

# Shvilei Pinches

## Parshas Bechukosai

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### The Significance of the Five “Vav”s Yaakov Ovinu Took from Eliyahu

In this week’s parsha, Bechukosai, we read (Vayikra 26,42): **”וזכרתי את בריתי יעקוב ואף את בריתי יצחק** **”בחמשה מקומות נכתב [יעקוב] מלא ואלהו חסר,** **”ואף את בריתי אברהם אזכור והארץ אזכור”** in order to insure the future redemption of his children: **”בחמשה מקומות יעקב נטל את משמו של אליהו ערבון, שיבוא ויבשר גאולת בניו”**.—in five places in Scriptures, we find Yaakov’s name spelled out in full with a “vav”(as it appears in our verse) and, correspondingly, the name Eliyahu appears without a “vav” in five places; Yaakov took this letter from Eliyahu’s name as a security to guarantee that he would return and herald the redemption of Yaakov’s children.

The Maharal of Prague in Gur Aryeh explains the matter as follows: since the Almighty brought Eliyahu into this world for the sole purpose of ushering in the redemption for Yisroel, his name remains deficient until he has served that purpose. Here are his holy words:

**”וטעם המדרש הזה, רמז לך כי אליה לא נברא רק שיגאל את ישראל ולדבר זה עומד, ומכיון שהוא עומד לזה ולא היה זה עדיין, לפיכך נטל את מאותיות שמו של אליהו לערבון אצל יעקב, כלומר אליה אין שמו שלם... ותשלום שמו אצל יעקב, שבני יעקב עומדים לגאולה, וכשהיו נגאלים אז יהא שמו של אליהו שלם”**.

It is clear that this idea demands deeper analysis: (a) why, of the three Patriarchs, did only Yaakov see fit to snatch the letter “vav” from Eliyahu’s name in order to guarantee the future redemption of Yisroel? (b) why did he specifically choose the letter “vav” from among the letters of Eliyahu’s name, and why precisely five times? (c) why did Yaakov Ovinu feel it necessary to take a security from Eliyahu—is it even conceivable that Yaakov Ovinu doubted that Eliyahu ho’navi, himself, yearned to return and announce to Yisroel the ultimate redemption?

### The Third Beis Homikdash Will Be in the Merit of Yaakov Ovinu

Let us begin by explaining why, specifically, Yaakov Ovinu made an effort to grab a letter from the name of Eliyahu ho’navi zachur la’tov. The Gemora (Pesachim 88.) explains that the three Temples correspond to the three Patriarchs. The first Beis Ho’mikdash was in the merit of Avraham Ovinu, who referred to it as “har,” a mountain; the second bayis was in the merit of Yitzchak, who referred to it as “sadeh,” a field; the third Beis Ho’mikdash will be built in the merit of Yaakov, who called it “bayis,” a house.

We might suggest that this is the reason behind the Zohar ho’kadosh’s (part 1,261:) elucidation of the verse (Michah 7,15): **”כימי צאתך מארץ מצרים אראנו נפלאות”**—as in the days when you left the land of Egypt, I will show it (the people of Yisroel) miracles—just as the Holy One brought Yaakov Ovinu to witness the redemption from Egypt, so, too, He will bring him to witness the future redemption. Based

# Shvilei Pinches

## Parshas Bechukosai

on what we have just learned, this is understood as follows: since the third Beis Ho'mikdash will be built in Yaakov's merit, Hashem will bring him to witness the associated, future redemption. Therefore, it is only fitting that Yaakov be the one to take a security from Eliyahu, in order to guarantee that he will return to announce to Yisroel the redemption and the building of the third Beis Ho'mikdash.

