

# Shvilei Pinchas

## Parshas Pinchas

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### **We Read About Pinchas Who Is Eliyahu During the Three Weeks To Persuade Him to Come and Herald the Redemption**

This coming shabbos, we read parshas Pinchas. In a normal, non-leap year, parshas Pinchas always falls during the first of the “three weeks,” between the seventeenth of Tamuz and the ninth of Av. During these three weeks, it is incumbent upon all Jews to mourn and lament the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and to daven for the final and complete redemption. Seeing as these things do not occur by mere coincidence, there is, obviously, an intimate connection between parshas Pinchas and the “three weeks.”

Concerning this fact, the holy, Opter Rav, zy”a, writes in “Ohev Yisroel” that since all of the moadim are mentioned in this parsha, it was instituted to read parshas Pinchas during the “three weeks.” By so doing, we reinforce our hopes that these days, too, will soon be transformed into days of rejoicing and happiness as predicted by the prophet (Zechariah 8,19): **“כה אמר ה' צבאות צום הרביעי וצום החמישי וצום השביעי וצום העשירי יהיה לבית יהודה לששון ולשמחה ולמועדים טובים והאמת והשלום אהבו.”**

This connection between parshas Pinchas and the “three weeks” ties in beautifully with the opening verses of the parsha: **“וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר, פינחס בן אלעזר בן אהרן הכהן השיב את חמתי מעל בני ישראל, בקנאו את קנאתי בתוכם ולא כליתי את בני ישראל בקנאתי, לכן אמור ליתן שלום ביני לבין בני ישראל, שנתת שלום ביני לבין בני ישראל וביני בעולם הזה, אף לעתיד לבא אתה הוא שעתיד לבוא יום ה' וגו' והשיב לב אבות על בנים.”**—Pinchas’ zealous actions spared Yisroel from Hashem’s wrath; as a reward, Hashem gives him His covenant of peace.

The Targum Yonasan explains: **“את בריתי שלום, האנא גזר ליה ית קימי שלם, ואעבדיניה מלאך קיים ויחי לעלמא, למבשרא גאולתא בסוף יומיא”**—the covenant of peace took the form of Pinchas being made into an angel, living forever and announcing the redemption in the end of days. This matter is presented at greater length in the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni here):

**“לכן אמור הנני נותן לו את בריתי שלום - אמר רבי שמעון בן לקיש, פנחס הוא אליהו, אמר לו הקב"ה, אתה נתת שלום בין ישראל וביני בעולם הזה, אף לעתיד לבא אתה הוא שעתיד לבוא יום ה' וגו' והשיב לב אבות על בנים.”**

The yalkut adds an important detail for us—Pinchas and Eliyahu hanavi are one and the same; just as he facilitated shalom, peace, between the Almighty and Yisroel at that time, so, too, he will serve this function once again in the future.

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The rationale for reading parshas Pinchas at the onset of the “three weeks” is now more evident. At a time of mourning over the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and Yisroel’s extended golus, it provides tremendous chizuk to recall the merit of Pinchas, Eliyahu, who willingly put his life on the line for the honor of the Almighty and in order to protect Yisroel from annihilation. We also intend to persuade him to fulfill that which Hashem promised him: “הנני נותן לו את בריתי שלום”—that he will appear to herald the redemption, swiftly, in our days, Amen.

### The Purpose of Creation Is that Man Should Dwell in Both Worlds

Now, that we have established that we wish to invoke the merit of Pinchas, who is Eliyahu, and to hasten the arrival of the final redemption, let us take a closer look at the promise Hashem made to Pinchas. We have introduced the commentary of the Targum Yonatan that this promise conveys the fact that Pinchas will live forever and that he will be the messenger announcing the future redemption. This requires further clarification. The possuk alludes to the fact that he will facilitate “shalom” between Yisroel and their Father in Heaven; however, where do we find an allusion to the fact that he will live forever without dying?

Let us proceed by presenting an important principle gleaned from the holy teachings of the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh (Bereishis 3,14) which he expands upon (beginning of Bechukotai) in one of his forty-two elucidations (#20) of the possuk (Vayikra 26,3): “אם בחוקותי תלכו”. Here are his elegant words:

“כשברא ה' אדם הראשון בעולם הזה לא בראו לשבת בעולם הזה לעולמי עד כשלא יחטא, שאם כן אדרבה ירידה היא לו ושפלות היא, כי תכלית המקווה הוא בעולם העליון ששמה יקצור אשר זרע, אלא היתה הכוונה כי עלה יעלה לשמים ולאוצרות החיים בעת אשר יחפוץ, ויהיה כמי שדר בבית ועליה על גבה, וכשירצה לעלות ולהשתעשע יעלה, כמו שמצינו שעלה אליהו בסערה השמימה (מלכים ב ב יא), ועל ידי החטא הוצרך להפשיט עורו מעליו ויניח הגוף בעולם הזה.”

