

“They shall take Me a portion from every man”

What Prompted HKB”H to Create a Unique Animal for the Sake of the Mishkan? The Name Tachash Connotes that It Rejoices and Takes Pride in Its Colors

In this week’s parsha, parshas Terumah, we read (Shemos 25, 1): “**וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר, דבר אל בני ישראל, ויקחו לי תרומה מאת כל: כל איש אשר ידבנו לבו תקחו את תרומתי, וזאת התרומה אשר תקחו מאתם זהב וכסף ונחשת, ותכלת וארגמן ותולעת שני ושש ועזים, ועורות אילים מאדמים ועורות “חחשים ועצי שטים” —Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: Speak to Bnei Yisrael and they shall bring Me a portion, from every man whose heart will motivate him you shall take My portion. This is the portion that you shall take from them: gold, and silver, and copper; and turquoise wool, and purple wool, and scarlet wool; and linen and goats’ hair; and ram skins that are dyed red, and “techashim” skins, and shittim wood.** Rashi comments (ibid. 5): **“Techashim, this is a type of animal which existed only at that time; it had many colors. Therefore it is rendered by Targum Onkelos as “sasgonah”; for it rejoices and prides itself in its colors. [“Sas” means rejoice; “gevanim” means colors.]**

As the following pesukim explain, HKB”H commanded that the skins of the “techashim” serve as a covering for the tent. They covered the roof of the Mishkan as it is written (Shemos 27, 14): **“ועשית מכסה לאהל עורות אילים מאדומים ומכסה עורות חחשים —you shall make a cover for the tent of red-dyed ram skins, and a cover of “tachash” skins above.**

Upon careful examination, we find that the subject of the “tachash” deserves further explanation: (a) Why did HKB”H create a special animal solely for the purpose of covering the Mishkan? (b) Now, the purpose of the Mishkan was to provide a resting place for the Shechinah, as it is written (Shemos 25, 8): **“ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם” —they shall make Me a Mikdash (sanctuary), so that I may dwell among them.** As we know, HKB”H only rests His Shechinah on the humble. In fact, the Gemara states (Sotah 5a): **“כל אדם שיש בו גסות הרוח, אמר הקב”ה אין אני —concerning any person who possesses a haughtiness of spirit, HKB”H says: I and he cannot dwell together in the world.** So, why would HKB”H create such an

animal for the sake of the Mishkan that **“rejoices and prides itself in its colors”**? Self-pride and delighting in oneself seem to be diametrically opposed to the characteristic of humility. (c) As explained, HKB”H only created this creature to exist for a brief period of time. Why did HKB”H refer to this animal in the Torah as a **“tachash”**? What is the connection between this name and the Targum’s interpretation **“ססגוּנא”**—indicating that **“it rejoices and prides itself in its colors”**?

The Middle Bar Represents Yaakov

Let us begin our journey by presenting an incredible passage from the Zohar hakadosh (Terumah 175b) regarding the passuk (Shemos 26, 28):

“אמר רבי שמעון, והבריה התיכון בתוך הקרשים מבריה מן הקצה אל הקצה, זהו יעקב הקדוש השלם, כמו שביארנו על הכתוב (בראשית כה-כז) ויעקב איש תם יושב אהלים, יושב אהל לא כתוב אלא יושב אהלים שנים, שנאחז בזה ובזה, אף כאן כתוב, והבריה התיכון בתוך הקרשים מבריה מן הקצה אל הקצה, שנאחז בזה ונאחז בזה.”

The passuk states: **“The middle bar between the beams shall extend from end to end.”** Rabbi Shimon said that this passuk is a reference to Yaakov—the holy, perfect one. The passuk in Bereishis describes Yaakov as **“yoshev ohalim”**—dwelling in tents, in the plural. He was associated with two tents. Similarly, the passuk here states that the middle bar bridged between two ends; it was connected to both.

