olam he-zeh v'olam ha-ba

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Olam Ha-ba in Rabbinic Literature: A Functional Reading

Dov Weiss

INTRODUCTION

The Hebrew phrase *olam ha-ba* [the next world] first appears in rabbinic literature. It is not found in the Hebrew Bible or Second Temple Hebrew writings. Typically, the rabbinic term *olam ha-ba* is juxtaposed with *olam ha-zeh* [this world]. But what exactly does *olam ha-ba* mean? What world does it refer to? A physical one or a spiritual? Here, the rabbinic sources are vague.

At times, it seems to refer to the messianic age, to the time of resurrection, when all of the dead will rise again and return to their original bodies. At other times, the term denotes the place to which every (worthy) individual soul (re)turns after death. In this latter case, *olam ha-ba* would exist in present time—though on a different realm. This connotation would be roughly synonymous with *Gan Eden* [Garden of Eden]. And, still yet, on other occasions one gets the sense that the rabbis themselves are not sure what they mean by *olam ha-ba*. They simply have in mind another world that is different from this one. Like *olam ha-ba*, a similar amorphous phrase used by the rabbis is *le-atid lavo* [the future to come].

According to either explanation—whether *olam ha-ba* refers to the messianic age or a spiritual life after death—the concept in rabbinic literature transformed Judaism. It became a supreme article of Jewish faith. Remarkably, the term *olam ha-ba* appears over two thousand times in rabbinic literature, yet the Hebrew Bible contains no notion of an individual receiving rewards and punishments after death. And the belief in bodily resurrection emerges only in the latest books of Tanakh, most notably in Daniel 12. For the most part, reward and punishment in the Hebrew Bible is relegated to the mundane pre-messianic physical world. Thus, with their intense emphasis on *olam ha-ba*, the rabbis in the first few centuries of the Common Era were able to restructure the primary arena of religious life. This world was understood to be merely a prelude to the more significant next world. The following rabbinic texts make this point: (1) The Mishnah in *Avot* (4:16) has Rabbi Jacob declare: “This world is like a hallway before the World to Come. Prepare yourself in the hallway so that you may enter the banquet hall.” (2) Midrash *Tanhuma* claims that God gave Israel the Torah and mitzvoth only so that they could
merit olam ha-ba. A late rabbinic midrash on Exodus compares olam ha-zeh [this world] to a man and woman who are engaged but the all-the-more-important olam ha-ba symbolizes the actual marriage. That same midrash also compares this world to the first tablets of law [luchot] that were smashed by Moses, and the next world to the second tablets that were to be eternal.

The rabbinic decision to place olam ha-ba at the center of their religious consciousness did not go unnoticed by many medieval Jewish theologians, such as Sa’adia Gaon, Judah Halevy, and Bahya Ibn Pakuda. And the apparent absence of olam ha-ba in the Hebrew Bible disturbed these medieval thinkers, for they wondered: if the rabbis regarded olam ha-ba as embodying the very aim of Jewish life, why did the Hebrew Bible never explicitly mention it? Interestingly, this medieval Jewish anxiety became inverted in contemporary times, when, in most denominations (excluding the Ultra-Orthodox) this world, olam ha-zeh, stood—and continues to stand—at the core of religious life. Post-Enlightenment, modern Jews are typically not interested in afterlife speculations. In short, whereas medieval Jewish theologians were consumed with afterlife speculation—and anxious about its apparent absence in the Hebrew Bible—modern Jews, by stark contrast, are obsessed with this world and anxious about the centrality that the next world occupies in rabbinic and medieval Jewish literature.

