

The  
**CHASSIDUS**  
**PERSPECTIVE**  
*with Reb Yoel Kahn*



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## THE ULTIMATE VISION

This Shabbos is Shabbos Chazon. The simple reason for this name is in reference to the *haftorah*, which begins with the words *Chazon Yeshayahu*.

R. Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev famously gave another reason for the name Shabbos Chazon. He explained that there are certain times when we're shown the third Beis Hamikdash, and one of these occasions is the Shabbos before Tisha B'Av. This is why it is known as Shabbos Chazon, which means "vision."

### THE THREE SUITS

R. Levi Yitzchak proceeded to give a parable:

There was once a father who sewed a handsome garment for his son. However, the son misbehaved and the garment ripped. The father prepared a second suit, but the child acted up again and it tore as well. Finally, the father sewed a third, beautiful garment, which the son strongly desired. However, instead of giving it to him immediately, he showed it to him from time to time. He promised to present it to him when he would learn to conduct himself properly, to the extent that it would become his very nature, precluding the concern that he would revert to his original behavior.

Interestingly, the Rebbe would mention this idea every year on Shabbos Chazon. Often, he would explain it and offer novel insights; however, even when he would not, he would mention it anyways. This demonstrates how fundamental this idea is to this Shabbos.

### A VISION WITH A PURPOSE

A question can be asked:

The father was willing to share the first two garments despite the possible consequences. In the *nimshal*, it wasn't just a concern; Hashem knew we would sin, and yet he gave us the first two *Batei Mikdashos*. Then, when it came to the third suit, the father was only willing to give it to his son when he was confident it would not be mistreated. Why the change in attitude between the first two and the third?

Another question: Since we don't physically see the third Beis Hamikdash, what is the purpose of this vision?

It is generally understood that this vision is similar to the various Heavenly announcements that are issued every day (such as the announcement to repent). Here too, the question can be asked: Who

hears these proclamations? And if no one hears them, what purpose do they serve?

The Baal Shem Tov explains that in truth, we do hear these calls. It sometimes happens that a person experiences a spontaneous urge to repent. You have a case where a person decides that he must

repent, so he actively goes about inspiring himself; for example, he studies texts that elaborate on the gravity of the sin he committed, until he is aroused to mend his ways. Here, however, the person is engaged in unrelated activities, and yet he is suddenly aroused with an urge to do *teshuvah*.

Where does this come from? His *neshamah* Above "hears" these spiritual broadcasts, and this manifests itself in his *neshamah* below in the form of a palpable desire for *teshuvah*.

Yet, no matter how strong this *hirhur teshuvah* is, in a certain respect it can't compare to *teshuvah* accomplished as a result of one's own efforts.

When the urge to repent is not his own but rather an external inspiration initiated from Above, in all likelihood it will dissipate with the termination of the Heavenly alert. Personal initiatives, on the other hand, are likely to last much longer, as the person put in effort to achieve them.

In light of all this, it is problematic to explain the vision of the third Beis Hamikdash as being similar to these Heavenly announcements (namely, that our *neshamah* Above sees it, and this influences us down below). If that would be the case, the vision won't accomplish its purpose—to arouse us to change our behavior until it becomes our very nature?!

### PROS AND CONS

In truth, both types of inspiration have a unique upside. On the one hand, inspiration achieved through one's own efforts is far deeper and more meaningful. Yet, Heavenly inspiration is much more powerful and intense than anything one could ever reach through his limited understanding.

A person is limited, and is unable to properly fathom neither Hashem's greatness, nor the gravity of severing his connection with Hashem by sinning. True, whatever inspiration he does attain is more personal and enduring; however, the inspiration itself is weaker. By contrast, the divine call to repentance, although external, contains tremendous, unlimited energy.

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## THREE NUMBERS, THREE MONTHS

Based on this, we can understand the meaning of the three *Batei Mikdashos*. They are not merely three numbers, but correspond to three levels in our connection with Hashem: the first Beis Hamikdash represents Hashem's initiative; the second Beis Hamikdash signifies our own efforts; and the third Beis Hamikdash is a combination of both.

We find a similar concept with the first three months of the year. Nissan, the first month, featured Yetzias Mitzrayim, where Hashem revealed Himself and extracted us from Mitzrayim. It was a powerful experience that engulfed the Jewish people with a tremendous desire to follow Hashem into the desert, without making any calculations whatsoever. This was something we couldn't achieve on our own.

At the same time, their personal character hadn't changed; the only way for that to happen was through personal effort. This is the theme of Iyar, the second month, which is dedicated to *sefiras ha'omer*, in which we transform each individual *midah*.

Next comes Sivan, the month of *matan Torah*. In this third month, both advantages are combined: "those Above descend below and those below ascend Above."

## ABOVE OR BELOW?

It is this "above-below-both" pattern that holds true for the three *Batei Mikdashos*.

The first Beis Hamikdash represents the *avodah* of a *tzaddik*. It reflected Hashem's original plan for the Jewish nation: they would enter Eretz Yisroel and build the Beis Hamikdash in a sin-free environment.

A *tzaddik* learns Hashem's Torah and performs Hashem's *mitzvos* without fail. The *kedushah* that is achieved is great, but the emphasis is on Torah and *mitzvos* as they derive from Above, and not on the person's own *avodah*.

The second Beis Hamikdash, by contrast, symbolizes the *avodah* of a *baal teshuvah*. It was preceded by the sins that brought about the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdash, followed by seventy years of exile—ten for every *midah*—for the purpose of *teshuvah*.

When a sinner repents, it is *he* who regrets his actions and is inspired to change his ways. Here, the emphasis is on *his* desire to transform.

(Parenthetically, the Minchas Chinuch is of the opinion that there is no actual *mitzvah* to repent—the only *mitzvah* is that when we do choose to do *teshuvah*, we must recite *vidui*. At first glance, this view seems strange: Hashem is leaving us the choice of whether or not to do *teshuvah*, and all He's commanding us is that if we do decide to repent, we should recite *vidui*!

Based on the above, we can understand the Minchas Chinuch's reasoning. *Teshuvah* is all about a *personal* sense of regret. To be instructed to do *teshuvah* would go against its very definition—he's "regretting" his conduct because he was told to do so, not because he actually feels that way.)

## THE BEST OF BOTH

Finally comes the third Beis Hamikdash, which combines both qualities: the revelation is great and unlimited, but at the same time, it becomes one with our own existence.

The first and second "garments" can be given even if there is a concern they will be ripped. The first Beis Hamikdash was a revelation from Above that did not become internalized; since we did not change, it was possible that we would act improperly. Similarly, although the second Beis Hamikdash involved our own input, since it was constricted by our limitations, it too did not last.

When is one advantage at the expense of the other? When we and Hashem are two entities. Therefore, you either have the advantage of great levels of spirituality, but it doesn't become internalized, or it is your *avodah*, but it is limited. However, with the third Beis Hamikdash, we and Hashem are one. Therefore, it is possible to have both qualities

together—an unlimited revelation that becomes internalized.

It is this unity between us and Hashem, represented in the third Beis Hamikdash, which we are shown in a vision. This vision is unlike the Heavenly announcements, which are given from Above but do not penetrate our existence. Here, however, we have the ability to sense that we and Hashem are one. The outcome of this exposure is a type of *teshuvah* that precludes the possibility for future misconduct, as the highest levels ultimately become our actual nature.

**For further learning see *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 9, pp. 24ff.**

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