



”לכן אמור הנני נותן לו את בריתי שלום”

## Pinchas Is Eliyahu HaNavi Who Came from the Hair of Adam HaRishon Who Did Not Partake of the Eitz HaDa’as and Did Not Taste Death or Burial

This week’s parsha, parshas Pinchas, always falls during the first week of the three weeks of Bein HaMetzarim in non-leap years. This is the period designated for mourning the churban, lamenting the galus, and expressing our yearning for the future geulah. As the Gemara (Megillah 31b) teaches us, Ezra HaSofer arranged the weekly cycle of Torah-readings with precise intent. It is plausible that he arranged for parshas Pinchas to be read at the beginning of the three weeks, because of what HKB”H promises Pinchas (Eliyahu) at the beginning of the parsha. For his brave act of zealotry, he is rewarded with eternal life and the privilege of announcing to Yisrael the arrival of the complete geulah at the end of days. Here are the pertinent pesukim (Bamidbar 25, 10):

”וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר, פינחס בן אלעזר בן אהרן הכהן השיב את חמתי מעל בני ישראל, בקנאו את קנאתי בתוכם ולא כיליתי את בני ישראל בקנאתי, לכן אמור הנני נותן לו את בריתי שלום.”

Pinchas, the son of Elazar, the son of Aharon HaKohen, turned back My wrath from upon Bnei Yisrael, when he zealously avenged Me among them; so, I did not consume Bnei Yisrael in My vengeance. Therefore, say: Behold! I give him My covenant of peace (“shalom”). The Targum YoNasan provides the following interpretation regarding the words “את בריתי שלום”: **I will establish My covenant of “shalom” with him by making him a living angel (messenger) who will live for all eternity; he will be the one to announce the geulah at the end of time.**

Where in the words “הנני נותן לו את בריתי שלום” does the Targum YoNasan find any suggestion that HKB”H promised Pinchas that he is destined to be Eliyahu HaNavi, to live forever, and to hail in the geulah at the end of days? Let us refer to the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni, Pinchas):

**Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: Pinchas is Eliyahu! HKB”H said to him: You established peace between Yisrael and Me in Olam HaZeh; so, too, le’asid la’vo you will be the one to establish peace between Me and My children. As it says (Malachi 3, 23): “Behold, I send you Eliyahu HaNavi before the coming of the great and awesome day of Hashem. And he will turn back the hearts of fathers with their sons and the hearts of sons with their fathers.”** However, this still does not suggest any promise that he will live forever.

Now, we have learned in the Gemara (Kiddushin 32a) that if a son wishes to correct his father, he must do so with deference and “kavod,” as follows: **”אבא מקרא כתוב—בתורה כך”**—Father, the following passuk is written in the Torah. Accordingly, we can propose that this is why Ezra HaSofer arranged for us to read parshas Pinchas at the start of the three weeks of Bein HaMetzarim. We are politely hinting to our heavenly Father: **”אבא מקרא כתוב בתורה כך”**. It is written that You promised Pinchas that he was destined to become Eliyahu, who would announce to Yisrael the arrival of the complete geulah. So, now, we pray to You, Master of the Universe, to recall Your promise and send us Eliyahu HaNavi with tidings of the final geulah.

Thus, it is fitting for us to examine the holy personage of Eliyahu HaNavi “zachur la’tov,” who is none other than Pinchas ben Elazar. How did his act of zealotry, avenging the honor of Hashem, which prevented the annihilation of Yisrael, warrant this reward? How is not being subjected to death and burial and being privileged to herald in the future geulah a reward of “midah k’neged midah” for his actions?

### “The man called ‘Hairy One’”

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by referring to the Midrash (V.R. 27, 4; K.R. 3, 19): **Were a person to say to you: “Is it plausible that Adam HaRishon not sinned and eaten from that tree, he would have lived and endured forever?” You should say to him: “There has already been Eliyahu, who did not sin, and he lives and endures forever.”** This Midrash teaches us an incredible chiddush! Eliyahu HaNavi is living proof that had Adam HaRishon not partaken of the Eitz HaDa’as, he would have lived forever. The only reason he was condemned to die was because of the sin, as it is written (Bereishis 2, 17): **וְיֹמַעַץ הַדְּעַת טוֹב וְרַע לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי בְיוֹם אֲכָלְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ מוֹת תָּמוּת—**but of the Eitz HaDa’as Tov VaRa, you must not eat thereof, for on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die.

