



## Defending Torah Secrets & Reincarnation

*By Rabbi Ariel Bar Tzadok  
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**“So that you may know that not on bread alone does a man live, but on all that comes forth from the Mouth of HaShem does a man live.” (Dev. 8:3)**

Parashat Ekev is often used by the holy Mekubalim to explain the secret Torah teachings about reincarnation. In light of recent statements made by HaRav HaGaon Ovadiah Yosef regarding reincarnation, I thought it wise to address the subject in brief. Yet, first a short introduction about Sitrei Torah (the secrets of Torah) in general is appropriate.

All Poskim (Halakhic authorities) agree that the secrets (sodot) of the Torah were revealed by G-d at Mt. Sinai along with the other three methods of Torah understanding, pshat (simplicity), remez (implications) and drash (moralisms). Together these four are referred to throughout Torah literature as the PaRDeS.

The validity and authenticity of the Sitrei Torah (secrets of Torah) is undeniable in all Torah faithful (Orthodox) communities. It is widely said by many Poskim, Ashkenazi and Sephardi alike, that one who denies the authenticity of the Sitrei Torah is as one who denies the entire Torah. Such a denier is to be considered an outcast.

See our KosherTorah essay on this subject that documents all the opinions, [http://www.koshertorah.com/Kabbalah\\_in\\_Halakha.pdf](http://www.koshertorah.com/Kabbalah_in_Halakha.pdf).

In the past century, secular skeptics have arisen who have dared to cast aspersions on the holy teachings of the Sitrei Torah. These secular so-called scholars claim that there are no authentic ancient references to anything mystical in Judaism. Yet, the scholarly evidence is so overwhelmingly against their foolish viewpoints that their so-called scholarly objections are revealed for what they are - secular anti-religious prejudice.

The works of secular anti-religious so-called scholars such as Gershom Sholem of Hebrew University are best sent to the refuse heap than to a library. Everything that that man has written is full of errors and his personal prejudices. Sholem has done horrible damage to the holiness of the mystical traditions of Judaism. Barukh HaShem, Hebrew University has other scholars today who are much more professional and respectful of Torah.



Over the centuries, there have even been one or two Rabbis who have compromised their souls by speaking out against the authenticity of holy Sitrei Torah. If you wish, try to find out who they are or what they taught and you will have to search rather deep. The Poskim have agreed to blot out their names and their false teachings from the collective teachings of Israel.

One of the sacred teachings of the Sitrei Torah is called Torat HaGilgul (the Torah of reincarnation). This set of teachings was known throughout Biblical times and subtle hints are made to it throughout the TaNaKh (Bible) and all later Torah literature. So wide spread was the knowledge about Torat HaGilgul that reference to it is to be found even among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Christians may find it objectionable, but even their religion originally believed in reincarnation and reference to it is subtly made in their Avon Gilyon (Christian Bible).

In our many sins and in fulfillment of prophecy, one of the punishments decreed upon Israel from Heaven, after the destruction of the Temple, was that there would be a famine for the word of HaShem. After over a thousand years of the mystical teachings being widespread, the Divine edict was for them to be concealed for over a thousand years. Thus from a period soon after the writing of the Mishna by Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi, the sacred teachings of mystical Torah were removed from any type of public exposure. The holy Zohar, which records the teachings of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai some fifty years after the Temple's destruction was included in this edict. The Zoharic writings were only to be edited and published in Spain in 1290.

During the time of the formations of both the Yerushalmi and Bavli Talmuds, the mystical teachings of Torah became known as the Sitrei (secrets of) Torah. Access to them was limited to only those small groups who were entrusted to safeguard them throughout the centuries. During this time, all Rabbinic literature, especially the Talmud Bavli, makes numerous hints to these secrets. Indeed, to this day, all the secrets of the Torah can be found in the dapim (pages) of the Talmud Bavli – if one knows how to break the secret codes to unravel them.

Such holy Rabbanim as HaRav Yitzhak Haver and HaRav Yosef Haim have written works revealing only the smallest sample of mystical Talmud. Indeed, the Talmud Bavli is the greatest of all mystical (Kabbalistic) texts, greater than even the Zohar. Yet to the majority, the mystical teachings of Talmud Bavli (and Torah in general), to this day, remain an enigma and a mystery.