We can understand this passage from the Zohar based on a well-known principle. Avraham Avinu, whose attribute was “chesed” (kindness), occupies the right side; Yitzchak Avinu representing the attribute of “gevurah” (severity/strength/restraint), occupies the left side; whereas Yaakov, whose attribute is “Tiferes” (splendor/beauty/balance), combines “chesed” and “gevurah” together. This is the significance of the

passuk: “ויעקב איש תם יושב אהלים”—**Yaakov was a wholesome man, dwelling in tents.** He dwelled between the two tents of Avraham’s “chesed” and Yitzchak’s “gevurah.” Thus, בריה “התיכון—the middle bar—alludes to Yaakov. His attribute was “Tiferes,” an intermediate attribute comprised of both “chesed” and “gevurah.” Hence, the passuk states: מבריה מן הקצה אל “הקצה—it bridged the gap between the two extremes. In other words, he was associated both with “chesed” on the right side and “gevurah” on the left side. [Right side and left side refer to the arrangement of the sephirot in the Sefirotic Tree.]

We find, in fact, that the words of the Zohar hakadosh coincide beautifully with Rashi’s comments concerning the passuk in our parsha (Shemos 26, 15):

“ועשית את הקרשים למשכן עצי שטים עומדים * היה לו לומר ועשית ‘קרשים’ כמו שנאמר בכל דבר ודבר, מהו ‘הקרשים’, מאותן העומדין ומיוחדין לכך. יעקב אבינו נטע ארזים במצרים, וכשמת צוה לבניו להעלותם עמהם כשיצאו ממצרים, ואמר להם שעתיד הקב”ה לצוות אותן לעשות משכן במדבר מעצי שטים, ראוי שיהיו מזומנים בידכם.”

“You shall make the beams of the Mishkan of shittim wood, standing erect.” Rashi questions the significance of the word **“the beams”**—indicating that these were not ordinary beams but specific beams that had been designated for this purpose. Yaakov Avinu planted these trees in Mitzrayim. When he was dying, he commanded his sons to take them out with them when they departed Mitzrayim. He informed them that that at some point in the future HKB”H would command them to build a Mishkan in the wilderness from shittim trees. He said, “Heed that you should have these trees ready and available for that purpose.”

The Mishkan Was Stored Away to Be Revealed “Le’asid La’vo”

It is now incumbent upon us to explain the special connection between the Mishkan and Yaakov Avinu. Because of this intimate connection, Yaakov merited planting special trees in Mitzrayim for the sake of the building of the Mishkan. Furthermore, he merited becoming: **“the middle bar between the beams extending from end to end.”**

I would like to propose an explanation of my own concerning this matter. First, let us present a question posed by the great scholar from Brezhan, ztz”l, in Techeiles Mordechai regarding HKB”H’s request: **“They shall make Me a Mikdash and I shall**

dwell among them.” The Midrash (V.R. 2, 2) teaches us that whenever the Torah employs the term “לי”—meaning for Me—it is an indication that the item will last forever. If so, how does the passuk here employ the term “לי” regarding the Mishkan? After all, the Mishkan did not remain forever; it was concealed upon the entry of Bnei Yisrael to Eretz Yisrael.

Seemingly, we can resolve this difficulty by referring to the Gemara (Eiruvin 2a): ... **אשכחן משכן דאיקרי מקדש ומקדש דאיקרי משכן... ונתתי משכני בתוכם, משכן דאיקרי מקדש דאיקרי משכן דכתיב (ויקרא כו-יא) ונתתי משכני בתוכם, ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם**—the terms “Mishkan” and “Mikdash” are used interchangeably. Let us consider why HKB”H described the Mishkan as a “Mikdash.”

We find a plausible explanation in the Otzros HaRamchal on parshas Vayakhel. He writes: **וזה תיקון המשכן היה הכנה למקדש, וזה תיקון המשכן היה הכנה למקדש, והכל ענין אחד, שהמשכן אינו אלא הכנה למקדש, ששם באמת היה התיקון הגמור**—The building of the Mishkan was a preparation for the Mikdash; the Mikdash, in truth, represented the ultimate completion of this project.