We will attempt to interpret this Midrash in greater depth. How does the fact that Eliyahu HaNavi remains alive forever prove definitively that if not for the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as,” we would live forever? Perhaps, since Eliyahu is Pinchas, the reason he merits eternal life is because he prevented the annihilation of Yisrael by killing Zimri ben Salu. So, let us introduce the words of the divine poet who composed “Eliyahu HaNavi,” which is customarily recited on Motza’ei Shabbas and extols the virtues of Eliyahu: **אִישׁ הַנִּקְרָא בַּעַל שַׁעַר בְּסִמְנֵי, אִישׁ וְאֶזְרָר עוֹר אֶזְרָר בְּמַתְנֵי—the man called Hairy One, because of his appearance; the man with a leather belt girding his loins.**

The source for this depiction is found in the Navi. When the wicked King of Shomron, Achaziah ben Achav, took ill, he sent messengers to seek help from the avodah-zarah of the Pelishtim, Ba’al Zevuv, in Ekron. Eliyahu HaNavi

intercepted them and chastised them for neglecting to pray to HKB”H for a cure. When they returned to Achaziah, he asked them to describe this man who chastised them. Here is their response (Melachim II 1, 8): **וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו אִישׁ בַּעַל שַׁעַר—**they said to him, **“He was a hairy man with a leather belt girded on his waist.”** He (Achaziah) said, **“He is Eliyahu HaTishbi.”**

It is fascinating that both the text of the Navi and the divine poet rely on these two distinguishing characteristics to describe and praise Eliyahu HaNavi. I believe that we can explain this based on the following Midrash (S.R. 40, 3): **While Adam HaRishon was not yet fully formed, HKB”H showed him every single tzaddik that was destined to come from him. Some were associated with Adam’s head; some were associated with his hair; some were associated with his forehead, some with his eyes, some with his nose, some with his ear . . .**

You may know that this is so, for when Iyov sought to argue with HKB”H, and said (Iyov 23, 3): **“If only I knew how to find Him . . . I would present my case to Him.”** HKB”H responded to him, **“You seek to argue with Me?! Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation?”** What is meant by “where”? Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: HKB”H was saying to Iyov, **“Tell Me where your spiritual origin was located (in Adam HaRishon). Was it on his head, on his forehead, or on some other limb of his?”**

### Eliyahu HaNavi Was Rooted in the Untainted Hair of Adam HaRishon

We will now present a precious, illuminating teaching concerning the neshamah of Eliyahu HaNavi from the sefer Misaprim Tehillos Hashem (a commentary on Perek Shirah from a disciple of the Rama of Pano, ztz”l, named Rabbi Chananiah). He refers to an exposition in the Midrash (B.R. 19, 5) related to the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as” (Bereishis 3, 6):

**“And she took of its fruit, and she ate; and she also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.”** The term **“also”** indicates inclusion (of something not mentioned

explicitly). It indicates that **she** also **fed the animals, beasts, and birds. They all obeyed her except for a particular bird named “chol.”** Thus, it is written (Iyov 29, 18): **“My days will be as lengthy as the ‘chol.’”** The students of the Academy of Rabbi Yanai say: **It lives for one thousand years, and at the end of one thousand years, a fire erupts from its nest, consumes it, and leaves behind an egg from which it returns, grows limbs, and lives.**

Based on this, Rabbi Chananiah explains that the neshamah of Eliyahu HaNavi was rooted in the hair on the head of Adam HaRishon that did not partake of the Eitz HaDa’as. In contrast, the neshamah of Iyov was rooted in those hairs that did partake of the forbidden fruit. Let us summarize his sacred remarks:

**There is an ancient teaching that this bird named “chol” never dies. At the end of one thousand years, it bursts into flames and returns to its youth. The same was true of Eliyahu, z”l; he ascended to the heavens in a fiery chariot in a whirlwind. It is known that the nitzotz of Eliyahu came from the hair of the first man, and since the hair is the last to receive nourishment from the food, it stands to reason that the poison of the nachash did not spread there.**

Perhaps the same is true of the “chol” that maintains its prior form. And if you ask, what about Iyov; he was also rooted in the hair, yet he died? We can suggest that perhaps he was the klipah of Eliyahu, z”l; and every part of the perversion of the nachash that reached the hair entered him. Hence, he suffered twofold—both with afflictions and with death.

