

REINCARNATION AND PURIM

In the book, the Gates of Reincarnation, Mordechai haTzadik is said to have been a reincarnation of Ya'acov Avinu, and that Haman HaRasha was a reincarnation of Esav, his brother. Since Ya'acov bowed down to Esav, and called him, 'my master', they had to come back in reincarnation, in which case, Mordechai refused to bow down to Haman, and also, Mordechai bought Haman as a slave, in effect, becoming his master, as a repair of calling him 'master' in their previous encounter. The Chida asks a question based on the Zohar that says that Ya'acov did not bow to Esav, but rather to the Shechina, the Divine Presence, that was in front of him. If so, why did he need to return in reincarnation as Mordechai to repair that act? He answers that Yaacov did intend to bow down to the Shechina, but it *seemed* like he was bowing down to Esav, and for this he needed a repair for those who did not understand why he was bowing down, the concept of Ma'arit Ayin. From this we can see how closely HaShem judges the tzaddikim and desires their perfection. HaRav Yehonatan Avbshitz writes in his book 'Ya'arot Dvash' that Mordechai had a spark of the soul of Moshe Rabbenu, and Esther was a spark of Batya, the daughter of Paraoth. In return for Batya raising Moshe, Mordechai raised Esther. So too, the Egyptian that Moshe killed came back as Haman seeking to kill Moshe in the person of Mordechai. We see from this, that measure for measure, no good deed is ever lost, and that Hashem always protects the righteous. In an alternate reading, in 'The Gates of Intention', the Ari'zal brings that Esther was a reincarnation of Chava, and she came back to this world to repair the sin of eating from the Tree of Knowledge. In order to repair that sin, she had to keep three mitzvot to the fullest extent: Nida (family purity), chalah (separation of dough), and lighting shabbat candles. From this, the Midrash Eliyahu writes, we can understand why Esther cried out to Hashem before she came to Achashverosh. She said, "Master of the Universe, I have kept the three mitzvot that women were specifically commanded, so 'why have you left me?' She meant to say that she had fulfilled entirely the mission for which she had been sent into this world, so why do you leave me now to the mercy of this evil king? The Medrash Eliyahu mentions that Esther was able to cause Haman's death, only because of the festive party where they served an abundance of wine. The same occurrence happened when the snake gave Chava the 'fruit' of the Tree, he squeezed grapes so that she should become drunk and sin by eating from 'The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. This resulted in Chavas death.

Our Rabbis tell the story of a Jew who owned a cow that plowed his field. One day, he sold this cow to a non-Jew. The non-Jew started working the cow all six days of the week. However, on the seventh day, Shabbat, no matter how much the non-Jew would beat and whip the cow, it would not work. The non-Jew went back to the Jew and complained that this cow would not budge. "I beat him several times but he will not move on the seventh day." The Jew understood. The cow was used to resting on Shabbat, and was never given any work that day. The Jew went over to the cow and started whispering in the cow's ear: "Dear Cow, until now you've worked for me and I gave you rest on our holy day. However, now, unfortunately, you are under the rule of a non-Jew. You must work for him, and plow his field on the Shabbat." The non-Jew saw this and said, "I want to know what you were doing by the cow's ear. Tell me, what were you doing." The Jew answered, "I did not do anything, not magic or spells. All I did was whisper in the cow's ear a couple of words, and now the cow will plow for you on the seventh day." The non-Jew stood in wonder. "If a cow, who doesn't talk or have brains, could still recognize his owner, how much more so should I, who have a brain, recognize my Creator, the one above!" Immediately, the non-Jew converted and became a Jew. He learned our holy Torah and is known as 'Yochanan ben Torata.' The Rama writes that this cow was a reincarnation of Vashti the Queen! She refused to work on Shabbat and gave the work to the Jewish women. The Jewish owner of the cow knew this secret, and therefor he sold his cow, so that it would not rest after all 'it', (Vashti) had done to the Jewish women. The non-Jew who converted was a reincarnation of Achashverosh. When he converted, both he and the cow, Vashti, had repaired the deeds that had been committed long ago in the kingdom of Persia.

The Midrash Rabba writes that Mordechai ha Yehudi, after he had heard the decree of Haman, gathered together all the children who learned Torah, who were pure of soul, and began to teach them Torah. While he was teaching them, Haman entered the Beit Midrash in order to take him according to the command of the king, to lead him on the horse of the king in the king's garments. Mordechai thought Haman came to kill him, however Haman came over to him and asked him, 'What are you teaching the children?' Mordechai answered him that he was teaching the portion of the grain offerings brought in the Beit HaMikdash. Haman said, The 'kometz' or portion of your hand, ie; the learning of Torah you perform now, is worth more than the 10,000 shekels silver I gave to Achashverosh.' The Ari'zal writes in Sha'ar HaGilgulim that the power of Haman HaRasha which had enabled him to succeed in bringing such a difficult decree against the Jews was actually from the power of the holy sparks that had been hidden in the soul of Haman. And with this holy power, he had come to attack to the Jews. But from where did he derive this power? From the spark of the soul of the holy sage of the Talmud, Rabbi Shmuel bar Shilat, that was embedded in his soul. The Gemara writes about Rabbi Shmuel bar Shilat that he had been a school teacher who was completely dedicated to imbuing his students with the holiness of Torah and mitzvot. And this is why Mordechai's first response to Haman's decree was to gather the school children together to learn Torah. Because that was Rabbi Shmuel bar Shilat's mitzvah, and it was the power of this mitzvah that *extracted* the sparks from the soul of Haman. And because of this, Haman lost the power of holiness hidden in his soul, and from this point on, Haman's downfall continued until his death, and the fall of all the enemies of the Jews. As it was in those days, so shall it be in our days as well.