Hashem did not create man to dwell solely down below in this world; that would have been demeaning and would have constituted a spiritual decline for man. Rather, the intent was that man could reap the benefits of both worlds; for, his ultimate purpose and rewards lie in the world above. The situation would have been analogous to a person whose house contains a ground level with a second story above it; he would have had the freedom to climb to the second level and enjoy its treasures at will. This was, indeed, the situation witnessed with Eliyahu, who ascended to heaven in a blaze of fire; however, due to man’s sin, he was forced to relinquish this ability and freedom, and remains confined to his earthly body.

It occurred to me to elaborate upon the tremendous benefit it would be for man to be able to dwell in both worlds, like one who lives in a two-story house. The Agra D’Kallah (parshas Behaalotcha) presents the words of the Maggid of Mezritsch, zy”a, on the possuk (Bamidbar 10,2): “עשה לך שתי חצוצרות כסף” —rather than “make for yourself two silver trumpets,” he interprets this as saying “make for yourself two half-forms (a play

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on the Hebrew word for trumpets) that will long (a play on the Hebrew word for silver) for one another.”

The Agra D’Kalla explains the Maggid’s message as follows: **”על כן תקרא הנשמה שתי חצאי צורות, חציה למעלה וחציה למטה... וזה עשה לך שתי חצוצרות, היינו השתי חצאי צורות, כסף שיהיו משתוקקים זה לזה, זה לקבל וזה להשפיע ויהיה מלכות שמים שלימה, והכל על ידי קיום המצוות”**. Our holy sources have taught us that the neshomeh came down from on high to clothe itself in a physical form; nevertheless, the essence of the neshomeh remains above in the heavens. So, the neshomeh encompasses two half-forms—one residing above, while the other resides below. The intent is that they long for one another and operate together to achieve the fulfillment of the sovereignty of Heaven—one receives while the other provides the spiritual influence and bounty.

### **The Two Parts of the Neshomeh Illuminate One Another**

Upon closer examination, we find that each of these two partners, these two half-forms of the neshomeh, possess an advantage and a disadvantage. The heavenly half-form always remains pure and untainted by the sins of the body; however, it is unable to perform mitzvos, since it lacks the bodily limbs. On the other hand, the half-form of the neshomeh that is clothed by a physical body, possesses the luxury of being able to engage in Torah study and to perform mitzvos; yet, it suffers the blemishes and disgrace that result when the body sins.

This, then, is the meaning of the homiletic interpretation: “make for yourself two half-forms that long for one another.” If the bodily half-form serves Hashem honorably and enhances its spirituality and kedushah, the two half-forms will long to unite and illuminate one another. The lower form will illuminate the form above with the Torah and mitzvos acquired with its physical tools; while the heavenly form, will illuminate the earthbound form with the brilliance and splendor it is exposed to above. However, if the bodily neshomeh is tainted by sins, a barrier will develop between the two parts of the neshomeh. The essence of the neshomeh above longs to remain pure and unsullied by the sins of the body below; therefore, it will shun any relationship with its sullied partner below.

We now understand the potential benefits of being able to live in both worlds—like one who lives in a two-story house. The two halves of the neshomeh, living in their respective universes, would be free to interact at will and share in each other’s light. Unfortunately, the sin of the tree of knowledge created a fatal separation between these two entities. Although, they long to illuminate and unite with one another, their relationship has become a distant one. As things stand, the two half-forms of the neshomeh are only able to unite fully by means of death—when the earthbound neshomeh leaves its body and reunites with the essential neshomeh above.

### **Eliyahu Dwells in Both Worlds**

Looking back now at the words of the Ohr HaChaim quoted above, we find, that in his view, Eliyahu hanavi merited this lofty ability—to dwell in both worlds like one who lives in a two-story house.

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This understanding ties in wonderfully with the following Midrash: [אפשר] "אם יאמר לך אדם, שאלו לא חטא אדם הראשון ואכל מאותו העץ היה חי וקים לעולם, אמור לו אתה, כבר היה אליהו שלא חטא והוא חי וקים לעולם"—if someone says to you, had Adom harishon not sinned by eating from that tree, he would have been able to live forever; you should respond that, in fact, there was Eliyahu, who did not sin, and he does live on for all eternity. We learn from here, that Eliyahu hanavi is living testimony that had Adom harishon not partaken of the tree of knowledge, he would have lived forever. Based on what we have already established, Eliyahu does, indeed, dwell in both worlds and comes and goes as he pleases—akin to Adom harishon before the sin.

We can take this a step further, based on a teaching in the Zohar hakadosh (Vayakhel 197.) that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai expounded on the possuk (Mishlei 30,4): "מי עלה שמים וירד"—who ascended to heaven and then came back down—is referring to Eliyahu. Nevertheless, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai questions the logistics of Eliyahu's coming and going, seeing as heaven does not tolerate even the tiniest amount of physicality.

RaShbY explains, therefore, that when Eliyahu goes up to heaven, he divests himself of his bodily clothing and leaves it in a designated place between heaven and earth; he then adorns himself in a spiritual attire so that he may ascend and comingle with the malachim. Conversely, when he returns to this world on a Heavenly mission, he divests himself of his spiritual attire, between heaven and earth, and he reclaims his pure, physical body so that he can comingle with human beings. This is the meaning of the statement: "מי עלה שמים וירד" - זה אליהו—no man other than Eliyahu has ascended to heaven in the form of an angel and then returned to earth in human form.