Thus, we have learned an incredible chiddush. Eliyahu HaNavi originated from the hair of Adam HaRishon that was untainted and unaffected by the sin of eating from the Eitz HaDa’as. As a result, he was not subjected to death and burial, because he was not included in the decree: **“But of the Eitz HaDa’as Tov VaRa, you must not eat thereof, for on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die.”**

We can now comprehend the lesson taught by the

Midrash. If a person wonders and does not believe that Adam HaRishon would have lived for all eternity had he not eaten from the Eitz HaDa’as, point out to him what happened with Eliyahu. As we have learned, he was associated with a part of Adam HaRishon that did not participate in the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as.” Therefore, he lives and endures forever. Thus, we can conclude that had Adam HaRishon not sinned by partaking of the Eitz HaDa’as, he and all of his descendants would have lived and endured forever.

### **The Neshamah of Eliyahu Is Rooted in the Hair on the Neck over the Luz Bone**

It appears that we can expand on this idea based on a passage in the Midrash (ibid. 28, 3) related to the passuk (ibid. 6, 7): **“וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֱמַחָה אֶת הָאָדָם”—Hashem said, “I will obliterate mankind”:**

Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yehotzadak said: Even the “luz bone of the spinal column,” from which HKB”H will cause man to sprout le’asid la’vo, was obliterated. Hadrian, may his bones be crushed, once asked Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya, saying to him: From where will the HKB”H cause man to sprout le’asid la’vo? He answered him: From the “luz of the spinal column.” He asked him: From where do you know this? He said to him: Bring one to me, and I will show you. He ground it in a mill, but it did not become ground up; he placed it in water but it did not dissolve; he incinerated it but it did not consumed by the fire; he placed it on an anvil and began striking it with a hammer; the anvil split and the hammer broke, but it (the luz bone) remained intact.

This begs the question: Where is the “luz” bone—from which “Techiyas HaMeisim” will be initiated—located? We find an answer in the impeccable teachings of our master the Arizal. He asserts that this bone is located at the top of the spinal column, in the neck, opposite where the knot of the tefillin shel rosh sits. This concurs with what is written in Ohr HaChamah on the Zohar hakadosh (Noach 69a) in the name of Rabeinu Chaim Vital:

**וְהַעֲנִין כִּי תַחֲיִית הַמֵּתִים הִיא בְּסוּד אוֹתוֹ הָעֵצִם הַנִּשְׁאָר בְּקֶרֶקַע, וּבִיאֵר**



בזהר כי הוא עצם שמניח בו קשר תפלה של ראש, והטעם כי הוא גבוה מכל הגוף ואינו נהנה מן המאכל, ולכך אין שולט בו ריקבון ומשם נבנה הגוף."

**The secret to "Techiyas HaMeisim" is this bone that remains intact in the ground. The Zohar explains that the knot in the "tefillin shel rosh" is placed opposite this bone. It is located above the rest of the body; it is superior in that it refuses to derive benefit from our daily food intake. Consequently, it is not subject to deterioration and decay; hence, it is the starting point for rebuilding the body.**

Without a doubt, Rabbi Chaim Vital learned this fact from his teacher and master, the Arizal. In fact, in Likutei Torah (Shoftim), the Arizal provides the exact same explanation: "ואמרו רבותינו ז"ל עצם יש באדם במקום קשר תפילין שאינו מתרקב, וממנו יתגדל הגוף לעתיד ונקרא לזו." Our Rabbis of blessed memory taught that there is a bone in a man, at the site of the knot of the tefillin, that does not decay; from it the body will grow in the future; it is called "luz."

The great possek and author of the Pri Megadim quotes the Eliyahu Rabba in Mishbetzot Zahav and elaborates: "עייין אליהו רבא להכי אבר זה אין נפסד וממנו יברא לעתיד לבוא, דאדם הראשון אכל מעץ הדעת ונהנה כל האברים, נגזר עליהם לעפר תשוב, מה שאין כן אבר זה אין לו הנאה כי אם מסעודת מוצאי שבת, ובערב שבת לא נהנה לכך קיים." When Adam HaRishon ate from the Eitz HaDa'as, all of his limbs benefitted; as a consequence, they were doomed to return to dust. This bone, however, which only benefits from the motza'ei Shabbas meal, did not partake of what was consumed on erev Shabbas; consequently, it continues to exist without decay. We should note that the Eliyahu Rabba's source is the great Rabbi Heschel of Cracow, zy"a; his words are brought down by his students in Chanukas HaTorah (Likutim 209).

