THE "LEFTOVER" YUD

by Rabbi Pinchas Winston

God told Moshe, "Pinchas — Peh-YUD-Nun- Ches-Samech — the son of Elazar, the son of Aharon the priest, stopped My anger towards the Children of Israel because he was zealous on My behalf, which prevented Me from destroying them because of jealousy. (Bamidbar 25:11)

When God changed Avraham's name, He added a letter that wasn't there before, a Heh, transforming his name from "Avram" to "Avraham," a very significant change. Likewise, when God changed the name of his wife, Sarai, to Sarah, the letter Yud was removed and replaced with another letter, also a Heh. And, as the Midrash explains, when Moshe Rabbeinu changed Hoshea's name to Yehoshua in advance of the mission to spy the land, it was the "leftover" Yud was from Sarai's name that was added to make the transformation.

In each case, the change of name was quite noticeable, especially the one from Ya'akov to Yisroel.

However, when Pinchas received his Yud, nothing really changed at all, at least far as the name was concerned. It was still pronounced the same way, because the Yud had always been there, phonetically-speaking. It had been audible, though not visible, and as a result of Pinchas' heroic act of zealousness, it became revealed as well, and that is extremely significant. If ever the expression, "good things come in small packages" applied, it is to the letter Yud, the smallest letter in the Aleph-Bais, and the only one not to be a composite of other letters (for example, an Aleph is comprised of two Yuds and a Vav). And, apparently, the one letter that represents the soul of a person, as the Talmud seems to indicate:

Rebi Yehudah bar Rebi Eloy elucidated: The Holy One, Blessed is He, created two worlds, one with a Heh and one with a Yud. I do not know if the World-to-Come was created with a Yud and this world with a Heh, or if this world was with a Yud and the World-to-Come was with a Heh. However, it says, "These are the generations of Heaven and Earth in the creating of them (behibar-am) ..." (Bereishis 2:4); don't read "behibar'am" (i.e., in the creating of them) but "b'HEH bar'am" (i.e., with a Heh they were created). Thus we see that this world was created with a Heh, and the World-to-Come was created with a Yud. (Menachos 29b)

Hence, we learn, the letter Yud represents the eternal reality of the World-to-Come. Indeed, explains the Maharal, it is precisely the simplicity of the Yud that makes it so fitting a symbol of the sublime world of Divine unity, Olam HaBah (Haggadah Shel Pesach). Hence, Yud represents the number 10, the number of Divine perfection, and the number of sefiros in any complete spiritual

reality, called a partzuf.

Therefore, the Yud represents the essence of who we are, the spiritual force that makes each and every one of us unique, and which drives us to accomplish in life. The more meaningful our accomplishments are, the more of the Yud within us we reveal, and by definition, that results in a greater portion in the World-to-Come.

What Pinchas did that fateful day through his act of zealousness, we are all trying to do, each of us in our own way, each of us on our own level, whether a Yud becomes visible in our name as a result, or not. The entire point of Torah and mitzvos is to do that which causes our own personal Yud to emerge, bringing more completion and Godliness to our being. We can't help but become better, more dignified, more spiritually-complete individuals.

Hence, when Pinchas emerged from his act of zealousness, having revealed the Yud from within the depths of his being, and therefore, from within his "depths" of his name as well, he became a kohen, not as a reward, but as a consequence of his enhanced state of holiness. In fact, this is what it means to be a kohen, as their holy and set-apart Temple lifestyle indicated:

to live on the plane of the next world while still functioning in this world; to live on the level of the Yud. However, when one draws more of the spiritual reality of the Yud into the physical reality of the body, just as Pinchas' physical name was enhanced, so too is one's body enhanced. The body cannot help but become more spiritual as well, and an even better kli — vessel — for the soul, the reality of Yud in this world. Consequently, not only did Pinchas become a kohen, but he morphed into a different person altogether, one of the greatest prophets to ever live:

Thus we find that four levels were in Pinchas. The first was that of the Nefesh of Pinchas with which he was born, a single soul even though it was the combination of two drops, one from Yosef and one from Yisro.

The second level was the Nefesh of Nadav and Avihu, which came b'sod ibur and was also called "one soul," as is known from the Zohar: Nadav and Avihu were two limbs of one body (Acharei Mos 57b). The third was a Nefesh called "Eliyahu HaTishbi" from the root of Gad, and the fourth level was "Eliyahu" from the root of Binyomin. (Sha'ar HaGilgulim, Ch. 32)

This is why, you may have noticed, that Eliyahu's parents are never mentioned anywhere: he had none. Rather, his soul, both of them, descended from Heaven and entered the body of Pinchas as a result of his act of zealousness, and this transformed him into Eliyahu HaNavi. Though Pinchas seems to disappear from history after the Torah comes to a close, the truth is, he remained quite alive and quite well, until he finally ascended to Heaven during Achav's time on a fiery chariot, a very dramatic end for a very dramatic life. He went from earth to Heaven without having to pass through death.