The modern Jewish sidelining of olam ha-ba has also affected the academic study of ancient Judaism, as scholars of rabbinic literature have given relatively little attention to olam ha-ba. None of the great rabbinics scholars of the twentieth century, such as Ephraim Urbach, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Arthur Marmorstein, and Max Kaddushin, devote a separate section of their theological books to olam ha-ba. Admittedly, the term olam ha-ba or a discussion of the afterlife appears here and there, but their works do not provide a systematic or comprehensive analysis of a religious category that is so fundamental to rabbinic thinking. While the phrase olam ha-ba can be found close to two thousand times in rabbinic literature, a quick database search of contemporary academic articles on the subject reveals very little by way of scholarship. To be sure, Ephraim Urbach, the great systemizer of rabbinic theology, has a multipage discussion on olam ha-ba, but this reflection appears only in the context of describing God’s justice system. Reading Urbach, one would come away with the mistaken impression that the rabbis imagined olam ha-ba to be merely a place where humans are judged. But, of course, the rabbinic view of olam ha-ba is richer than that.
Strikingly, two lesser-known scholars of ancient Judaism, Claude Montefiore (1858–1938) and Herbert Loewe (1882–1940), admit this very point when defending their pithy and highly disorganized chapter on *olam ha-ba*.\(^\text{13}\) They maintain that the rabbis “thought about [*olam ha-ba*] in terms and conceptions most of which have become obsolete and remote for us today, and so their ideas are of small interest or profit.”\(^\text{14}\) Similarly, the founder of Reconstructionist Judaism, Mordechai Kaplan (1881–1983), in *Judaism as a Civilization* argues:

> We are so far removed from the world-outlook and thought-habits of the pre-enlightenment days that, with the best of intentions to know and understand the past, we find it hard not to read into it our own ideas. We are habituated to the modern emphasis upon improvement of life in this world as the only aim worthy of our endeavors. We take for granted that, if we do our best here, we can afford to let the hereafter take care of itself. So much a part of our thinking has this modern conception of human life become that we can scarcely conceive that not long ago the center of gravity of human existence for Jews, Christians and Mohammedans alike, lay not in this world, but in the world to come.\(^\text{15}\)

Notwithstanding Kaplan’s commitment to modernity and his attendant rejection of the miraculous and supernatural realms, Kaplan celebrates *olam ha-ba* not because it actually exists but because of how the concept functioned for the rabbis. Kaplan posits: “[T]he traditional conception of the world to come expresses man’s discontent with the things as they are and his yearning for the things as they ought to be. From this viewpoint, the important element in this belief is not the fantastic picture of the ideal world, but the inner urge of which it was an expression.”\(^\text{16}\)

In short, according to Kaplan, rabbinic writings on *olam ha-ba* reflect rabbinic dreams, desires, and aspirations. In what follows, I will use Kaplan’s functional method of interpretation to make sense of the rabbinic descriptions of *olam ha-ba*.

**SIX PRIMARY FUNCTIONS OF OLAM HA-BA**

Broadly speaking, rabbinic teachings on *olam ha-ba* can be grouped into six functions. After outlining the first five of them quickly, I will explore the sixth one, the moral function, in greater detail.
The first and most crucial function of *olam ha-ba* in rabbinic literature is judicial: *olam ha-ba* provided a defense of God, a theodicy. Although righteous people suffer in this world, they could now be thought of as duly compensated in the next world. Inversely, although some wicked people prosper in this world, they would be duly punished in the next world. In short, *olam ha-ba* squares everything away; debts will be paid and rewards will be procured. The most famous rabbinic articulation of this theology is when the Babylonian Talmud claims that all of a person's deeds in this world will be replayed back for him/her in the next world.

The judicial function of *olam ha-ba* has three basic versions: one moderate, one extreme, and one intermediate. The moderate position envisions God primarily rewarding and punishing in this world, but subsequently, if necessary, slightly adjusting each person's accounts via punishments and rewards in the next world. This method guarantees that full justice will be ultimately implemented. The radical view, attributed to Rabbi Yaakov in the Babylonian Talmud (*Kiddushin* 39b) is that God rewards (and punishes) people only in the next world.

Between the moderate and radical positions, we have the famous view attributed to Rabbi Akiva that God reluctantly rewards the wicked in this world—but God does so only in order to punish the wicked more harshly in the next world; inversely, God punishes, lovingly, the righteous in this world so as to protect them from incurring a more painful punishment in *olam ha-ba*. Rabbi Akiva's position assumes that divine rewards and punishments in the next world are far more potent than the rewards and punishments of this world. Rabbi Akiva, thus, radically reverses the biblical picture. In the Bible, the righteous are rewarded in this world, and the wicked are punished in this world. Now, the righteous are punished in this world, and the wicked are rewarded in this world. As a consequence of this theology, Rabbi Akiva's followers argued that human suffering in this world should be regarded as a sign of divine love, for only the truly righteous are punished in this world.

