

Fascinating INSIGHTS

כ"ו תמוז תשפ"ו
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A book about languages

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When Fathers Nurse

The gemara¹ records that there was a person whose wife passed away, leaving behind a son who required nursing. Lacking the means to hire a wet nurse, he was unable to care for the child in the normal manner. A miracle was performed for him and he was enabled to nurse his own son through his own milk!

The Rema Mipano² explains that this man had his origins in Mordechai who came to him through soul migration, as the Midrash³ tells us that Mordechai himself nursed Esther providing for her with his own milk!

How did Mordechai have the ability to nurse?

Adam Harishon was a collective, cosmic soul that contained the spiritual sparks of those who would later exist. These souls were divided according to the limbs and parts of Adam's body. Mordechai's soul was from the chest of Adam. We find a hint to this in the words מְרֹדְכַי, Mordechai's uncle,⁴ as the word מְרֹדְכַי is written without the vuv. As a result the word can be read as מִדְּ, referring to the part of the body where one nurses. This is where Mordechai was sourced. This explains how he had the capability of nursing.⁵

Hidden Perfection

The words תינוק, קינות and תיקון share the same letters. What message is being conveyed here?

There is a very important message being relayed in these words. And that is, even though a young age and the experience is one of קינות (lamentation) there is still a deeper, hidden dimension in which his soul reaches its תיקון, rectification. Every soul is sent into this world with a specific mission—its own precise “job.” If that mission is fulfilled, then even within a short life it is considered rectification.

There is also a subtle allusion in the language itself: the word קינות contains a bent or constricted *nun*, reflecting limitation and what appears unfinished (תינוק also contains this *nun*, as it also

נ

reflects this idea of limitation and being unfinished). By contrast, the word תיקון has an elongated and expanded *nun*—something that stretches beyond its original bounds, symbolizing completion, elevation and wholeness. In that sense, *tikkun* represents the soul reaching its full expansion and fulfillment of purpose.

So even within the frame of *kinus*, the inner reality may still be *tikkun*—the soul having accomplished exactly what it needed to, and thereby arriving at its perfected state.

The following story brings out this point. On the eighth day after a certain baby was born, the Baal Shem Tov came to attend the bris. The name given to the child was Yosef. After the bris the mother of the baby began sobbing because her baby had just died.

The Baal Shem Tov explained that that day was the yahrtzeit of R' Yosef Karo, author of the Shulchan Aruch. He was born during an epidemic, which delayed his bris from being performed on the eighth day. It was decided to wait until he was stronger and healthier. Due to this delay of his bris, after death he was unable to ascend to certain levels.



The Baal Shem Tov told the distraught mother, “Your baby was a gilgul of R' Yosef Karo. Be happy that you were chosen to be the mother of the gilgul of R' Yosef Karo.”

Rabbi Alt merited to learn under the tutelage of Rabbi Mordechai Friedlander ztz”l for close to five years and received semichah from Rabbi Zalman Nechemia Goldberg ztz”l. Rabbi Alt has written thousands of Torah articles on numerous topics for various websites and publications and is the author of eleven fascinating and popular books. His writings, many of which have been translated into Yiddish, Hebrew, German, Spanish and French, inspire people across the spectrum of Jewish observance to live with the vibrancy and beauty of Torah. His shiurim can be found on various websites including Kol Halashon's. Rabbi Alt lectures, writes and teaches, and is passionate about inspiring Jews of all levels of observance. He can be reached at yalt3285@gmail.com or on WhatsApp at +972 54 849 5217.

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¹ Shabbos 53b.

² Gilgulei Neshamos, Erech Mordechai.

³ Breishis Rabba 30:8.

⁴ Esther 2:15.

⁵ The words מְרֹדְכַי מְרֹדְכַי, אסתר בת אביחיל דר מרדכי, Esther, the daughter of Avichayil, Mordechai's uncle (Esther 2:15), can be understood

that Esther nursed (מְרֹדְכַי referring to the chest where one is nursed from) from Mordechai (see Manos Aharon, Esther, Chapter 2 in the name of R' Vidal Hatzarfasi in Megilas Setarim).