

# Shaar Hagilgulim – Gate of Reincarnations

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In Shaar Hagilgulim the Arizal reveals and explains all the secrets of reincarnation. The origin and different reincarnations of known Rabbis, kings, prophets etc...

## The five names of the soul

There are five names to the soul, their names from the bottom up are: Nefesh, Rua'h, Neshama, Haya and Yehida, these names are not just incidental. Know that the individual is the spiritual component within the physical body, while the body is only its garment and not the individual himself. As it is written; Upon man's flesh it shall not be poured... (Ex 30:32), and noted in Zohar, Parashat Bereishit, 20b.

## Origin of the souls

All the souls were at first inside Adam Harishon, when he sinned, most descended to the lower husks. All the sparks of his Nefesh, Rua'h and Neshama were damaged, fell and mixed between these Kelipot<sup>1</sup>. These souls are liberated from these husks and reincarnate as a result of our Mitzvot and Tefilot. The body of man consist of several sparks in his 248 limbs and 365 tendons, and several sparks in his head, eyes, in all his other parts and likewise in his Nefesh, Rua'h and Neshama. This is the secret of what is written in Sefer haTikunim, in the introduction to the verse; Like a bird wandering from its nest. Like the Shekhina has been exiled between the Kelipot, so the Tsadikim will be exiled with it generation after generation. According to the aspect of the sparks, they were exiled to the place intended for them amongst the Kelipot, head in head, eye in eye and so on. This is the secret of the exile of the Neshamot mentioned there. Other souls originate from his sons Cain and Hevel. They also sinned, a different sin from the one of Adam their father, therefore their sparks also descended into the depths of the Kelipot. And indeed in each generation, few sparks go out and reincarnate in this world according to the aspect of the Neshamot of that generation, either from the sparks of the head or from the sparks of the eye, and the like, and are rectified in this world.

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<sup>1</sup> Negative husks

## **Acquiring the different levels of a soul**

Since man connects all the four worlds of Asiah, Yetsirah, Beriah and Atsilut, there has to exist in him parts from all these four worlds and each one is called by one of the five names of Nefesh, Rua'h, Neshama, Haya or Yehidah. In one reincarnation he does not get all of these five levels at once, they will be acquired according to his merit. At first, he gets the lowest level, which is called Nefesh. Later on, if he merits, he will additionally obtain Rua'h. This is discussed in many places in the Zohar such as in Parashat Vayehi, Teruma, and Mishpatim (Zohar 94b); Come and see, when an individual is born, he is given a Nefesh.....

All Nefashot are from the world of Asiah, Ruhot from the world of Yetsira and Neshamot from the world of Beriah. However, most people do not have all 5 levels, but only the level of Nefesh from Asiah. Even for Nefesh there are many levels because Asiah also divides into five Partsufim called; Arikh Anpin, Abba, Imah, Zeir Anpin, and Nukvah

Before a man can merit to obtain his level of Rua'h from the world of Yetsira, he has to first be complete in all the levels of the 5 Partsufim of Nefesh of Asiah and so on. As there are individuals whose Nefesh is from Malhut of Asiah, and others who are from Yesod of Asiah etc. everyone still, must rectify all his levels of Asiah and afterwards receive his levels of Rua'h from Yetsira. Similarly, in order to receive his levels of Neshama from Beriah, an individual needs to rectify every parts of his Rua'h in all of Yetsira, after which he will obtain his Neshama from the world of Beriah.

## **Tikun of a soul**

Know that when the soul of a man comes for the first time and is damaged because of his sins, it will reincarnate in an other body to be rectified, this is called a first Gilgul<sup>2</sup>. And if it is not rectified then, it will return for a second Gilgul.

If not rectified again, it returns for a third Gilgul and if he does not advance in the process of his Tikun<sup>3</sup>, from then onwards, it no longer has any rectification in Gilgul, as it is said about it; And that Nefesh will be cut off from its people completely. Indeed this only happens when no Tikun is done at all during any of these times (that it reincarnates), but if during any of these three times, it began to be rectified slightly, it is not cut off and is able to return to be rectified, even up to a thousand generations if necessary.