In fact, we can substantiate the claim that the Mishkan was constructed in preparation for the third Beis HaMikdash from what we have learned in the Gemara (Sotah 9a): **דרש רבי חנינא: בר פפא, מאי דכתיב (תהלים לג-א) רגנו צדיקים בה’ לישרים נאווה תהלה, אל תקרי נאווה תהלה אלא נוה תהלה, זה משה ודוד שלא שלטו שונאיהם במעשיהם, דוד דכתיב (איכה ב-ט) טבעו בארץ שעריה, משה דאמר מר משנבנה מקדש ראשון נגזז אהל מועד קרשיו ובריהו ועמודיו ואדניו, היכא, אמר רב חסדא Regarding Moshe, the master said: When the first Mikdash was built, the Ohel Moed was concealed; its beams, its hooks, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets. Where? Rav Chisda said in the name Avimi: Under the tunnels of the Heichal.**

Additionally, we find in the Gemara (Succah 45b) an elucidation regarding the Torah’s description (Shemos 26, 15): **עצי שטים עומדים... שמא תאמר אבד סיברם ובטל סיכויין, תלמוד לומר: עצי שטים עומדים, ששם באמת היה התיקון הגמור**—One might have thought that once the Mishkan was no longer in use and was concealed away that its promise and hope had vanished never to return. Therefore, the Torah teaches us that the beams were made of **“עצי שטים עומדים”**—shittim wood that would remain standing for all eternity. [The operative word being **“עומדים”**, standing.] We learn from this Gemara that the trees Yaakov planted in Mitzrayim will last for all eternity—even **“le’asid la’vo.”** According to what we have learned, this means that

the Mishkan is destined to be included within the third Beis HaMikdash in the future. I also found a statement to this effect in the Maaseh Rokeiach: “שְׁעוֹמְדִים לְעוֹלָמִי עוֹלָמִים, וְהֵינּוּ שְׂיֹחֲזֵר לָהֶם” —“they will stand forever; in other words, the Mishkan itself will be returned in its full glory in the future.

Thus, we can now appreciate why HKB”H’s request specifically employed the term “לִי”: “וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וּשְׂכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם” HKB”H hinted to the fact that Yisrael were to construct such a Mishkan that would endure for all eternity—befitting the term “לִי”. As we have learned, this condition was fulfilled. The Mishkan was hidden away for the Future to Come; then it will be included as part of the third Beis HaMikdash, which will stand for all eternity.

The Third Beis HaMikdash Will Be in the Merit of Yaakov

This enlightens us as to why HKB”H arranged for Yaakov to plant the trees for the Mishkan and why he represents the middle bar. For, we have learned in the Gemara (Pesachim 88a): “מֵאֵי דְכַתִּיב (ישעיה ב-ג) וְהָלְכוּ עִמָּי רַבִּים וְאָמְרוּ לָנוּ וְנַעֲלֶה אֶל הָרַה' אֶל בֵּית אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב וְגו', אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב וְלֹא אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק, אֲלֵא לֹא כְּאַבְרָהָם שְׂכַתוֹב בּוֹ הֵר... לֹא כִּי־צַחֵק שְׂכַתוֹב בּוֹ שְׂדֵה... אֲלֵא כִּי־עַקֵּב שְׂקָרָא בֵּית” According to the passuk in Yeshayah (2, 3), many nations will say that they are going to the house of the G-d of Yaakov. The Gemara questions why the passuk specifies the G-d of Yaakov and not that of Avraham and Yitzchak. We learn that Avraham described the Beis HaMikdash as a mountain (“har”); Yitzchak described it as a field (“sadeh”); whereas Yaakov called it a house (“Bayis”).

The Alshich hakadosh explains in Torat Moshe (Bechukotai) that the first Beis HaMikdash stood in the merit of Avraham Avinu; it was conquered by our enemies because of Yishmael, who was the offspring of Avraham. Similarly, the second Beis HaMikdash, which stood in the merit of Yitzchak, was conquered by our enemies due to Eisav—the offspring of Yitzchak. The third Beis HaMikdash, however, which will stand in the merit of Yaakov Avinu, whose offspring were pure, will endure forever without interruption.

Seeing as the Mishkan was concealed and is destined to be a part of the third Beis HaMikdash—which will endure forever in the merit of Yaakov—it was imperative that Yaakov himself make preparations for the Mishkan. This explains very nicely the elucidation in the Zohar hakadosh of the passuk: “וְהִבְרִיחַ”

הַתִּיכוֹן בְּתוֹךְ הַקְּרָשִׁים מִבְּרִיחַ מִן הַקְּצֵה אֶל הַקְּצֵה, דָּא הוּא יַעֲקֹב קְדִישָׁא “שְׁלִימָא”—that the middle bar bridging the two extremes is the holy and complete Yaakov. For, in truth, Yaakov Avinu is the middle link sustaining the Mishkan until “le’asid la’vo,” when it will be incorporated into the third Beis HaMikdash.

