

## **The Unification of Torah and Science: Basic Principles and a Case Study on Electromagnetism**

### **Part 26--A Prophetic Vision from the Horizon**

*There is a tradition passed down through Reb Hillel of Paritsch from Rebbe Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev that on the Shabbat before Tisha b'Av, the day of mourning over the destruction of the first and the second Temples, every Jew, at some deep point of his soul, is shown a vision of the Third Temple. That vision is the remedy that precedes the blow of Tisha b'Av itself, when the Temple was destroyed.*

The following parable is used to describe this phenomenon:

*There was once a man who made a beautiful garment for his son, but the son tore it and misused it. The father thought that perhaps the boy was too young to appreciate such a precious gift at this stage of his development, so he waited until the son was a little older and made him another one. However, this garment fared no better than the first one and was soon torn to pieces. The father realized that although he definitely wanted to give his son this beautiful, princely garment, he must use a different policy. He then ordered a third garment for his son (which was even more precious and beautiful than the first two garments) however, this time he put it aside in a closet in his own room and did not allow his*

*son access to the area because he knew that if the boy would get too close to the garment it could get torn. Once a year, the father would take the garment out of the closet and show it to his son from afar, telling him, "Here is the garment that I made for you. If you behave appropriately, I will give it to you."<sup>1</sup>*

The Lubavitcher Rebbe would explain the precise meaning of the phrase "show him from afar." First, the son here does not actively **see** the garment, implying that he does something in order to see it, but he is **shown** it. At a certain level of the soul, each one of us is shown a vision of the Temple, whether or not we actually merit seeing it. Being shown the vision "from afar" relates to our "horizon experience," where the vision is still fuzzy and imprecise. This is to allow scope for change because until the redemption, we will not know how it will be. The Rebbe teaches that the fact that we are shown the vision from afar is to arouse our longing to come closer to it and to effectuate it. This is in contrast to the period of the first two Temples, when, in order to see (lirot u'lhairaot), we simply had to visit three times a year. Since the achievement of this task was relatively easy, there was little motivation to realize it. Yet now, when we are shown the vision of the Temple from afar, our motivation to come closer and merit to clearly see the

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<sup>1</sup> In one *sichah* the Rebbe explained at length why a home [the Temple], which is a particular level of "surrounding light" (מקור), is symbolized here by Rebbe Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev as a garment, which is a different level of *makif*. However, we will merely note here that the garment in this parable symbolizes the home.

Temple is aroused. In order for the vision to become real, our desire to see the "garment" must bring us to the location where the garment is situated, at the very moment when our Father is inclined to show it to us. This is one explanation of the Rebbe's teaching that we must "live with Mashiach," we must aspire to come closer to the horizon, which appears to be fuzzy, yet by approaching that horizon, we make Mashiach imminent and immediate.

One very important analogy is the gift of prophecy, which has to do with the ultimate rectification of the power of imagination. Prophecy entails a meeting of the prophet's talents together with God's desire to communicate. The classic example of a sage who had all the necessary criteria and worthiness to become a prophet, but who nevertheless did not merit receiving prophecy, is Baruch ben Neriyah, the student of the prophet Jeremiah. Here, Baruch had apparently set out to reach the horizon, yet the union between his own readiness and the Divine will never materialized. While the illusion of the horizon being so far may cause a sense of despair or retreat, it should instead be used as a catalyst to motivate us to increase our endeavors to finally achieve the union of these infinite coordinates.