The second function for *olam ha-ba*, the interpretive one, provided the rabbis with a new hermeneutical tool to read biblical passages that, ostensibly, have nothing to do with reward and punishment. This binary of *olam ha-zeh* and
olam ha-ba is often employed to explain strange or redundant biblical words and phrases. At times, the rabbis situate olam ha-zeh and olam ha-ba as opposites: for example, they would argue, unlike this world where suffering occurs, the next world would be full of pleasure.22 At other times, the rabbis use the binary of olam ha-zeh and olam ha-ba to express continuities or foreshadowing: for example, just as there are Torah academies in this world, so too there will be Torah academies in the next world, albeit even greater ones.23

Mystical

The third function of olam ha-ba in rabbinic literature is what I would call the mystical one. In these instances, the rabbis use olam ha-ba as a method to satisfy their spiritual yearnings of having an unmediated encounter with God in a world where God is hidden. For example, Sifre Deuteronomy posits that the dead will be able to see God in olam ha-ba.24 Or a more moderate version from Leviticus Rabbah, which asserts that that whereas in this world only select individuals can see God, in olam ha-ba everyone would see God.25 A teaching in Pesikta de-Rav Kahana maintains that whereas in this world the priests purify the impure, in the next world God would assume the role of purifier.26 Also in Pesikta de-Rav Kahana it is said that God would directly teach Torah to all of Israel.27 Two more examples: the Jerusalem Talmud has God dancing with the righteous in olam ha-ba.28 And, Ecclesiastes Rabbah presents us with a picture of God leading the olam ha-ba choir.29

Polemical

The fourth function is polemical. Here, the rabbis invoke olam ha-ba as a theological weapon to express their animosity toward specific nations or peoples, such as their immediate Jewish rivals or gentiles. Most famously, a Mishnah in Sanhedrin declares that Epicureans, and those who reject the resurrection of the dead or that Torah is from Heaven, will lose their place in olam ha-ba.30 Many scholars, such as Menachem Kellner, read this Mishnah as a critique of the Sadducees, who rejected the afterlife and the Oral Torah.31 Or consider the Tosefta in Sanhedrin that has Rabbi Eliezer posit that “none of the gentiles will have a place in the World to Come.”32 One final instance: the rabbis use olam ha-ba as a method to express their disgust at particular biblical villains and at wicked generations such as the people of Sodom, Korach and his followers, the generation of the Flood, and the spies.33
RHETORICAL

The fifth function, the rhetorical one, represents the inverse of the polemical function. In these cases, the rabbis invoke *olam ha-ba* not to lambast others, but to motivate or threaten righteous Jews to comply with various rabbinic ethics and laws. They appropriate *olam ha-ba* as a placeholder or carrier to express their deepest values and concerns. Examples of actions that would cause a person to forfeit his or her *olam ha-ba* include desecrating holy objects, disgracing the holidays, embarrassing a fellow Jew, teaching an incorrect halachah,\(^34\) eating meat that is not slaughtered,\(^35\) eating pork,\(^36\) making use of the tetragrammaton,\(^37\) acting jealously, having desires, seeking honor,\(^38\) ceasing to learn Torah, neglecting to tend to the needs of Torah sages,\(^39\) sleeping in the morning, drinking in the afternoon, speaking like a child, or attending the synagogues of simpletons.\(^40\) On the positive side of the rhetorical function, Midrash Mishlei states that any Jew who walks six feet in the Land of Israel will receive a share in *olam ha-ba*,\(^41\) while Avot de-Rabbi Nathan contains an entire list of *olam ha-ba* achieving actions that include being a good friend and a good neighbor.\(^42\)

ETHICAL

The sixth function of *olam ha-ba* is ethical. In these cases, the rabbis use the afterlife as a method to subtly express moral discomfort with a biblical idea or received Jewish tradition. They accomplish this by declaring the problematic Jewish principle inoperative for the next world. Stated differently, *olam ha-ba* provided the rabbis, among other things, with a moral safe haven: although a troubling law or theology might not be eradicated in this world, at least it could be so in the next.\(^43\) This ethical response does not solve the moral problem, but minimizes it.\(^44\) In what follows, I present three such examples in some detail.