At this point, I would like to propose a novel theory with the utmost reverence and devotion: The neshamah of Eliyahu HaNavi was rooted in the hair on the back of the neck of Adam HaRishon opposite the "luz" bone, where the knot of the tefillin is placed. Just as the "luz" did not partake of the Eitz HaDa'as, so too, Eliyahu HaNavi, who was rooted in the hair over the "luz," did not partake of the Eitz HaDa'as.

## The Reason Eliyahu HaNavi Is Depicted as the "Hairy One"

Continuing along this path, we will now focus on the two outstanding characteristics of Eliyahu HaNavi. Firstly, he is described as the **"Hairy One."** Now, in the essay for parshas Korach, we presented what the great Rabbi Yehonasan Eybeschutz, zy"a, wrote in Yearos Dvash (Part 1, Drush 6) concerning the reason HKB"H commanded the leviim to have their entire bodies shaven with a razor. He explains that body hair represents the excesses and physical desires that a Jew should shun and avoid. Here is an excerpt from his fascinating remarks:

**A Jew must distance himself from excesses (overindulgence). This applied all the more so to the leviim. They were designated to serve Hashem and sing in His house. They were not allotted a portion of their own but were dependent on gifts and donations. It was imperative that they avoid all excesses and overindulgence. Therefore, when they were sanctified and consecrated to serve in Hashem's house, Moshe shaved off all of their hair to minimize excesses as much as possible. Thus, they would be ready for matters of kedushah and the service of Hashem exclusively.**

**They taught the same regarding a king (Ta'anis 17a). He shaved daily, because as a king, he must take greater care to resist excessive desires. Hence, he was commanded not to accumulate wealth, horses, and wives. Similarly, a kohen-gadol shaved weekly to minimize excesses. Regarding Korach, he was extremely proud of his exceptional riches and possessions—desires which are not lasting. Hence, he mocked Moshe for shaving the leviim and removing their hair with a razor.**

This did not apply to Eliyahu HaNavi whose neshamah was rooted in the hair of Adam HaRishon over the "luz" bone. Therefore, he retained his sanctified hair that was not tainted by eating from the Eitz HaDa'as. Thus, he was an example for the people of Yisrael and could inspire them to sanctify themselves in all of their mundane, worldly endeavors. As it states in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 231):

**Whatever a person derives pleasure from in Olam HaZeh, he should not do so for his own pleasure but rather for the service of the blessed Creator, as it is written (Mishlei 3, 6): “In all your endeavors know (emulate) Him.”**

The second outstanding characteristic of Eliyahu HaNavi was that he was **“the man with a leather belt girding his loins.”** Now, the Shulchan Aruch (ibid. 74, 1) states that if there is no separation between the heart and the private parts (genitals), it is prohibited to utter words of Torah or a berachah with the holy name. This is the rationale for the minhag of chassidim to wear a special belt (“gartel”) when davening; they are creating a symbolic separation between the heart and the private parts (“nakedness”).

Now, it is apparent that Eliyahu HaNavi was blessed with eternal life in the merit of not allowing his heart to see his “nakedness” in the tragic incident involving Zimri ben Salu. Of all the people of Yisrael witnessing Zimri’s lewd, indecent behavior, he was the only one willing to sacrifice his life to avenge the honor and dignity of Hashem. We can even suggest that this admirable trait was already present at the time of the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as.” For, according to the Gemara (Shabbas 146a), when Chava sinned with the Eitz HaDa’as, the nachash had sex with her and infected her and all of creation with its filth and corruption. Thus, by not participating in the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as,” the heart of Eliyahu HaNavi remained separate from the indecent “nakedness” of the filth and corruption of the nachash.

This explains magnificently why Eliyahu girded his loins specifically with a **“leather”** belt. For, after the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as,” the Torah teaches us (Bereishis 3, 21): **“וַיַּעַשׂ ה' אֱלֹהִים לָאָדָם וּלְאִשְׁתּוֹ כִּתְנוֹת עוֹר וַיַּלְבִּישֵׁם”**—**Hashem Elokim made for Adam and his wife garments of skin (leather), and He clothed them.** According to the Tikunei Zohar (Tikun 58), the leather garment Hashem fashioned for them was **“from the skin of the serpent,”** i.e., the “nachash hakadmoni.” We can suggest that is because HKB”H wanted them to always remember that the nachash, the embodiment of the yetzer hara, caused them to sin with its duplicity, and they should distance themselves from it. Therefore, Eliyahu HaNavi who was privileged to keep

his heart separate from the “nakedness” of the “nachash hakadmoni” always girded his loins with a leather belt—symbolizing the sanctity of creating a separation between the heart and the “nakedness.”