However, for a brief period, Pinchas-Eliyahu, faltered. For a brief period of time, the Yud of Pinchas

did not remain revealed, at least not as much as it had previously:

Later in history, when the incident of the daughter of Yiftach HaGiladi occurred, they (Eliyahu and Yiftach) were both punished. For, as Chazal say, Yiftach was a judge and he did not want to come to Eliyahu to cancel his vow, and, Eliyahu did not want to come to him, for he said, "The one who is suffering must come to the doctor" and thus between the two of them the daughter of Yiftach went. Yiftach, who was directly involved in the incident was punished, and as a result everywhere he went he lost limbs, as it says, "They buried him in the cities of Gilad" (Shoftim 12:7) — in the plural. Eliyahu was punished by the departure of the Shechinah, as Chazal say (Bereishis Rabbah 60:3) on the verse, "And Pinchas the son Elazar had been the supervisor over them in former times, for God was with him. (I Divrei HaYomim 9:20), which is talking about Pinchas. Thus, it seems, that he had been the "supervisor" over them, but no longer.

After the Nefesh of Nadav and Avihu, that had been in him b'ibur, was removed from him, it later reincarnated into Shmuel HaNavi, as we will explain. This is the sod of what Chazal say: The Vav of "Brisi Shalom" (Bamidbar 25:12) is cut. They also say in the Zohar (Acharei Mos), that the Yud of "Pinchas" is small (Bamidbar 25:11). Thus, in the incident with Zimri he merited the souls of Nadav and Avihu, as mentioned in the Zohar (Pinchas 217a), but he lost them as a result of the sin from the daughter of Yiftach. This is why the Vav is cut, to represent the sefirah of Yesod, which is called "Brisi Shalom." It was actually "cut" when he lost the Shechinah and the souls of Nadav and Avihu ... (Sha'ar HaGilgulim, Ch. 32)

However, the story has a happy ending, with a bit of history and some soul-travel in-between:

When prophecy returned to him it was after he was called "Eliyahu HaTishbi," and after Shmuel had died so that Nadav and Avihu could return to him during the incident of Mt. Carmel. (Ibid.)

Ever since then, Eliyahu HaNavi has made guests appearances throughout history, attending each bris, and house-hopping Leil Seder. And, on some occasions, he returns in the guise of a person to test us, to work some kind of miracle on behalf of some worthy person, or in a story like this one:

Rebi Yehoshua ben Levi met Eliyahu standing at the entrance of the cave of Rebi Shimon bar Yochai and asked him ... "When will Moshiach appear?" He answered, "Go and ask Moshiach himself."

"But where can he be found?"

"At the gate of Rome."

"And by what sign [can I recognize him]?"

"He is among the poor people afflicted with wounds. They open the bandages of all their wounds at one time, adjust and dress them. He opens, adjusts, and dresses one wound at time, for the reason that when he might be called there should be no delay."

I went to him, and said, "Peace be upon you, my master and teacher," and he answered, "Peace be with you, Bar Levi."

I asked him, "When will the master appear?"

He answered, "Today."

I then went back to Eliyahu and asked regarding all that Moshiach said, and told him that he said, "Peace be with you, Bar Levi." Eliyahu then said, "I can assure you and your father a share in the World-to-Come." "But he made a fool of me," I told Eliyahu, "because he said that he would come today."

Eliyahu answered and said, "The expression 'today' means the same as it does in the verse, 'Today, if you will listen to His voice'" (Tehillim 95:7)." (Sanhedrin 98a)

For, that is his final job, at least on this side of history. It will be Eliyahu, once Pinchas, who will herald the arrival of Moshiach himself, as the Final Redemption unfolds. By allowing his Yud to surface, he became part of a different reality, of a different time period, even though he remained in ours.

His reality was that of Yemos HaMoshiach and onward, and therefore, he will merit to usher in that period of time, which is much closer than most think.

However, his final known role in the history of the Jewish people will be far more illustrious, as the Arizal explains:

In the "End of Days" in the generation of Moshiach, Moshe will return to teach Torah to Israel and will still be of "uncircumcised lips." However, Eliyahu, who will "chai" — live — will be his interpreter, and this is the sod of the verse, "Pinchas, the son of Elazar, the son of Aharon HaKohen" (Bamidbar 25:11). This is as it is written, "If [one is drawn] to scoffers, he will scoff" (Mishlei 4:37): when they will need a translator for Moshe, Eliyahu who will be "chai" will translate and be Moshe's interpreter.

(Sha'ar HaGilgulim, Ch. 36) In other words, on our side of history, it was Aharon HaKohen who had the great merit of being Moshe Rabbeinu's interpreter. However, in Yemos HaMoshiach, when Moshe Rabbeinu (in the body of Moshiach Ben Dovid) will resume his role as teacher of all Israel once again, it will be "Pinchas, the son of Elazar, the son of Aharon HaKohen," as Eliyahu HaNavi will assume the coveted role. As I said, when it comes to the letter Yud, big things truly come in small packages. Text

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