The Tachash Is an Allusion to Yaakov’s Attribute of Tiferes

Continuing along this path, let us address Rashi’s comment that HKB”H created a unique creature for the sake of the Mishkan called a “tachash”: “שֶׁשׁ וּמִתְפָּאֵר בְּגוּוֹיָיו שְׁלֹ” —**that rejoices and prides itself in its colors.** Let us refer to a wonderful chiddush from our holy master, Sar Shalom of Belz, zy”a, in Midbar Kadeish. He mentions that he once heard from the brilliant Maggid Rabbi Shlomo of Lutsk, zy”a—the author of Dibros Shlomo—quoting his teacher the great Maggid Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezritsch, zy”a, that Rashi’s comment is an allusion to Yaakov’s attribute of “Tiferes.”

We can provide some clarification based on the following statement in the Zohar hakadosh (Pinchas 215b): “חֹזֵר דָּא אַבְרָהָם” דַּתְּלָבֵן בַּחוּרָא דְגוּרָא, סוּמְקָא דָּא יִצְחָק וְדָאִי, יְרוֹק דָּא הוּא יַעֲקֹב דְקִיָּימָא בֵּין תְּרִין דְּאֵבְרָהָם—Avraham is white; Yitzchak is red; Yaakov is green, for he exists between the two colors. Let us explain. Since Avraham served Hashem with “chesed,” his color is white. Since Yitzchak served Hashem with “gevurah,” his color is red. Since Yaakov served Hashem with “Tiferes”—a mixture of “chesed” and “gevurah”—his color is green, a mixture of the two colors.

We see, therefore, that Avraham Avinu and Yitzchak Avinu were both limited to a single color or shade. Yaakov Avinu, on the other hand, was multidimensional—represented by the color green. We can now comprehend the Maggid of Mezritsch’s comment regarding Rashi’s explanation concerning the “tachash”: “סִסְגוּנָא, שֶׁשׁ וּמִתְפָּאֵר בְּגוּוֹיָיו שְׁלֹ”. Note that Rashi specifically uses the word “מִתְפָּאֵר” related to Yaakov’s attribute of “Tiferes.” Of all the Avot, only he is able to take pride in the fact that he embodies a variety of colors; for he is a combination of both “chesed” and “gevurah.”

Let us expand on this idea a bit further. We know that Yaakov was extremely humble, as attested to by his statement (Bereishis 32, 11): “קִטְוֹנְתִּי מִכָּל הַחַסְדִּים וּמִכָּל הָאֱמֶת אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂית עִמָּ” —“עַבְדְּךָ”—he expresses that fact that he feels tiny and undeserving. Hence, it is quite surprising that he would glory and take pride in his diversity of colors. However, we can explain the matter

very nicely. Avraham introduced creation to the concept of “chesed.” He cannot take pride in his mode of service, for fear that maybe he should have also served Hashem with “gevurah.” Similarly, Yitzchak introduced the concept of “gevurah” into creation. He cannot take pride in his attribute, for fear that he should have possibly served Hashem also with the attribute of “chesed.”

Yaakov Avinu, however, did not introduce any new shades into the world. He took the two existing colors introduced by Avraham and Yitzchak and blended them together; the result was green. Therefore, he was able to rejoice and take pride in the colors and attributes he learned and inherited from his father Yitzchak and his grandfather Avraham. This does not in any way contradict his trait of humility. On the contrary, he is taking pride in the kedushah of his fathers.

