

# INTRO TO PERSONAL IDENTITY

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Intro Metaphysics

## 1. The afterlife

How could God make it be *you* in the afterlife?

**Physical similarity** But you don't just want someone *like* you to exist in the afterlife; you want *yourself* to exist then.

**Particles** But what if your particles have become mingled with others', or even came to constitute someone else before the afterlife?

**Soul** But do souls really exist? And what determines their identity over time?

## 2. Criteria of personal identity

Giving a criterion of personal identity means filling in the blank in the following:

One person is identical to a later person if and only if ...

For example:

...the people are physically similar

...the people have the same particles

...the people have the same soul

### 3. Two kinds of identity/sameness

Numerical identity:

- “Joe Biden is identical to the president of the United States”
- “ $2 + 2 = 4$ ”
- “The author of *Harry Potter* is the same person as the author of *The Cuckoo’s Calling*”

Similarity:

- The airport sign “Careful, many suitcases are identical”
- “Hey, we wore the same shirt today!”
- “He hasn’t been the same person since that nasty breakup.”

### 4. Leibniz’s Law; identity and change

**Leibniz’s Law** If one object has some property that another object lacks, the objects are not identical

But does Leibniz’s Law rule out *change*? Suppose a person gets a haircut.

The Argument from Change

1. The person who entered the salon has the property *having long hair*; the person who exited the salon lacks this property
2. If one object has some property that another object lacks, the objects are not identical
3. Therefore, the person who entered the salon is not identical to the person who exited the salon

Response: there is no such property as *having long hair*. There is the property of *having long hair before the haircut*, and the property of *having short hair after the haircut*; but both the person who entered the salon and the person that exited the salon have both properties.