

Moshiach: Does He Come or Do We Bring Him?

Judaism versus Christianity



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Does He Come or Do We Bring Him? – Rabbi Efreim Goldberg

- II. Fundamental principle to believe in the coming of Moshiach
 - a. Rambam -13 Principles of Faith, Yigdal, Hilchos Melachim 11:1
- III. Judaism versus Christianity on Moshiach
 - a. Parenthetically, it is ok to say the name Jesus
 - i. Hagaos Maimoniyos, Gr"a 147:3
 - b. Differences
 - i. Christianity claims Jesus was the Messiah, but of course they are categorically wrong!
 - 1. Jesus did not meet the criteria of Moshiach
 - a. Moshiach must descend on his father's side from Dovid Ha'Melech (Yeshaya 11:1-9, Hoshea 3:4)
 - b. Moshiach must reinforce Torah and halacha, not pervert or distort it. (Hilchos Melachim 11:4)
 - 2. He did not fulfill the messianic prophecies
 - a. Build the 3rd Beis Ha'Mikdash (Yechezkel 37:26)
 - b. Gather all Jews back to the land (Yeshaya 43:5)
 - c. End hatred, oppression and war (Yeshaya 2:4)
 - d. Unite the world as one with recognition of and service to the God of Israel. (Zecharya 14:9)
 - 3. Jewish belief is based on national revelation and not claims of miracles (Rambam, Yesodei Torah 8)
 - ii. A second critical difference often neglected is the question of what will bring Moshiach?
- IV. Does He Come or Do We Bring Him?
 - a. Christianity
 - i. Rabbi Dr. Meir Soloveitchik article
 - 1. Messiah saves humanity because man cannot save himself.
 - 2. Belief in messiah by definition means belief in our inability to become worthy of the messiah and in our needing the messiah to take our sins upon himself.
 - 3. Coming of messiah makes repentance possible
 - b. Judaism
 - i. Belief in Moshiach by definition means belief in our ability to become worthy of Moshiach. Teshuva makes Moshiach possible.
 - 1. Devarim 30:1-3 Redemption depends on teshuva
 - 2. Sanhedrin 97b – when will Moshiach come?
 - a. Maharsha – both opinions agree that teshuva is necessary, their debate is if it can be inspired teshuva or must be self initiated teshuva
 - 3. Rambam hilchos teshuva 7:5
 - 4. Rabbi Soloveitchik Al Ha'Teshuva – How can we say we believe in Moshiach if his arrival depends on us?
- V. Nature of Teshuva
 - a. Christianity
 - i. Fundamental flaw, original sin cannot be repaired
 - b. Judaism
 - i. Soul is fundamentally pure – Elokei neshama she' nasata bi
 - c. We make mistakes
 - i. Dovid – admits his mistakes
 - ii. Bereishis Raba 22:6 – we can control our yetzer ha'rah
- VI. Yichus – lineage
 - a. Moshiach has a scandalous and salacious yichus.
 - i. Midrash – Dovid Ha'Melech is found in Sedom
 - ii. Moshiach was born in episode of Tamar and Yehuda
 - b. Why? Tzidkas Ha'Tzadik – model of ability to do teshuva
- VII. We want Moshiach now!
 - a. Man and the world capable of being redeemed.
 - i. Rabbi Dr. Meir Soloveitchik (69)
 - b. Judaism impact on the world
 - i. Paul Johnson, A History of the Jews
 - ii. John Adams
 - c. We don't calculate when Moshiach is going to come and we don't spend time seeking to identify who he is. That has only resulted in calamity in Jewish history (i.e. Bar Kochva, Shabtai Zvi).
 - i. Sanhedrin 97b, Rambam – Melachim 12:2
 - ii. Lubavitcher Rebbe castigated his Chassidim for this and instead told them to concentrate on what is necessary to bring him.
 - d. Long for Moshiach
 - i. Sha'arei Teshuva – concentrate when saying es tzemach in shemona esrei
 - e. How do we bring him?
 - i. Chafetz Chaim – realize our potential
 - ii. Sfas Emes – love all Jews
 - iii. Chasam Sofer – acts of kindness
 - iv. Chafetz Chaim – maintain peace
 - f. Transform the whole world
 - i. Rebbe 7 mitzvas bnai noach campaign
 - ii. Rabbi Soloveitchik