During the time of the edict of silence many Rabbanim overtly avoided any discussion of the Sitrei Torah. RaMBaM is the case in point. Long championed as the father of rationalism (and thus the antagonist of mysticism) RaMBaM himself was very well aware



of the secrets of the Torah. RaMBaM used Greek philosophy as his vessel to explain the secrets of the Torah in a permissible manner in his work, the Moreh Nebukhim (The Guide to the Perplexed). This is evident from the writings of Rabbi Avraham Abulafia.

RaMBaM's mystical knowledge also is evident in his Hilkhot Yesodei Torah (the laws of the Foundations of Torah). Indeed, in this work, RaMBaM revealed knowledge about the 10 Angelic orders that has no other source in Torah literature other than in the holy Zohar, a work that was not to be published for another 50 years. Our holy Rabbis have always known how to keep a secret and at the same time let us know that indeed there was a secret being kept.

Reference our KosherTorah.com essay on RaMBaM and the Kabbalah at <http://www.koshertorah.com/PDF/rambam.pdf>.

With regards to reincarnation, there is a statement made in the writings of HaRav Saadiah Gaon (some three hundred years before RaMBaM) denying its legitimacy. Some individuals have latched onto this statement to condemn Torat HaGilgul. Yet, in my opinion, there is very good reason why he wrote what he did, although he himself knew otherwise.

First, as leader of the Jewish nation under Moslem rule, HaRav Saadiah Gaon would have endangered the lives of all Jews if he publicly embraced a mystical teaching which the Moslem authorities had branded as apostate (as did Christian Europe). Second, there was no reason to defend this mystical teaching at that time because it was under a ban of secrecy. HaRav Saadiah Gaon couldn't have spoken about it in public even if he wanted to. We have many of HaRav Saadiah Gaon's mystical writings. History clearly documents his mastery of Torah mysticism. Therefore, his words denying the legitimacy of reincarnation have to be understood with the context of his times and his place.

Now let us explain in brief the teachings of reincarnation based upon the teachings found in Sha'ar HaMitzvot, Parashat Ekev and other writings of the Ari'zal, as well as from Sefer Minhat Yehuda of Rabbi Yehuda Fatiya.

On KosherTorah.com we have the following essays on this topic that will surely interest you: "The Secrets of Reincarnation" (<http://www.koshertorah.com/gilgul.html>) and "The Teachings of Rabbi Yehuda Fatiya" (<http://www.koshertorah.com/fatiyah.pdf>).

HaShem created in his universe an infinite numbers of souls, referred to prior to their original descent into this world as "nitzotzei kedusha" (sparks of holiness). As explained in the Ari'zal's lectures on the topics of the "Shattering of the Vessels" and "The Fall of the Primordial Kings" many of these sparks of holiness fell from their lofty heights in holiness and descended into the pits of the netherworlds. All fallen souls are given the



opportunity rise again to their original heights of holiness and to be stand before their Creator. Yet, this time, they will have earned their place and can, therefore, never fall again. Yet, in order to achieve this lofty status, souls have to work hard in order to earn it.

HaShem created His universe to operate under the forces of good and evil, reward and punishment, blessing and curse. When we obey HaShem's Will we contribute to the evolution of the universe. When we (souls) obey HaShem's commandments in the Torah, we are rewarded with good and blessings. We ascend the ladder of holiness. Unfortunately, the opposite is also true. When a soul violates HaShem's mitzvot, instead of reward there is punishment, instead of good there is evil. That soul descends further into the pit.

When a soul incarnates as a human being, even more so a Jew, it is given the opportunity to greatly enhance its spiritual stature. If the Gentile soul fully observes the Sheva Mitzvot D'benei Noah (seven universal laws), then the soul graduates from that level and is promoted to the next level. HaShem sends the soul back to Earth as a Jew. In this way the soul can perform even more mitzvot and rise to even higher levels.

Such was the case of Eliezer, the servant of Avraham Avinu. During the days of Avraham, Eliezer was a Caananite. Yet, due to his righteousness, he merited to be reincarnated, in the days of Moshe Rabbeynu, as a member of the tribe of Yehuda. Eliezer reincarnated as Caleb Ben Yefuneh. His soul later incarnated higher and higher until he was eventually a Kohen Gadol (Zecharia, the High Priest) and years later a Master Kabbalist (Rabbi Moshe Cordevero).