Once again, we have found clear evidence that Eliyahu dwells in both worlds and possesses both spiritual and physical attires which he dons as necessary and as is appropriate. This is truly akin to the state of Adom harishon before the sin who lived in both worlds—like someone living in a two-story house.

This, now, provides us with an answer to one of our original questions: where do we find in the Holy One's promise to Pinchas—"Behold! I give him My covenant of peace"—an allusion to the fact that he will live on forever? The sin of the tree of knowledge created a separation and barrier between the two parts of the neshomeh; however, Pinchas, who is Eliyahu, merited to receive the covenant of peace from the Holy One, the unique ability to make peace and reunite the two half-forms of the neshomeh. By living in both worlds, able to go upstairs and downstairs at will like someone living in a two-story house, he is living in a state of Adom harishon before the sin; this is our clear proof that his existence is eternal.

### **He Shall Restore the Heart of Fathers to Children and the Heart of Children to Their Fathers**

Continuing on this path, let us now try to understand how the promise: "Behold! I give him My covenant of peace," also conveys the message that Pinchas, who is Eliyahu, will merit to herald the future redemption to Yisroel. We will begin by explaining what we have learned in the Mishnah (Ediyos 8,7):

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**“אמר רבי יהושע, מקובל אני מרבן יוחנן בן זכאי ששמע מרבו ורבו מרבו, הלכה למשה מסיני שאין אליהו בא לטמא ולטהר לרחק ולקרב, אלא לרחק המקורבין בזרוע ולקרב המרחקין בזרוע.”**

It was transmitted to Moshe at Sinai that Eliyahu will not come to clarify matters of tumah and taharah, impurity and purity, but, rather, to distance those that were not meant to come close and to reunite those that have become distant.

The Arizal teaches us an important principle (Sefer HaLikutim, Haazinu) concerning the future redemption; that redemption is dependent upon rectifying the sin of Adom harishon. This also explains why the decree of death will no longer be in effect, because the world will return to the state of Adom harishon before the sin.

It is easy to understand, now, why Hashem specifically chose Eliyahu hanavi to herald the future redemption to Yisroel, as it is written in the words of the prophet (Malachi 3,23): **“הנה אנכי שולח לכם את אליהו הנביא לפני בוא יום ה' הגדול והנורא, והשיב לב אבות על בנים ולב בנים על אבותם”**—“Behold, I send you Eliyahu hanavi, before the great and awesome day of Hashem; he shall restore the heart of fathers to children and the heart of children to their fathers.” Who better than Eliyahu hanavi—who merited to dwell in both worlds like someone living in a two-story house—to have the power and kedushah to positively influence Yisroel to also merit this two-world existence?!

We can now interpret the possuk as follows: the purpose of sending Eliyahu hanavi before the day of redemption is because “he shall restore the heart of fathers to children and the heart of children to their fathers”—“fathers” refers to the essential neshomehs that remained in heaven; whereas, the “children” represent the offshoots of the neshomehs that descended to this world in order to take on a bodily form. When Eliyahu arrives to announce the redemption: “he shall restore the heart of fathers to children”—by uniting the essential neshomehs, the fathers, with their offshoots, the children, who will provide the latter with their heavenly illumination—“and the heart of children to their fathers”—the offshoots of the neshomehs, the children, will illuminate the essential neshomehs, their fathers, with the light of their Torah and mitzvos.

We can now return to explain the Mishnah: It was transmitted to Moshe at Sinai that Eliyahu will not come to clarify matters of tumah and taharah, impurity and purity, but, rather, to distance those that were not meant to come close and to reunite those that have become distant. We can interpret this as reference to the sin of the tree of knowledge which was due in great part to the serpent becoming too close with Chava, i.e. those that were meant to remain at a distance came too close.

The Gemorah explains (Shabbos 146.): **“שבשעה שבא נחש על חוה הטיל בה זוהמא”**—this undesirable and inappropriate relationship between the serpent and Chava left a perverse stain that resulted in distancing those that were meant to remain close and in touch, i.e. the essential neshomeh above was forced to distance itself from its counterpart below, and Adom harishon was no longer able to dwell in both worlds like living in a two-story house.

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The Mishnah teaches that Eliyahu will come and restore the proper order. In other words, he will reestablish the appropriate distance between the serpent and mankind—thus, rescinding the decree of death—and will help reunite the two parts of the neshomeh that became distant from one another due to the deceitful serpent. This was all part of Hashem's promise to Pinchas: **”הנני נותן לו את בריתי שלום”**—Behold! I give him My covenant of peace—he will merit to bring peace to Yisroel and reunite the two parts of the neshomeh when he arrives to herald the future redemption. This will represent the fulfillment of the possuk: **”והשיב לב אבות על בנים ולב בנים על אבותם”**—“he shall restore the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers”—swiftly, in our days, Amen.