The first example revolves around the rabbinic concept of the *Yetser Hara* [the evil inclination]. As Ishay Rosen-Zvi has shown, the various strata of rabbinic literature convey different conceptions of the *Yetser Hara*.\(^45\) For R. Ishmael and his school, the *Yetser Hara* is not an essential component of the human being, as it was for R. Akiva. It is rather an external and independent entity housed within the human heart. Moreover, for R. Ishmael, the *Yetser Hara* does not drive a human being to sin by manipulating a person’s emotions or desires, but rationally incites him or her to disobey God.\(^36\)
According to Rosen-Zvi, the position of Rabbi Ishmael and his students emerged as the dominant one in the post-Tannaitic period as these sages regarded the evil inclination as fundamentally evil. Because of that, not unexpectedly, a moral-theological problem arose: why would God create something that is evil or harmful to humanity? Does this not imply that God is evil, or at least is responsible for evil? Indeed, some late antique thinkers, such as Marcion (85–160 C.E.), Celsus (second century C.E.), and Adimantus (fourth century C.E. student of Mani) all railed against the idea that the biblical God implanted an evil desire in the hearts of humanity, beginning with Adam.47 They argued: if God created this sinful force, why should humanity suffer the consequences? God, therefore, must be unjust. These types of critiques might have reached the rabbis and naturally would have only exacerbated the theological crisis. Either way, the rabbis were confronted with this theological-moral dilemma. Many early rabbinic texts attempt to solve the problem.48 For example, Sifre Deuteronomy (ca. third century C.E.) maintains that God provided a method by which an individual could overcome the deleterious effects of the evil inclination: the study of Torah. Only through it could humanity defeat the evil inclination’s power.49

Other rabbinic texts ignore this solution and evince a profound discomfort and unease with an evil entity created by God. But they invoke olam ha-ba as a method to mitigate the problem. So, for example, Exodus Rabbah has God making this distinction: “In this world [Israel] made idols because of the evil inclination in them, but in the future world I will uproot from them the evil inclination.”50 About a dozen or so rabbinic texts make this type of distinction.51

Using olam ha-ba to mitigate problematic Jewish principles also emerges in response to the biblical notion, first found in the context of the Decalogue (Exod 20:5), where God announces that, as a “jealous God,” He will “visit the guilt of the parents upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generations.” This theology posed serious ethical problems for select rabbis who struggled with how the Torah could endorse a theology that punishes an innocent person for the sins of another. How does this punitive doctrine comport with God’s attributes of mercy and kindness? Moreover, the need for Jewish—and for that matter Christian—biblical exegetes to respond to this problematic idea was heightened by the fact that late antique thinkers, from Marcion onward, were wont to cite the doctrine of inherited punishment to argue for the immorality of the Old Testament and the Old Testament God.52

Some early rabbinic texts ignore the ethical problems and simply affirm the theology of transgenerational punishment. Others, like Mekhila de-Rabbi
Ishmael, posit that a child of the third generation would be punished for the sins of his grandparent only if there were a continuous line of evildoers from the grandparent to the grandchild. If the grandparent, parent, or child were righteous, then the child would not be punished for any of his or her ancestors’ sins. By limiting the applicability of inherited punishment to those who continue in their parents’ evil ways, this Tannaitic text resolves the implicit moral problem: innocent children are not punished for the sins of their parents or grandparents.53

Other rabbis reject this solution and continue to insist—along with a simple reading of Scripture—that righteous children indeed suffer for the sins of the parents. One of them, Rabbi Yossi, however, mitigates the moral problem by limiting the theological doctrine to this world only: “[If a person’s] deeds are good but his father’s deeds are not good. His father causes him to suffer (lit. not to enjoy) in this world, but his [own] deeds cause him to enjoy the next world [עולם הבא].”54

One last example of where olam ha-ba acts as an ethical reflex involves a specific type of inherited punishment that has real-life consequences. And that is the case of mamzer, a bastard child that is the product of incest or an extramarital affair. Tragically, this child can never marry a standard (non-mamzer) Jew. No doubt, this law clashes with the moral principle of individual responsibility that the rabbis elsewhere promote. Consequently, Leviticus Rabbah attributes the following question to Daniel the Tailor: “If the parents of these mamzerim committed transgression, what concern is it of these poor sufferers [i.e., the children]?”55 Strikingly, according to Daniel the Tailor, when Ecclesiastes 4:1 speaks of “all the oppressions that are done under the sun,” it refers specifically to children who are mamzerim due to no fault of their own. Amazingly, this late rabbinic text depicts this challenging Torah law as “oppressive.”