The righteous who engages in the Torah is not judged in Gehinom<sup>4</sup>. His trespasses have

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<sup>2</sup> Reincarnation

<sup>3</sup> Rectification

<sup>4</sup> Purgatory

to be cleansed in order for him to enter into Gan 'Eden. Therefore he has no other Tikun except in the Gilgul since all his sins were not atoned for through torments during his life. Since a Gilgul is needed to do rectification, he will reincarnates many times as needed, to expiate and rectify his trespasses. The righteous whose trespasses are fewer than his merits, are cleansed through all the torments which he suffers in the Gilgulim, and his more numerous virtues are added to him in each Gilgul to infinity. His reward is great, as has been written by our sages; Kadosh Barukh Hu wants to give merit to Israel, for this reason he has given them much Torah and Mitsvot.

### **He shall reincarnate even many times**

If he has not rectified his Nefesh completely the first time and departs from the world, then it is necessary for that Nefesh to return in a Gilgul, even many times, until everything required is refined completely. When the rectification of his Nefesh is completed, his Rua'h does not enter into him in this reincarnation because the Nefesh was rectified only through this present Gilgul.<sup>5</sup> Therefore it is necessary that he departs from the world, and when his Nefesh returns to be reincarnated, only then will he be worthy to get his level of Rua'h. And if the Rua'h is rectified in that reincarnation, it will be again necessary that he departs from the world, and afterwards when he will be again reincarnated the Neshama will also enter into him.

If the Rua'h is not rectified, the Nefesh together with the Rua'h must be reincarnated several times, until the Rua'h is rectified, then the man will die to reincarnate with the three levels of Nefesh, Rua'h and Neshama, until the three of them will be rectified. When the Neshama will be rectified also, he will be a complete man and will not need to reincarnate anymore.

It is necessary to know that when the Nefesh is rectified and returns afterwards to reincarnate in order to get its Rua'h and to rectify it too, if in that same Gilgul this man sins, this will not damage his Nefesh but only his Rua'h. Therefore, he will need other reincarnations in order to rectify his Rua'h, and for that, the Nefesh and Rua'h will reincarnate together until the Tikun of the Rua'h is complete.

Sometimes it will happen that the Nefesh will be completely rectified and will not need to return to reincarnate with the Rua'h for the Tikun of the Rua'h. The Nefesh will remain above in its appropriate place and the Rua'h alone will descend in this reincarnation to rectify itself. But since it cannot come without being clothed in a Nefesh, it will clothe itself in the Nefesh of a convert, as mentioned in the Zohar sect. Mishpatim. The two of them

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<sup>5</sup> It could happen only very exceptionally

will reincarnate together until this Rua'h is rectified, and then it will depart from this world. Afterwards, the first Nefesh will attach itself to it again, and the two levels of Nefesh and Rua'h will reincarnate together in order to receive their Neshama as well. Sometimes, likewise the Rua'h will come alone in a Gilgul with the Neshama, until the Neshama is rectified, then this man will no longer need to reincarnate.

### **Soul of a convert**

Know that the Nefesh of the convert, because it has been attached in this world to that Rua'h and helped it to rectify, it will also ascend with the primary Nefesh of that Rua'h, and the two of them will be on one level in the world to come, attached together and will not be separated.

### **Ibur – attachment of a soul**

According to the levels of purification and the degree of Tikun of that soul, the soul of a Tsadik, which has already finished being rectified and reincarnating and is not in need of reincarnation, will reincarnate in the body of that man as its level of Rua'h for his Nefesh. Sometimes it is possible that very old souls reincarnate in this way, even up to the times of Avraham Avinu, according to the Tikun and the purification of the soul of this man. This matter, which is an incarnation during life, is called by the sages; the secret of 'Ibur – attachment. This is the difference between Gilgul and Ibur – reincarnation and attachment.