With immense pleasure, we can apply what we have learned to explain the well-known fact that Eliyahu HaNavi, ז”ל, attends every “Bris milah.” Hence, we designate a special chair in his honor and announce **“זֶה הַכֵּסֵּא שֶׁל אֱלִיהוּ זְכוֹר לְטוֹב”**. The source for this practice is found in the Pirkei D’Rabbi Eliezer (29):

**HKB”H appeared to him and said to him (Melachim I 19, 9): “Why are you here, Eliyahu?” He answered Him: “I have been very zealous.” HKB”H said to him, “You are always zealous!” You were zealous in Shittim on account of the immorality, as it states: “Pinchas, the son of Elazar, the son of Aharon HaKohen, turned back my wrath away from upon Bnei Yisrael, when he zealously avenged . . .” Here you are also zealous. By your life, they will not perform a “Bris milah” until you witness it with your own eyes. Hence, the sages instituted that they should make a seat of honor for the Messenger of the Bris.**

In keeping with this discussion, we can explain this based on what the Rambam wrote in Moreh Nevuchim (Part 3, Chapter 60). The purpose of the mitzvah of milah is to weaken the influence of the yetzer hara regarding matters related to the kedushah of the Bris. Therefore, Eliyahu HaNavi, girded with a leather belt around his waist as a separation between his heart and his “nakedness,” was designated to attend every Jewish Bris. It is his responsibility to imbue the infant being circumcised with his kedushah, creating a separation between the heart and the “nakedness.”

We can now begin to appreciate the connection between Eliyahu’s two outstanding features: **“The man called Hairy One, because of his appearance; the man with a leather belt girding his loins.”** As explained, he was rooted in the healthy, good portion of the hair of Adam HaRishon—the part that was not tainted by the partaking of the Eitz HaDa’as. Therefore, he was blessed not to experience

death or burial. This is also the reason that he wore a leather belt around his waist to demonstrate his capacity to separate between the heart and the “nakedness.” This explains his constant vigilance avenging the honor of Hashem concerning the kedushah of the Bris.

### The Ideal Is for a Jew to Live in Both the Lower World and the Upper World

Based on what we have learned, we can now explain to a greater extent why Pinchas warranted the promise of eternal life and the privilege of announcing to Yisrael the arrival of the future geulah. In his illuminating commentary, the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh provides forty-two interpretations of the passuk (Vayikra 26, 3): **“אם בחוקותי תלכו—if you will follow My decrees.”** In #20, he asserts that the goal of creation was not for man to live exclusively in this lowly, material world. Ideally, he is meant to live in two worlds simultaneously. He should be able to ascend to the heavenly realm to attain and enjoy the wonderful teachings of the Torah and then to return to the earthly realm to actually perform and fulfill the mitzvos. Thus, he will always live in both worlds simultaneously. Here is a translation of his sacred words:

**When Hashem created Adam HaRishon in Olam HaZeh, He did not intend for him to remain in this world forever had he not sinned. For that would have been a spiritual decline for him and demeaning. His**

**ideal place is in the upper world, a place he can ascend to and enjoy its treasures whenever he pleases. Thus, he reaps the benefits of both worlds. It is analogous to someone living in a two-story house; he can go up to delight in the upper level whenever he chooses. We see that this occurred with Eliyahu; he went up to the heavens in a whirlwind. Due to the sin (of Adam HaRishon), however, he was forced to relinquish this ability and freedom and remain physically confined to Olam HaZeh.**

We learn from the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh that Eliyahu HaNavi achieved this ideal existence; he lives in both worlds simultaneously. This answers the question we posed at the beginning of this essay. Where does HKB”H’s promise to Pinchas—**“הגני נותן לו את בריתי שלום”**—suggest that Pinchas and Eliyahu would live forever? As a consequence of the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as,” death became a reality, and a barrier was created between the upper and lower worlds. Due to this berachah, Eliyahu HaNavi did not die and for him there was no barrier between the two worlds; this is the “shalom” that he was promised—the freedom to live in both worlds. Also, for this reason, he will be privileged to be the messenger announcing the future geulah to Yisrael. For, at that time, the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as” will be rectified, and all of Yisrael will once again be able to live in both worlds—with the coming of the righteous redeemer, swiftly in our times! Amen.

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