Following this path, let us rise to the next challenge; let us explain why Yaakov took specifically the letter "vav" from Eliyahu's name and, precisely, five times. We are all familiar with the custom observed on the night of the Pesach seder to pour a fifth cup of wine, the cup of Eliyahu, in addition to the four cups that we consume in accordance with Rabbinical decree. A source for this custom is found in the Chok Yaakov (Orach Chaim, 480,6): **"נוהגין באלו מדינות למזוג כוס אחד יותר מהמסובין וקורין אותו כוס של אליהו הנביא".**

A beautiful explanation for this custom is found in the Chasam Sofer's commentary on the Pesach haggadah, based on the Yerushalmi (Pesachim 10,1) and the Midrash (B.R. 88,5). The four cups of wine we consume on the night of Passover, were instituted by our blessed sages to commemorate the four languages of redemption mentioned in parshas va'erah (Shemos 6,6): **והוצאתי, והצלתי, וגאלתי, ולקחתי**. The difficulty, however, is that in the verse immediately following, we find a fifth language of redemption (ibid. 6,8): **"והבאתי"**. So, why didn't the sages institute a fifth cup corresponding to **"והבאתי"**? One solution is that the verse **"והבאתי אתכם אל הארץ"** is mentioned as a reference to the future redemption, when the Holy One will bring Yisroel to the promised-land for all eternity. Since **"והבאתי"** will only be realized in the future, a corresponding fifth cup was not instituted.

Nevertheless, this provides a nice explanation for the widespread Jewish custom to pour a fifth cup referred to as the "cup of Eliyahu." It informs us that we will drink a fifth cup in the future when Eliyahu comes to herald the final redemption—as promised by Hashem with the fifth language of redemption: **"והבאתי אתכם אל הארץ"**. This can be reinforced by the fact that the numerical value of **"והבאתי"** (424) equals **משי"ח ב"ן דו"ד** (358+52+14=424); this is an allusion to the fact that this language of redemption will only be realized with the future redemption and the coming of Moshiach.

Let us return to the words of the prophet cited above (Michah 7,15): **"כימי צאתך מארץ מצרים אראנו נפלאות"**. The prophet compares the future redemption to the redemption from Egypt to teach us that the future redemption will complete, retroactively, the redemption from Egypt. For, what purpose did the previous redemptions serve, if the Almighty doesn't redeem us, chas v'shalom, once and for all, finally and completely? What is the value of the previous redemptions if we, chas v'shalom, are to remain in exile?

Now, with clear vision and joy in our hearts, we can understand why Yaakov Ovinu deliberately took the letter "vav" from Eliyahu's name five times. He is sending Eliyahu a reminder to fulfill the holy mission he was entrusted with—to complete the five languages of redemption which all begin with the letter "vav," **והוצאתי, והצלתי, וגאלתי, ולקחתי, והבאתי**. Although, Eliyahu is only coming to announce the future redemption, corresponding to **"והבאתי"**, he is, in fact, completing all five languages of

# Shvilei Pinches

## Parshas Bechukosai

redemption. For, as just explained, the future redemption will also complete retroactively the four languages of redemption that were realized in Egypt.

### **An Explanation of the Five “Vav”s in the Five Languages of Redemption**

Following this path, let us attempt to resolve our remaining inquiries. It seems apparent, that there must be a deeper connection between the letter “vav” and the five languages of redemption. Each of the five languages of redemption, surely begins with the letter “vav” for a reason.

Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrachi, in his commentary on Rashi, explains that Yaakov took the letter “vav” from Eliyahu’s name on five occasions corresponding to the five books of the Torah. This does not explain, however, why he specifically chose the letter “vav,” rather than any of the other letters of the name Eliyahu.