Yet, here too—as in the other two cases—the midrash has God declare that the “next world” will provide respite for the “oppressed” children: “It shall be My task to comfort them. For in this world there is dross in them, but in the World to Come . . . they will all be pure gold.”56 Needless to say, these types of distinctions—between this world and the next world—do not appear in the Bible itself.57 Notably, in each of these three aforementioned examples—evil inclination, inherited guilt, and mamzer—the exegetical grounding is forced, thus highlighting the rabbinic agenda to minimize the moral-theological irritant.58

In conclusion, the rabbis use olam ha-ba as a category to place their hopes, fears, anxieties, and yearnings. However, not all of them adopted the
mythic speculations of their colleagues. There was some rabbinic pushback against these types of theologizing. For instance, in the Babylonian Talmud (Sanhedrin 99a), we have two forms of critique: the first, attributed to the early Palestinian Amora, Rav Yochanan, challenges the very notion that we can know what olam ha-ba will bring:59 “R. Hyya b. Aba said in R. Yohanan’s name: All the prophets prophesied [all the good things] only in respect of the Messianic era; but as for the world to come ‘the eye has not seen, O Lord, beside You, what he has prepared for him that waits for him’ [Isaiah 64:3].”

The second critique of olam ha-ba speculation, attributed to the early Babylonian Amora Samuel, relies on the belief that olam ha-ba will be exactly the same as olam ha-zeh, with only one difference: the Jewish people will no longer be controlled by foreign nations; they will have political independence. “Samuel said: This world differs from [that of] the days of the Messiah only in respect of servitude to [foreign] powers.”

DEDICATION

This article is lovingly dedicated to the memory of Stewart Harris.

Yehi Zichro Baruch [May his memory be for a blessing].

NOTES


The prerabbinic Ethiopic (non-Hebrew) equivalent, alam zayekawwen [the world which is come to come], can be found in 1 Enoch 71:15. See Outside the Bible: Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture, vol. 2 (ed. Louis H. Feldman, James L. Kugel, and Lawrence H. Schiffman; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2013), 1399 notes to 71:15. To be sure, while the technical term olam ha-ba emerged in the rabbinic period, the Jewish notion of a separate life for the soul after death long predated the rabbinic period.


4. The tenet of bodily resurrection also surfaces as a Jewish theology in 2 Maccabees 7 and 1 Enoch 51:1–2, 102:4–103:8. These Second Temple texts, however, were not considered sacred for traditional Jews through the millennia. For an analysis of corporate resurrection


16. Ibid., 402.


18. BT *Ta'anit* 11a.

19. Also see BT *Hullin* 142 and *Tanhuma* (ed. Buber) *Pekude* 7.

20. See *Genesis Rabbah* 33:1 and *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana* (ed. Mandelbaum) 9.

21. On this rabbinic notion, see *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, bahodesh 10, and *Sifre Deuteronomy* 32. The dictum is often repeated by his students in rabbinic literature
(e.g., BT Bava Metzia 85a and BT Sanhedrin 101a). On Rabbi Akiva’s understanding of suffering, also see E. P. Sanders, “Akiba's View of Suffering,” Jewish Quarterly Review 63 (1972–1973): 332–52; Urbach, The Sages, 444–48. Also see the related maxim attributed to Rabbi Judah the Prince in Avot de-Rabbi Nathan (ed. Schechter version a, 28) that if people get pleasure in this world, they will lose an equal amount of that pleasure in the next world. Interestingly, the German pietists of the thirteenth century would radicalize this notion even further by willfully afflicting themselves so as to incur greater pleasures in the next world. See chapter three of Ivan G. Marcus, Piety and Society: The Jewish Pietists of Medieval Germany (Leiden: Brill, 1981).

22. BT Pesachim 50a. For other examples of rabbinic texts that contrast olam ha-ba and olam ha-zeh, see especially Leviticus Rabbah 13:3, BT Bava Metsia 85b, and Midrash Psalms 91.

23. Ecclesiastes Rabbah 5. For other examples of olam ha-zeh as foreshadowing olam ha-ba, see Genesis Rabbah 62:2; BT Bava Batra 15b, 16b; Pesikta de-Rav Kahana (ed. Mandelbaum) 12; and Midrash Psalms 84.

24. Sifre Deuteronomy 357. See also Midrash Psalms 13.

25. Leviticus Rabbah 1.


27. Pesikta de-Rav Kahana (ed. Mandelbaum) 12 and echoed in Tanhuma vayigash 11. Also see Tanhuma (ed. Buber) miketz 4, which posits that in the next world all of Israel will become prophets.