The Word ת'ח Is an Acronym for ש'לום

After much consideration, I would like to propose an explanation as to why HKB”H named this unique creature a “תחש” and explain how this name relates to “Tiferes.” I would like to begin by presenting a very nice allusion related to the name “tachash” I found in the Derashot Chasam Sofer (Part 2, page 281, column 1). We have learned in the Gemara (Berachos 56b): **“אמר רבי חנינא, הרואה באר בחלום רואה שלום... רבי נתן אומר מצא שלום... רבא אמר חיים ממש”**—**Rabbi Chanina said: One who sees a well in a dream sees שלום... Rabbi Nattan says: He has found תורה... Rava said: It symbolizes actual חיים.**

Based on this passage, the Chasam Sofer posits that תחש is an acronym for these three elements--ש'לום. Under the influence of the forces of evil, the klipah, the letters of תחש are reversed to spell תחש. Concerning this duality, the Gemara states (Berachos 28b): **“אני משכים לדברי תורה והם משכימים לדברים”**—**I arise early for words of Torah; they arise early for words of nonsense . . . I run toward life in Olam HaBa, while they run toward a pit of destruction (hell).** This concludes the idea of the Chasam Sofer.

Upon careful examination, we see that these three elements--ש'לום, תורה, חיים—are associated with Yaakov Avinu. As we learn in the Zohar hakadosh (Vayeitzei 146b), Yaakov represents the pillar of “תורה”—one of the three pillars which supports the world. “חיים”—we have learned in the Gemara (Ta’anit 5b): **“יעקב—Yaakov Avinu never died.** Thus, he represents

“חיים”, continual life. “שלום”—as explained in our sacred sefarim, Yaakov represents the proper balance of the “midot” of Avraham and Yitzchak; hence, he succeeds in making “שלום” between them. We can even suggest that this is why the third berachah in Birkas Kohanim—which corresponds to Yaakov—concludes with the words: **“וישם לך שלום”—may He grant you “שלום.”**

“He looked, and behold—a well in the field!”

This idea provides us with a wonderful allusion in the passuk associated with Yaakov Avinu’s arrival in Charan to build the house of Yisrael (Bereishis 29, 2): **“וירא והנה באר בשדה”**—**והנה שם שלשה עדרי צאן רובצים עליה, כי מן הבאר ההוא ישקו העדרים—He looked, and behold—a well in the field! And see there, three flocks of sheep lying beside it, for from that well they would water the flocks.** We learn that HKB”H showed Yaakov a “באר”—a well—in the field. As we have just learned, the well symbolizes several good and desirable achievements. In fact, the passuk specifies that there were **“three flocks of sheep”** lying beside the well. They allude to the three elements listed above: שלום, חיים, תורה. The holy flocks were watered with these three elements: **“כי מן הבאר ההוא ישקו העדרים.”**

Upon further analysis, we find that these three elements--ש'לום, תחש—are related to Yaakov’s attribute of “Tiferes.” How so? “תורה”—the Gemara (Berachos 58a) explains: **“והתפארת זו מתן תורה”**—**“Tiferes” is Matan Torah.** Similarly, the Tikunei Zohar states (Tikun 21, 49a): **“תפארת תורה”**—**“Tiferes” is Torah.** We also find a connection between “חיים” and the attribute of “Tiferes.” The Zohar hakadosh (Mishpatim 117a) elucidates the passuk in Mishlei (3, 18) as follows: **“עץ חיים היא”**—**“it is a tree of life for all that hold fast to it”—the tree of life (“חיים”) is “Tiferes.”**

“שלום” is also associated with the attribute of “Tiferes.” For it determines the perfect balance between the attributes of “chesed” and “gevurah.” We find an allusion to this fact from Rabbi Yishmael in a Baraita in Torat Kohanim that we recite every morning in Shacharit: **“וכן שני כתובים המכחישים זה את זה, עד שיבוא הכתוב השלישי ויכריע ביניהם”**—**similarly, two passages that contradict one another until a third passage appears and reconciles between them.** The Sefer HaPliah explains: The two contradictory passages allude to “chesed” and “pachad” (associated with Yitzchak and similar to “gevurah”). They are reconciled by the third passage, “Tiferes.” The process of reconciliation creates “shalom.”

We learned earlier that HKB”H chose to call the animal he created to grace the roof of the Mishkan a “תחש”. We also learned that the Targum translates this name as “ססגונא”—indicating that it rejoices and takes pride in its own colors. We can now appreciate the amazing connection between the two. The name “תחש” alludes to Yaakov Avinu, whose attribute is “Tiferes.” He saw the well in the field representing the three positive elements alluded to by the name “תחש”—“תורה, חיים ש’לום--”תחש”. As we have demonstrated, all three are associated with Yaakov and his attribute of “Tiferes.”