Let us resolve the matter based on a teaching of the Ohr Ha’Chayim (beginning of Tetzaveh) citing the Zohar Chadash (Bereishis 12:)

**"רבי יוסי בן חלפתא ישב לפני רבי יצחק, אמר לו שמא שמע מר מדוע נתארך כל כך ימי המשיח בגלות זו. אמר לו רבי יצחק, כך שמעתי מרב המנונא סבא, שלש גליות גלו ישראל ונגאלו מהן בזכות הג' אבות, אבל מגלות הרביעית יגאלו ישראל בזכות משה.**

**בא ואראה לך, שלא גלו ישראל אלא על ביטול תורה, שנאמר ויאמר ה' על עזבם את תורת. אמר הקב"ה, בגליות הראשונות חזרו בזכות אברהם יצחק ויעקב, עכשיו הם חטאו בתורה שנתתי למשה, כשישובו ויעסקו בתורתו, בזכות משה אני גואלם."**

Rabbi Yossi ben Chalafta questions why the current exile is lasting so long. Rabbi Yitzchak answers, in the name of Rabbi Himnuna, that the first three redemptions were in the merit of the three Patriarchs; the fourth redemption, however, will be in the merit of Moshe. He adds that since this exile is the result of forsaking the Torah which Hashem gave to Moshe, Hashem will redeem them when they occupy themselves once again with his Torah; He will do so in the merit of Moshe.

The Ohr Ha’Chayim concludes: **"ולזה נתארך הגלות, כי כל עוד שאין עוסקים בתורה ובמצוות אין משה חפץ**—this is the reason for the lengthy exile; so long as Yisroel do not occupy themselves with Torah and mitzvos, Moshe is unwilling to redeem a people who are remiss in Torah study.

### **The Future Redemption Will Be in the Merit of the Oral Law**

We have also learned from our sages of blessed memory, that the future redemption depends on the merit of studying Torah she’b’al peh, the oral law. This is expressed in the Midrash (V.R. 7,3): **"אין כל הגליות הללו מתכנסות אלא בזכות משניות"**

## Shvilei Pinches

### Parshas Bechukosai

The holy, gaon Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld points out an amazing allusion in the verse (Isaiah 1,27): **"ציון במשפט תפדה ושביה בצדקה"**—Zion will be redeemed through justice, and those who return to her through righteousness. The main components of Torah she'b'al peh are the Talmud Bavli and the Talmud Yerushalmi which are alluded to in the verse as follows: **ציון במשפט תפדה** has the same numerical value as **תלמוד ירושלמי** (1076), while **ושביה בצדקה** has the same numerical value as **תלמוד בבלי** (524).

If we combine the message of the Zohar Chadash with that of the Midrash, it is evident that the future redemption is dependent on the committed study of Torah she'b'al peh.

Additionally, it is well known that complete Torah study requires the appropriate combination and balance of Torah she'b'chsav with Torah she'b'al peh. It is impossible to fulfill any mitzvah of the Torah she'b'chsav fully without the elucidation revealed in the Torah she'b'al peh, based on the thirteen hermeneutic principles. This also explains why Yaakov took the letter "vav," which has a numerical value of six, from Eliyahu's name five times—to suggest the proper combination and balance of the five books of the Torah with the six orders of the Mishnah. Each of the five books of the written Torah is elaborated upon by the six orders of the oral Torah—this truly represents five times "vav."

We find a parallel combination of five and six in parshas Terumah. The curtains of goat hair covering the Mishkan were five curtains opposite six curtains, as it is written (Shemos 26,9): **"וחברת את חמש"** **היריעות לבד ואת שש היריעות לבד"**. The Targum Yonatan (ibid.) comments that the set of five attached curtains corresponded to the five books of the Torah, whereas the set of six attached curtains corresponded to the six orders of the Mishnah.

By taking the letter "vav," which has a numerical value of six, from Eliyahu ho'navi's name five times as a security, Yaakov Ovinu intended to insure that Eliyahu would come to herald the future redemption to Yisroel—which will come in the merit of the concerted study of the six orders of the Mishnah which expound upon the five books of the Torah.

Finally, it is apparent to us why the Holy One Blessed be He, chose to begin each of the five languages of redemption with the letter "vav": **ו'הוצאתי, ו'הצלתי, ו'גאלתי, ו'לקחתי, ו'הבאתי**—we are being taught that the fulfillment and completion of all of the redemptions, which will be realized with the future redemption, will come only in the merit of a concerted balance between the five books of the Torah and the six orders of the Mishnah.