



Behar-Bechukotai

The Most Remarkable Letter in the Hebrew Alphabet

The most remarkable Hebrew letter would be the letter ו. ו is actually a word, spelled וו.

וו means a hook. And indeed, a ו looks like a hook. ו also means “and” because it's a conjunction. In the same way as hooks link up different parts and entities, the Mishkan was kept together by all the ווים, all of the hooks. The ו has that role of bringing disparate parts together to become one entity.

And we have a fascinating detail relating to the ו. There is a word in Hebrew which is spelled with ו ו ו ו -

“וּוּ” “
And his hook”

Surely that cannot be the case in any other language.

In Parshat Buchukotai, the Torah tells us how special the ו is in the midst of the תּוֹכַחָה, curses, which could befall our people - a promise is given that the Jewish nation will continue to live on. Hashem says:

“וְזָכַרְתִּי אֶת בְּרִיתִי יַעֲקֹב”
“I will always remember my covenant with Jacob”

Meaning: Am Yisrael Chai. The Jewish nation will continue to live. But notice how the word יַעֲקֹב is spelled in that context: it has a ו. There are only five times in the whole of Tenach in which יַעֲקֹב has a ו. And our sages tell us that these five occasions match those in which the prophet Elijah's name, אֵלִיָּהוּ, is spelt אֵלִיָּה without a ו at the end.

The reason for this, according to Rashi, is that the time come soon, when אֵלִיָּהוּ will come to the children of יַעֲקֹב in order to redeem the ו which יַעֲקֹב took from אֵלִיָּהוּ, and while he retrieves his ו, he will inform us about the great times of the coming of the Moshiach and the redemption of the world.

The role that אֵלִיָּהוּ has is to create peace on earth, to facilitate the coming of that great period of our redemption. And it all comes together - the ו links up, the ו coordinates. It's the conjunction. It brings people and parts together. And that is the role of אֵלִיָּהוּ: to create peace on earth.

So let us not forget the powerful lesson of the ו in our lives: the “and”, the conjunction, to guarantee that we are always linked to others, that we focus on peace, and that together we move forward in order to achieve a better world.

Shabbat Shalom.