In other words, Yaakov revels and takes pride in the fact that his attribute “Tiferes” is green and combines the colors of “chesed” and “gevurah.” It turns out, therefore, that both the name mentioned in the Torah--“תחש”—and the Targum’s interpretation--“ססגונא”—convey the same message quite nicely.

We can now comprehend why HKB”H created the “tachash” especially for the Mishkan. As we have seen, Yaakov Avinu represents the middle bar bridging the two extremes. He introduced into the Mishkan the kedushah of the third Beis HaMikdash, which will be built in his merit and will endure for all eternity. Seeing as Yaakov’s attribute “Tiferes” combines both “chesed” and “gevurah,” therefore HKB”H created such a creature: “ששש ומתפאר בגוונין שלו”—**that rejoices and takes pride in its own colors.** This constituted a symbolic gesture evoking the kedushah of Yaakov, blending the colors white and red. He named the creature תחש—an abbreviation for תורה חיים ש’לום—which represents Yaakov and his attribute of “Tiferes,” as explained previously.

Yaakov Rejoices and Takes Pride in the Kedushah of His Fathers

I was struck by a wonderful idea. I would like to explain in greater depth the notion that Yaakov Avinu, whose attribute is “Tiferes,” **“rejoices and takes pride in his own colors.”** Why do the colors white and red, which he manifests in a perfect balance, give him cause to rejoice and take pride? We shall begin by introducing the brilliant words of the Yismach Moshe (Tetzaveh) expounding on the passuk (Tehillim 127,1): **אם ה’ לא יבנה בית שוא עמלו בוניו בו—If Hashem will not build the house, the builders will have labored in vain.** First, it is important

to note that the word “יבנה”—he will build—appears in the future tense; whereas, later in the passuk, the word “עמלו”—they labored—appears in the past tense. The following are the extraordinary words of the Yismach Moshe:

“ולחבין כל זה נקדים מה דעמדו הקדמונים, הכי השני מקדשים שחרבו הם פועל ריק ח’ו והיו כלא היו, חלילה מלומר כן. אמנם הענין יובן על פי משל לאחד שהביא זרע אילן טוב ממרחק, ונטעו עד שצץ ופרח ועשה פרי, ואחר כך עקרו והביא זרע אילן אחר ונטעו וגם עשה פרי, ועקרו וחזר והביא זרע אילן דוגמתו מן המובחר, ונטעו והכניסו לקיום להיות דבר המתקיים לעד. והנה בעת עקירת השני אילנות הראשונים, כל הרואה משתומם ומתפלא על מה עשה ככה לארץ הזאת, לנטוע אילן טוב ויפה ולעקור אותו זה פעמיים, ומה טעם יש בדבר.

אמנם האיש הנוטע אף הוא השיב אמרוי להם, כי הכל בחכמה ובהשכל, וכי גם נטיעת ב’ האילנות הראשונים ועקירתם הכל היה צורך קיום אילן השלישי, לאשר כי הארץ הלזו אינה מסוגלת לגדל אילן כזה בטבעה ולא תוכל שאתו, לזאת הקדים לנטוע נטע נעמן בארץ, עדי תקבל קצת איכות וטבע עפר הארץ המגדלת אילנות כאלו, ואחרי זה עקרו לנטוע אחר תחתיו, וכן בפעם הב’, ואז כשקבלה הארץ כח שיש בו די לקיים האילן קיום נצחי, נטע אילן השלישי אשר לזה היה מגמתו.

והנמשל הוא כשראתה חכמתו יתברך, אשר אין בכח הארץ הגשומה הלזו, לקבל ולסבול נוגה אור קדושת בית המקדש השלישי שיבנה במהרה בימינו, אשר כוננה היוצר בגבהי מרומים ליסדו על מכוון הר ציון, לולי הב’ מקדשות הראשונות, אשר על ידם ובכח קדושת העבודה ויתר עבודת הקודש אשר היה שם כמה מאות שנה, קנתה הארץ גם היא כח רוחני ואיכות קדושה נפלאה, עדי תוכל מעתה לסבול קדושת הבית השלישי, מעשה ידי יוצר בית המקדש שלמעלה המכוון כנגד בית המקדש של מטה, וגדול יהיה כבוד הבית האחרון קיום נצחי ובית עולמים יקרא.”