*(Reference Sha'ar HaPesukim of the Ari'zal, I have this material available in translation in a recorded lesson entitled, "The Reincarnations of Eliezer, Servant of Abraham" available in our KosherTorah online store, item #M0015).*

Alas, in our many sins, just as souls can evolve upward in Kedusha (holiness) so can they descend into tumah (uncleanness). When this occurs, HaShem can punish a human soul by incarnating it into a non-human form. Indeed, a human soul can incarnate into anything that HaShem has created. HaShem has placed fallen human souls into animals of all kinds, into plants and even into rocks, water, sand and dirt. Each of these places is to act as a prison for the soul, each in accordance to the sins it performed.

The fallen soul is destined by Divine edict to stay trapped in its non-human form with all its memories of being human for a specified amount of time. It is said that this form of punishment is most hard to bear and the most painful punishment of all. Yet, although HaShem is a G-d of Justice, He is also a merciful and compassionate G-d. He has given



into the hands of the righteous souls the opportunity to redeem the souls of the fallen sinners. The righteous do this by performing a basic down to earth mitzvah of daily eating and saying a Berakha (blessing) over one's food.

Indeed, the reason why Berakhot (blessings) were ordained to be said in precise ritual fashion (Barukh Atah HaShem Elokeynu Melekh HaOlam etc...) is because the words contain a secret code that is used to help elevate fallen souls that are entrapped in the foods that we eat.

Human souls are often reincarnated into animals. Of these, kosher animals are purchased by Jews, slaughtered according to Torah Law and eaten as part of a seudat mitzvah (festive meal). We have stories told about many Rabbanim who recognized within an animal the soul of a fallen Jew, who would then purchase the animal for kosher slaughter.

The holy Rabbanim saw with Divine inspiration that such a fate was the destined rectification for the fallen soul. Indeed, once the animal is kosher slaughtered and is eaten with appropriate blessings before and after, the soul therein finds rest in the Heavenly spheres. However, this only occurs when the officiating Rav knows the proper meditations to elevate the soul along its journey.

So important is the eating of meat as a spiritual ritual of soul rectification that the Gemara has taught that an Am HaAretz (an unlearned individual) is forbidden to eat meat. The underlying secret message in the Gemara is that the mere eating of meat for the sake of physical pleasure does not release the souls incarnated within. Indeed, one who eats for mere physical pleasure instead of for spiritual reasons can end up harming souls, not helping them. The penalty for such a spiritual blemish is midah k'neged midah (measure for measure). Guess who gets reincarnated as a cow next time?

Human souls, including Jews can also reincarnate in any other form of matter. A soul can return in a piece of fruit or in a potato, in a glass of water or in a piece of pizza. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us that when we eat we perform the mitzvah of pidyon shibuyim (redemption of captives). We must recite our berakhot with full intention and also keep in mind, if not verbally state the following small prayer – “HaShem, may it be Your Will that any souls incarnated in the food that I am about to eat be rectified and elevated to their holy source above.” In this way we assist in redeeming fallen souls and keep ourselves away from being blemished.

The fallen soul becomes absorbed into the one eating. When that one performs a mitzvah using the strength gaining from the food eaten, the fallen soul is transformed into the mitzvah and thus ascends above along with it. The soul has now been elevated. Nonetheless, while it has been cleansed of specific previous sins, it still has no merits to

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speak of. Thus, HaShem allows the soul to return to Earth to acquire for itself merit by the performance of mitzvot.

However, if the soul has any left-over judgement still hanging over it from other previous lives, then HaShem will send to the soul trials and travails in its lifetime until the Heavenly slate has been cleared. Thus, even if a soul is perfectly righteous in this lifetime, such as Job, bad things can still happen to it, to purify it of previous sins. This is the secret of why the righteous suffer. (Job was the reincarnation of the Terah, the father of Avraham Avinu. Terah served idols. Job was punished for what he did as Terah, although as Job he was guiltless. Nonetheless, once his spiritual account was settled G-d again blessed him in full). It was in reference to this that HaRav Ovadiah Yosef made mention, when his words were purposely misinterpreted by a hostile secular Israeli media many years ago with a remark about why so many suffered during the Holocaust.

Thus, our parasha teaches us, “man does not live by bread alone, but on all that comes forth from the Mouth of HaShem.” What comes forth from the “Mouth of HaShem” is the rectification of souls. These accompany our physical food. Thus, we must elevate our physical eating to being a spiritual act. Indeed, the Ben Ish Hai and others have full orders of learning and mystical prayers to be recited at meal times.

We must always remember that our dinner tables are altars to HaShem and our meals are like sacrifices to Him. If we keep this in mind as we eat, we elevate fallen souls incarnate in our food and we elevate our own souls as well.