

Soul Reincarnations

Haftorat Pinchas

1 Melachim 18:46-19:21

My Haftorah commentary this week is all about reincarnations as learned from Zohar, Arizal and his students. Learning about soul reincarnations strengthen me in my desire to perfect myself here and now, and accept difficulties as they come, as we never know which prior life they come to rectify or atone for.

Eliyahu – the Soul Incarnation of Pinchas

According to the Zohar, Eliyahu was a reincarnation of Pinchas (*Zohar, part 2, 190a*). They both were zealous on G-d's behalf, in spite of the dangers involved. Therefore, they were both rewarded that the Angel of Death had no power over them. The evil queen Izevel, nevertheless, was trying very hard to kill Eliyahu. Her hatred of him stemmed from his confrontation with her priests of idol-worship on Mount Carmel, which led to their execution. "Then Izevel sent a messenger to Eliyahu, saying, ...by about this time tomorrow, I will make your *nefesh* (soul) as the *nefesh* of one of them" (*1 Melachim 19:2*).

Rectifying the Migrating Souls of Nadav and Avihu

Arizal explains that the souls of Aharon's sons, Nadav and Avihu were impregnated within the soul of Eliyahu in order to reach their *tikun* (rectification). Their original sin was not just offering a strange fire, but moreover staring brazenly at the *Shechina* (Divine Indwelling Presence) during the giving of the Torah through eating and drinking (See *Rashi, Shemot 24:11*). Their souls were rectified when the entire people fell on their faces, as Hashem's fire descended on Mount Carmel to consume the sacrifice of those who followed Hashem. Their sin was atoned when they did not gaze at the fire that came down from heaven, as they were falling on their faces on the ground. After their souls were rectified, they no longer needed to be impregnated in Eliyahu's soul, so they left him.

The Witchcraft of Izevel, Queen of Israel

Izevel, King Achav's wife was a great witch. Through her witchcraft she knew that the holy souls of Nadav and Avihu had departed from Eliyahu. Therefore, she understood that his everlasting protection from the Angel of Death no longer applied, since he originally received this covenant of eternal life and peace for the sake of Nadav and Avihu, who originally were part of his soul in his incarnation as Pinchas. Therefore, when she told him "I will make your *nefesh* (soul) as the *nefesh* of one of them," she was hinting that Eliyahu's soul would become like one of the souls of Nadav and Avihu which were burned up through the fire of the incense. Since Eliyahu felt that his gift of eternity was lost from him, he feared and ran away to Mount Chorev. This explains why it states, "When he saw that, he arose and went for his *nefesh* (life)" (*1 Melachim, 19:3*). Now he only had his own single soul (without the protective souls of Nadav and Avihu). He was, therefore, afraid of Izevel, (*Arizal, the Gate of Reincarnation, Introduction 32*). We can learn from this to be super careful not to trust all kinds of spiritual healers, charlatans and astrologers. A person may know many secrets and even perform wonders, but if he is not connected with *kedusha* (holiness), his power emanates from the

other side: the evil forces of witchcraft and black magic. Only a G-d fearing person can be trusted to be a pure channel for Hashem's holiness. Unfortunately, many so-called "Kabbalists" and "spiritual healers" are not necessarily trustworthy. If they charge an exorbitant fee, it is a sure indication that they are motivated by selfish desires rather than being a pure conduit for holiness.

The Soul Travel of Izevel from Korach's Wife and Kozbi, to the Wife of Turnus Rufus

The Rama of Pa'ano explains an additional reason why Izevel was so hot in her pursuit and desire to kill Eliyahu. Izevel's ingrained hatred for Eliyahu stemmed from her earlier incarnation as Kozbi the Midyanite woman whom Pinchas killed while engaged in intercourse with Zimri, the prince of the Tribe of Shimon. She was, therefore, hungry to take revenge on Eliyahu for having killed her when she was Kozbi during his incarnation as Pinchas. As, a person's soul consists of many parts it can be reincarnated into different people simultaneously. Izevel, was also, the reincarnation of the wife of Korach, who instigated Korach to rebel against Hashem's appointment of Aharon as his chosen Kohen (*The Rama of Pa'ano, The Book of Soul Reincarnations, Ot 1*). Since she had never repented her previous sin, Izevel was placed in a situation from which it was even harder to repent. As King Achav's wife she now had the opportunity to either enact a very great rectification, or to sin in an even greater capacity, by turning the King of Israel against the prophets of G-d. The Ramchal points out that the numerical value of Achav is twelve corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel. He could actually have been the Mashiach son of Yosef, and the king of all twelve tribes, had he not been led astray by his evil wife. We learn from this how deep into the mud a person can sink when not taking the opportunity to repent. In the end, however, even the evil Izevel became rectified as the wife of Turnus Rufus who converted and married Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Akiva was actually the reincarnation and rectification of Zimri, when he didn't sin with Turnus Rufus's wife who came to his doorstep to tempt him, but only married her after she had converted. The soul- reincarnations of Izevel teach us that no matter how low a person falls, eventually, Hashem will help us all repent and reach our ultimate perfection.