He explains: We need to address the question that troubled our predecessors. Were the first two Temples that were destroyed totally for naught, chas v’chalah, or did they serve some unknown purpose? The matter can be understood based on the following parable. A man plants seed for an exotic tree; once it blossoms and begins to bear fruit, he uproots the tree. In its place, he plants seed for a second tree; once again, he waits until it bears fruit and then uproots it, as well. Now, he acquires seed for a tree of indescribable quality and beauty. This time, he plants it and cares for it so that it will last forever. During the uprooting of the first two, beautiful, seemingly healthy trees, observers could not comprehend what this fellow was up to nor what his reasoning might be.

The fellow, himself, explained to them that all of his actions were founded on a sound, well thought out plan. Even the first two trees and their uprooting were ultimately for the sake of the survival and long-term existence of the third tree. The

land, however, was not initially suited to sustain a tree of that nature and quality. Therefore, a gradual process needed to be employed, preparing the ground for its ultimate purpose. Once the soil achieved the richness and quality necessary to sustain a tree that could endure forever, the third tree was planted—the tree that was intended from the very start.

In a similar fashion, the Almighty intended all along to build the third Beis HaMikdash in its indescribable brilliance and splendor, swiftly in our days. Knowing, in His infinite Wisdom, that this physical, material world, could not, initially, sustain such a spiritual, holy structure, it was necessary to institute a gradual process involving the first two Batei HaMikdash. Thanks to their existence and the holy service that took place on their grounds over hundreds of years, the land acquired the spiritual potential and quality necessary to sustain and house the sanctity of the third Beis HaMikdash—the handiwork of the Creator, a Bayis that will outshine its predecessors and endure forever.

This, then, is the meaning of David HaMelech's words: 'אם ה' "לא יבנה בית שוא עמלו בוניו בו"—If Hashem will not build the house, the builders will have labored in vain. The fact that we have witnessed the building and the destruction of two Temples is a source of hope and eager anticipation for those awaiting His salvation. If not for His divine plan to build in their place a third Bayis, more magnificent than the first two, why did Hashem bother building and destroying the first two. It would be heresy to suggest that His endeavors are for naught or that they serve no purpose. Certainly, all that has transpired has been in preparation for the anticipated third Beis HaMikdash, which shall be built shortly.

In order to strengthen our belief that the third Beis HaMikdash will certainly be built, David HaMelech said: 'אם ה' "לא יבנה בית". In other words, it is inconceivable that Hashem will not build the third Beis HaMikdash in the future. For that would imply that the first two were built for naught: "שוא עמלו בוניו בו". To say such a thing would be sacrilege and utter nonsense. Rather, we must believe with absolute certainty that HKB"H will build the third Beis HaMikdash in the near future, and that the first two Batei HaMikdash served as essential preparations for its eventual construction.

We can now rejoice at having shed some light on the subject of Yaakov Avinu's immense kedushah and humility: "שש ומתפאר"—he rejoiced and took pride in his own colors. Seeing as the first two Temples which stood in the merits of Avraham and Yitzchak were destroyed, while only the third Beis HaMikdash which stood in Yaakov's merit will endure forever, he could very easily have entertained the notion that he merited something above and beyond what his fathers merited.

Nevertheless, based on what we learned from the Yismach Moshe, we can suggest that Yaakov Avinu did not take credit for this achievement but rather credited the kedushah of his fathers. They paved the way for kedushah in this world via the first two Temples. Solely in their merit will the world be able to withstand the immense kedushah of the third Beis HaMikdash. In this light, we can begin to understand the wonderful allusion used to describe Yaakov Avinu. Despite the fact that only the third Beis HaMikdash—the one built in his merit—will endure for all eternity, nevertheless "he rejoices and takes pride" in the two colors passed down to him from Avraham and Yitzchak. For, it is in their merit that the world will be able to endure the kedushah of the third Bayis, which will be built swiftly, in our times. Amen.



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