Sometimes it is possible that a Rua'h will attach into him from a Tsadik going back to the first Tsadikim, even in this latest time of ours. Everything depends on the value of the Mitsvot this man does, because there are Mitsvot that have power to attract the Nefesh or the Rua'h of a Tsadik in the secret of 'Ibur.

It is also possible that sometimes a soul of a Tsadik will attach into him, and afterwards he will be worthy that the soul of yet another Tsadik, greater than the first will attach into him. Beside his own Nefesh, the Nefesh of the Tsadik that came to him at first will be his level of Rua'h, the second Nefesh of the higher Tsadik, which came to him later will be his aspect of Neshama. And this is the secret of what is written in the Midrashim, in particular in the Midrash of Shemuel; There is not a generation which does not have someone like Avraham Avinu, or Yits'hak, Ya'akov, Moshe, Shemuel and so on.

The principle is that depending on the value of the Tikun and the purification of the Nefesh of a man, he will be worthy to obtain a Neshama from one of the Neshamot of the earlier ones, even up to the highest of all.

It is also possible that if his three levels of Nefesh, Rua'h and Neshama are rectified, and a Nefesh or Rua'h of a Tsadik attach into him, when he departs from this world he will be able to ascend according to the level of that Tsadik who attached into him, and there, in the world to come, both of them will be on one same degree and level. This is the secret of what is written in the introduction to Bereshit in the Zohar, page 7b, that Rabbi Shim'on Bar Yo'hai fell on his face and saw Rabbi Memune Sava who said that in that world they will be lying together.

There is also a benefit for the Tsadik who attached into him, since he helped him to do the Mitzvot to complete his Tikun, he will also have a part in them. This is the secret of what is written; Great are the Tsadikim who even in their passing earn the right to children, etc. And he, because he gives merit to this man, he is made like a father to him to guide and help him. However, if this man acts wickedly, there is no punishment or loss for that Tsadik, because he is attached into him only to do good to him and not to harm him. Furthermore, if that man acts negatively and damages what he had repaired, that Tsadik will leave and detach from him.

### **Rectification of all the levels of a soul**

It is insufficient for him to rectify only the particular level in which his soul-root is based. Instead, he must rectify all the levels of Asiah, and then get his Rua'h of the world of Yetsira, and in the same manner for all the worlds. If he caused a damage in a certain place in Asiah, even if it is not where his Neshama is attached, he has to repair it.

The reasons why souls reincarnate are various. There are those who reincarnate because of sins they did in their previous life or it could also be because of a Mitzva they could not accomplish as having children or getting married, because he transgressed a certain commandment of the Torah and came back to correct it, or when he comes to help others to guide and rectify them.

Someone who has reincarnated to be rectified, but was not careful of sin returns to be immersed again in the Kelipot as at first, he and all the sparks which are drawn out from him and dependant on him.

### **Goal of a reincarnation**

When a soul reincarnates in this world, the goal of this reincarnation is to rectify its individual damaged parts. Reward and punishment will depend on those individual parts damaged in the previous body that came to be rectified. This soul will now suffer the torments and punishments that will come to this body in this present life, apart from what

it suffered already in its previous bodies. It suffered the sorrows of past death and will again for this coming death. All this will help for the atonement of his previous transgressions. With the Mitsvot he did in his past reincarnations and if he does all the ones he is required to do now, his Tikunim will be completed.

### **Various parts of Teshuva**

We will now explain the different parts of Teshuva which are necessary for men, and by this, more of this subject will be understood. There are various parts of Teshuva, one being that whoever has the level of Nefesh from the world of 'Asiah, when he sins, he causes the separation of 'Asiah from Yetsirah in one particular place from which is the root of his soul. Therefore, his Teshuva is to do the Tikun necessary to attach 'Asiah back to Yetsirah in that particular place of the root of his soul. Likewise, whoever has the level of Rua'h from Yetsirah, and sins, needs to attach back Yetsirah to Beriah in that particular place of his root. And whoever has the level of Neshama from Beriah needs to attach back Beriah to Atsilut in that particular place of his root. These are the three lower parts of Teshuva because they are in the worlds of Beriah, Yetsirah and 'Asiah.

