that crease, that indentation between the nose and upper lip. It is said that when the angel escorted our Soul to a body in a womb of a woman, that the angel stayed in

the womb with us and taught us Torah for nine months and that when the mothers water breaks and we are about to be born that the angel places his finger upon our lips, causing the indentation and says, “Shhhhhh!” and we immediately forget all the Torah we were taught and that is why we cry upon entering the world and that our purpose in life is to learn or really remember the Torah we were taught in the womb.

Rav Sha’ul (Apostle Paul) who was a Torah master and a master of all things and concepts Jewish said in II Cor. 5:8, “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”

It is the Ruach/Neshamah which is the “Divine Spark” that returns to its source which is Adonai who gave it.

Ecc. 12:7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

And it is the Nefesh that goes on into Sheol, either the compartment of Paradise or Gehenna (Hell) until the New Earth is created from the ashes of the old as Revelation and Peter says, and Hell (Sheol) is cast into the Lake of Fire. If it is Redeemed it goes to Paradise (Abraham’s Bosom) if it is not it goes to Hell, Gehenna.

Soul Sleep

There are some who read the Scriptures in such a way so as to promote the doctrine of “soul sleep.” Folks who believe in soul sleep tend to be Dichotomist instead of Trichotomist. The difference between the two is the Dichotomist believes in only a spirit and a body. They believe the spirit and the soul are one and the same. The other, the Trichotomist believes in body, soul and spirit. What is meant by the term “soul sleep” is that upon bodily death the soul rests in a dormant and or unconscious state awaiting the Resurrection. Jehovah’s Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists are the predominant groups who ascribe to the doctrine of “soul sleep.”

People who believe the doctrine of soul sleep fail to recognize analogies and idioms within the Hebrew and Greek Language, such as we have in English. If I were to say, “I was so tired; I slept like the dead last night.” You would

know I am speaking figuratively and I do not mean in a literal sense that I died when I went to sleep last night, nor did I sleep like the dead, because a dead body is dead and does not sleep. Such considerations within context need to be ascribed to Scripture when reading a given passage.

We even have a phrase of slang used to indicate death and resurrection. Mobsters in the 1920's, 30's, and 40's spoke of a "dirt nap." Referring to killing and burying someone, but the "nap" part hints to the belief of an eventual bodily resurrection.

And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. – John 5:29

As mentioned before the Talmud, which is the compendium of Jewish wisdom based on the "Old Testament" Scriptures symbolically says that sleep is 1/60th of death (Berachot 57b).

And when thy days be fulfilled, **and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers**, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. – II Sam 7:12

The Hebrew word for sleep here is, "shakab" and it means; to lie down for rest, sexual intercourse or death. To cast down, to lodge, rest or sleep. So by the very definition this word can be used literally or figuratively and again context will determine this. Obviously, sleep here is used in a figurative sense for bodily death. This word is also used in Kings and Chronicles when it speaks of a king dying and that he "slept with his fathers."

Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, **lest I sleep the sleep of death**; - Psa. 13:3

The word for sleep here is, "yahshane" and also can be used literally or figuratively in the Hebrew. It means; to be slack, grow old, stale or sleep. The way it is used in the verse above is referring to the slowing and breakdown of the body due to the aging process eventually leading to death. "Lighten mine eyes," means to restore ones youthful vitality.

So man **lieth down**, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their **sleep**. – Job 14:12

“Lieth down” in this passage is the word “shakab” which we have already gone over and in other passages has been translated as “death.” The word here for “sleep” is “shaynaw,” and it means... well what do you know, “to sleep.” And this word “shaynaw” can be used in a literal or figurative sense. Here it is being used figuratively to refer to bodily death.

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all **sleep**, but we shall all be changed, - I Cor. 15:51

The Greek word here for “sleep” is, “koyman” and is used to describe sleep or death. Here it obviously refers to bodily death.

Why refer to death in a figurative way as being a type of sleep? Well, if one continues reading I Corinthians 15 it speaks of a bodily resurrection. The dead body becomes alive again. Keeping with the analogy it “wakes up” for its “sleep” of death.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which **sleep in Jesus** will God bring with him. – I Thess. 4:14

The Greek word used for “sleep” in this passage is, “kathyoodo” and it is again used in a literal or figurative way. Here it is used figuratively to describe those who die believing in the Divine Messiah, Yeshua (Jesus).

He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but **sleepeth**. And they laughed him to scorn. – Matt. 9:24

Here “kathyoodo” is used again by Yeshua as he is referring to the bodily death of the little girl He is about to resurrect. He wanted to show He had the power over death; that resurrecting the dead for Him was like simply waking someone up who had been napping.

These things said He: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. – John 11:11

Here Yeshua is using the Greek word, “koyman” as we have discussed regarding I Cor. 15:51. In all these instances the object of sleep is always the physical body, and there is no reference to the slumber of the soul.

In I Samuel 28 we see Saul calls forth the non-sleeping, conscious soul of Samuel via a witch. Matthew 17, what has been dubbed as the Mount of Transfiguration we see non-sleeping souls of the bodily deceased Moses and Elijah talking with Yeshua. In Luke 16 in the story of Lazarus and the Rich Man we see both the souls of the righteous and unrighteous dead are conscious.

All the passages cited used sleep in a figurative way referring to bodily death and we see that the soul is conscious and awake after death.