EXPLORING JEWISH VIEWS OF THE AFTERLIFE

HIBBUT HA-KEVER/PANGS OF THE GRAVE:
Rabbi Yehuda said: “for seven days the soul goes to and fro from his house to his grave from his grave to his house, mourning for the body” (Zohar I, 218b)

Ancestral Guides - Familial Beings:
Rabbi Shimon said: ‘Have you seen today the image of your father? For so we have learnt, that at the hour of a man's departure from the world, his father and his relatives gather round him, and he sees them and recognizes them, and likewise all with whom he associated in this world, and they accompany his soul to the place where it is to abide. (Zohar I, 218a)

Ancestral Guides - Mythic Beings:
When a [person] departs this world... [s]he sees many strange things on his way & meets Adam, the first man, sitting at the gate of Gan Eden, ready to welcome all who have observed commands of their Master. (Zohar, Noah, 65b) ...no man leaves the world before he sees the Shekhinah....(Zohar, Emor, 88a) and with the Shekhinah there come three ministering angels to receive the soul of the righteous (I, 98a Midrash ha-Ne’elam).

Life Review:
when God desires to take back a man's spirit, all the days he has lived in this world pass in review before Him. (Zohar, I, 221b)

GEHENNA/REALM OF PURIFICATION & PURGATION:
There are five kinds of punishments in Gehenna, and Isaiah saw them all.... He entered the second compartment, and he saw two men hanging by their tongues; and he said, "O You who unveils the hidden, reveal to me the secret of this.” He answered, “These are the men who slandered, therefore they are thus punished.” He entered the third compartment, and he saw there men hanging by their organs. He said, "O You who unveils the hidden, reveal to me the secret of this.” And He answered, “These are the men who neglected their own wives, and committed adultery with the daughters of Israel.” [Keitzad Din Ha-Kever, 1-3).

GAN EDEN/HEAVENLY GARDEN OF EDEN:
Gan Eden has two gates of carbuncle, and sixty myriads of ministering angels keep watch. Each of these angels shine like the radiance of the heavens. When the righteous person approaches, angels remove from him the clothes in which he had been buried, and clothe him with eight robes of the clouds of glory, and place upon his head two crowns, one of precious stones and pearls, and the other of gold, ... they place eight myrtles in his hand and praise him, they lead him to a place full of waters surrounded by 800 species of roses and myrtles. (Masekhet Gan Eden, 1-2)

TZROR HA-HAYYIM/SOURCE OF LIFE:
...in the same way as the soul has to be clothed in a bodily garment in order to exist in this world, so is she given an ethereal supernal garment wherewith to exist in the other world, and to be enabled to gaze at the effulgence of life radiating from that “land of the living” [TZROR HA-HAYYIM] (Zohar, I, 66a).

COMPILITED BY: Simcha Raphael, Ph.D., 2016  www.daatinstitute.net
These texts are from Zohar, or elsewhere as noted, and appear in: Simcha Paull Raphael, JEWISH VIEWS OF THE AFTERLIFE, Rowman and Littlefield, 2009.
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