According to the level of a man's soul, is the strength and substance of the damage of his sin. For one who has a soul from Malkhut of Atsilut, his damage will ascend up to there and will damage the part of his root which is there, and in this way for the rest of the aspects.

### **Soul mate**

He could also reincarnate to marry his soul mate, because he did not merit being with her previously. Or he did marry his soul mate but transgressed commandment of the Torah and needed to reincarnate to repair it and came without her. If he has merits, even if she does not need to reincarnate, we will allow his wife to come with him. It could also be that he did not merit to have his soul mate, but an other one was brought to him which is the closest to his soul even if she is not his soul mate, when he reincarnates she will also come with him even if she does not need to reincarnate and is not his soul mate. Know that there are many roots of souls who remained ensnare in the negative forces. Reincarnation applies to men but not to women. One reason is because women, for various reasons, can enter Gehinom – Purgatory more rapidly and be cleansed from their sins. Even if they do not generally reincarnate they could still come as a 'Ibur' - attachment to another soul. If a feminine soul attaches to an other woman and the latter one becomes pregnant, the attached soul could then reincarnate in the newborn girl. It is also possible for a man to reincarnate as a woman, because of a particular sin as homosexuality. This woman will not be able to become pregnant. Only if she exceptionally merits, an other feminine soul will attach to her and she will become pregnant. When she will give birth to

a girl, the attached soul will reincarnate in the newborn. Whether a man marries his soul mate or not, he could bring children that originate from the root of his soul or the root of others. A father gives a part of his soul to his children, and this part becomes like a garment to the child's soul to help and guide him in the right path. This attachment can also be between a master and his students. Even more when a father teaches his son Torah, there is a double attachment; father-son, master- student.

Know that when it is mentioned that a soul of someone is reincarnated into this particular person and then in other numerous others, it does not mean that all of that soul has reincarnated at once in each one, it could be parts or sparks of that soul that needed repair or Tikun that have returned separately.

### **Accomplishing the Mitzvot**

A man has to accomplish all the 613 Mitzvot of the Torah by act, word and thought. If he does not have the possibility of doing a particular Mitzva he can still accomplish it by studying its details and laws, He then realizes this Mitzva with word and thought. If he does not, he will reincarnate as needed to accomplish it. Know that when a man occupies himself with the accomplishment of the Mitzvot but only on a physical level, which means just to accomplish them and no more, he resembles a woman whose husband has left to another country and she is left alone with no sustenance. But if this man does more effort and studies the Torah, and learns in it the meaning of what he does, then he will also merit the higher levels of his soul.

### **Learning the Torah**

If a man accomplishes only the physical acts of the Mitzvot he will merit the level of Nefesh and no more. If he does not study Torah according to its four levels of comprehension; simple meaning, allusion, homiletical and secret, he will come back to learn the higher missing level of understanding. If he also studies the Torah he will merit the level of Rua'h. If he puts even more effort and not only understands what he is doing, but also learns the secrets of the Torah and the inner meaning of the things he accomplishes, then he will merit also the level of Neshamah, which is from the world of Beriah. This Neshamah will shine inside his level of Ruah, and will add higher levels to his soul. Then he will be called a complete man, as it is written; And God created man according to his image.

### **Reincarnating in a stone or vegetal**

Often, when Rabbi Haim Vital was walking along with the Ari in the fields, the latter will tell him that this man son of this man was a scholar and because of this particular sin he was reincarnated in this stone or this vegetal. When we searched afterwards, this information was true even if the Ari never knew this man. Sometimes he would look from a far distance at a cemetery and say that a particular soul was seating on a tomb, and it was the soul of this man with this name and that he was punished by this particular punishment for this particular sin, and if we did enquire about it, it was as he said.