28. JT Megillah 2:4, 73b. See also Song of Songs Rabbah, 7 and Midrash Psalms 48. Other examples of the mystical function of olam ha-ba include the saying of God's real name (BT Pesachim 50a, Midrash Psalms 91) and God’s direct blessing to all of Israel (Pesikta Rabbati 5).

29. Ecclesiastes Rabbah 1.

30. Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1. See also Leviticus Rabbah 13:2, which declares that idolaters have no share in the world to come.


32. Tosefta Sanhedrin 13:1. R. Joshua challenges Rabbi Eliezer's view, arguing that righteous gentiles will receive a share in olam ha-ba. Also see Mekhila de-Rabbi Ishmael, nezakin, 10, which declares that gentiles have no redemption in the “time to come.” Strikingly, some rabbis even wanted to rob Solomon of his olam ha-ba until a heavenly voice intervened (see Tanhuma, Buber, metzorah 1).


34. Mishna, Avot 3:11.


37. Avot Rabbi Nathan, version a, 12.

38. Avot de-Rabbi Nathan, version b, 34.

39. Avot de-Rabbi Nathan, version a, 36.

40. Avot de-Rabbi Nathan, version b, 34.

41. Midrash Mishlei 17.

42. Avot de-Rabbi Nathan, version a, 14.

43. In the ninth century, Sa’adia Gaon (882–942 C.E.) attempted to prove the existence of an afterlife because otherwise God would be unjust: “We are confronted by the fact that God, the just, ordered the killing of the young children of the Midianites (Num 31:17) and the extermination of the young children of the Generation of the Flood (Gen 6–9). We note also how He continually causes pain and even death to little babes. Logical Necessity, therefore, demands that there exist after death a state in which they would obtain compensation for the pain suffered prior thereto.” Sa’adia Gaon, The Book of Beliefs and Opinions (trans. Samuel Rosenblatt; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 330. In this passage, Sa’adia acknowledges that God’s decision to wipe out, inter alia, the generation of the Flood, minus Noah and his family, if taken at face value, was immoral. Even if every adult acted violently and with corruption (Gen. 6:12)—and that itself is a huge assumption—what could justify God’s destruction of small children? To defend God, Sa’adia posits the necessity of the afterlife: although killed in this world, children will be rewarded in the next one. (Sa’adia ignores Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:3: “The generation of the Flood does not have a share in the World to Come [עולם הבא].” Cf. Tosefta Sanhedrin 13:2, 6.) Remarkably, for this Jewish theologian, God’s killing of children, or His commanding of it, proves the existence of the afterlife; for if the soul does not survive death, then God would be deemed immoral and unjust, which for Sa’adia, as a staunch defender of God’s justice, would be rationally impossible.

44. See Heschel, Heavenly Torah, 694.


The most radical Christian-like explanation appears in *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan* (version b) 42: God implanted the Evil Inclination in humanity as a punishment to Adam for eating the Tree of Knowledge.

49. Using various formulations, post-Tannaitic texts also present this teaching. See, for example, BT *Kiddushin* 30b, BT *Avodah Zarah* 5b, BT *Bava Batra* 16a, *Avot de Rabbi Nathan* (version a), 16.


51. See *Genesis Rabbah* 48:11, 89:1; *Exodus Rabbah* II 41:7, 46:4; *Numbers Rabbah* II 17:6; *Deuteronomy Rabbah* 2:80, 6:14; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 29; *Tanhumah yitro* 17; *Tanhumah* (Buber) bereishit 40; *Tanhumah* (Buber) kedoshim 15; *Tanhumah* (Buber) shelah 31; *Tanhumah* (Buber) ḥuqqat supplement #1; *Tanhumah* (Buber) va-ethanan 2; *Seder Elyahu Rabbah* 3, 16; *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 2:1, 12:1.


54. *Avot Rabbi Nathan* (version b, 22). A similar solution can be found in *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 4:1.


57. See also *Midrash Psalms* 19:13, which records a debate as to whether there will be Gehinnom in the next world; in *Leviticus Rabbah* 19:5 a view is presented that there will be no Attribute of Justice [*midat hadin*] in the future world.

58. *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 1:6 and BT *Nedarim* 8b (in the name of Reish Lakish) claim that there will be no Gehinnom in the next world. See also *Midrash Psalms* 19.

59. Also see *Midrash Mishlei* 13.