



Gilgulim and Moshiach

While the idea of reincarnation or *gilgulim* is one we are familiar with, its details and finer points are less known. It also has an interesting relevance to the times of Moshiach rendering its study a part of the Rebbe's dictum to learn all we can about *inyanei Moshiach u'geulah*.

The Alter Rebbe writes in Shulchan Aruch¹ that a *neshama* has to fulfill all of the 613 mitzvos in order for her to reach perfection. If a *neshama* doesn't complete that count in one lifetime, she is reborn into another body in the hopes that in this new incarnation she will succeed in attaining her fulfillment. This can happen a great number of times, until she finishes all the mitzvos.

Another reason a *neshama* may come in a *gilgul* is to reach perfection in all dimensions. In one lifetime she could have reached her potential in one aspect, such as *ahavas Hashem*, but she might still have room to grow in another aspect, such as *yiras Hashem*. She is therefore sent down once more so someone else can bring her other facets to their completion.

An intriguing question is put forward in Zohar. Reb Chizkiya asked, if one *neshama* can become a *gilgul* in many bodies, into which one will she be resurrected when *techiyas hameisim* happens? Reb Yose answered, the body that did not succeed in doing mitzvos and is therefore like a dead tree, will remain dead in those times

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as well. An individual who did do as he was bidden will merit that his body be resurrected when Moshiach comes.

The Arizal comments that every Jew certainly performs some mitzvos, and seldom will there be a body not worthy of *techiyas hameisim*. He therefore takes a deeper look at the Zohar and explains it in a fascinating manner. As mentioned above, a person may succeed in rectifying only one part of his *neshama* during his lifetime. In such a case, this person will be resurrected only with the part of his *neshama* that he fixed. This soul will then be reincarnated into another Jew in order that he remedy her other dimensions. The pieces of the *neshama* that the second individual rectifies will then be used to bring life to his body when the great day arrives. One *neshama* can be used to give life to the many bodies she once inhabited, each one receiving the spark it brought to completion in its original lifetime.

The Rebbe addresses this question in a few letters, both in *Lashon Hakodesh*² and English³. In these

letters the Rebbe anticipates a question one may have about this Zohar. The Rebbe Rashab writes that one *neshama* cannot give life to more than one body at a time. (It is for this reason that while Eliyahu Hanavi can attend many *brissim* at once, he couldn't be at Rashbi's *idra* (lit. A circle, a shiur in which Reb Shimon Bar Yochai would teach *pnimiyus hatorah*) when he was saving Rav Hamnuna. When visiting a *bris*—or Pesach seder—Eliyahu Hanavi doesn't take on a physical human form, therefore, as a *malach* he could visit many places at once. To save Rav Hamnuna, however, Eliyahu had to enclothe his soul in a body and his entire soul had to be used, therefore, he couldn't also be at the *idra*.) If that is the case, how can one soul enliven many bodies with each spark or facet giving life to another one?

The Rebbe explains that every *cheilek* of our *neshamos* is made up of a complete soul structure; a *nefesh* is made up of a *nefesh*, *ruach* and *neshama* and a *ruach* is also a composite of a *nefesh*, *ruach* and

neshama, etc. This is similar to what we know about the *sefiros*; each one is made up of the full system of seven *sefiros*. Therefore, when Zohar says that only a single fragment of the *neshama* will give life to a body, in essence, the person will be animated by the makeup of a complete *neshama*.

This idea becomes easier to swallow when we consider that really every *neshama* is only a spark from one greater soul. Adam Harishon is known as a *neshama klalis*, a general *neshama*. This means that all souls that existed and will ever exist were once included in Adam's *neshama*. Eventually, Hashem took pieces, as it were, of Adam's *neshama* and placed them into the bodies He created. A similar thing will happen at *techiyas hameisim*. Hashem will take pieces of a person's *neshama* and bring many bodies to life with it. May this happen speedily in our day. **1**

1. Hilchos Talmud Torah ch. 1 Halacho 4
2. Igros Kodesh vol. 2 p. 74 & p. 93.
3. Letter dated 2nd of Tammuz 5716