6. Yeshayahu 11

1. And a shoot shall spring forth from the stem of Jesse, and a twig shall sprout from his roots. א וַיֵּצֵא חֹטֶר מִגֹּזַע יֵשׁוּ וַיִּנְצֵר מִשְׁרָשָׁיו יִפְרֶה:
2. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and heroism, a spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord. ב וַנְּחֵה עָלָיו רוּחַ יְהוָה רוּחַ חֵכְמָה וּבִינָה רוּחַ עֲזָה וּגְבוּרָה רוּחַ דַּעַת וַיְרֵאת יְהוָה:
3. And he shall be animated by the fear of the Lord, and neither with the sight of his eyes shall he judge, nor with the hearing of his ears shall he chastise. ג וְהִרְיָחוּ בִּירְאֵת יְהוָה וְלֹא לְמַרְאֵה עֵינָיו יִשְׁפֹּט וְלֹא לְמִשְׁמַע אָזְנוֹ יוֹכִיחַ:
4. And he shall judge the poor justly, and he shall chastise with equity the humble of the earth, and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth and with the breath of his lips he shall put the wicked to death. ד וְשִׁפֵּט בְּצֶדֶק דְּלִים וְהוֹכִיחַ בְּמִישׁוֹר לְעַנְיֵי אֲרָץ וְהִכָּה אֲרָץ בְּשֵׁבֶט פִּיו וּבְרוּחַ שְׁפָתָיו יִמִּית רָשָׁע:
5. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faith the girdle of his loins. ה וְהָיָה צְדָק אֲזוּר מִתְּנָיו וְהֶאֱמוּנָה אֲזוּר חֲלָצָיו:
6. And a wolf shall live with a lamb, and a leopard shall lie with a kid; and a calf and a lion cub and a fatling [shall lie] together, and a small child shall lead them. ו וְגַר זֵאֵב עִם כֶּבֶשׂ וְנֹמֵר עִם גְּדִי יִרְבֹּץ וְעַגְלֵי וּכְפִיר וּמְרִיא יַחְדָּו וְנֹעַר קִטָּן נִהַג בָּם:
7. And a cow and a bear shall graze together, their children shall lie; and a lion, like cattle, shall eat straw. ז וּפְרָה וְדָב תִּרְעִינָה יַחְדָּו יִרְבְּצוּ יְלָדֵיהֶן וְאַרְיֵה כְּבָקָר יֹאכַל תֶּבֶן:
8. And an infant shall play over the hole of an old snake and over the eyeball of an adder, a weaned child shall stretch forth his hand. ח וְשִׁעֲשַׁע יוֹנֵק עַל חַר פֶּתֶן וְעַל מְאוּרַת צַפְעוֹנֵי גְמוּל יָדוֹ הִדָּה:
9. They shall neither harm nor destroy on all My holy mount, for the land shall be full of knowledge of the Lord as water covers the sea bed. ט לֹא יַרְעוּ וְלֹא יִשְׁחִיתוּ בְּכָל הַר קְדְשִׁי כִּי מְלֵאָה הָאֲרָץ דַּעַת אֶת יְהוָה כַּמַּיִם לַיָּם מִכֶּסֶם:
10. And it shall come to pass on that day, that the root of Jesse, which stands as a banner for peoples, to him shall the nations inquire, and his peace shall be [with] honor. י וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא שְׂרֵשׁ יֵשׁוּ אֲשֶׁר עֹמֵד לְנֶס עַמִּים אֵלָיו גּוֹיִם יִדְרְשׁוּ וְהִיְתָה מִנְחַתוֹ כְּבוֹד:

רשע ואפיקורוס : ד' ואם יעמוד מלך מבית דוד, הוגה בתורה ועוסק במצוות כדוד אביו כפי תורה שבכתב ושבעל פה, ויכוף כל ישראל לילך בה ולחוק בדיקה וילחם מלחמות י"י הרי זה בתזוקת שהוא משיח. אם עשה והצליח ונצח כל האומות שסביביו ובנה מקדש במקומו וקבץ נדחי ישראל הרי זה משיח בודאי : ואם לא הצליח עד כה או נהרג בידוע שאינו זה שהבטיחה עליו תורה והרי הוא ככל מלכי בית דוד השלמים הכשרים שמתו, ולא העמידו הקב"ה אלא לנסות בו רבים שני' ומן המשכילים יכשלו לצרוף בהן ולברר וללבן עד עת קץ כי עוד למועד : אף ישוע הנצרי שדמה שיהיה משיח ונחגג בבית דין, כבר נתנבא בו דניאל שני' ובני פריצי עמך ינשאו להעמיד חזון ונכשלו. וכי יש מכשול גדול מזה, שכל הנביאים דברו שהמשיח גואל ישראל ומושיעם ומקבץ נדחיהם ומחזק מצותו, וזה גרם לאבד ישראל בחרב ולפור שאריתם ולהשפילם ולהחליף התורה ולהטעות רוב העולם לעבוד אלוה מבלעדי י"י : אבל מחשבות בורא עולם אין כה באדם להשיגם כי לא דרכינו דרכיו ולא מחשבותינו מחשבותיו. וכל הדברים האלו של ישוע הנצרי ושל זה הישמעאלי שעמד אחיו אינן אלא לישר דרך למלך המשיח ולתקן את העולם כולו לעבוד את י"י ביחד. שני' כי אז אהפוך אל עמים שפה ברורה לקרוא כולם בשם י"י ולעבדו שכם אחד : כיצד. כבר נתמלא העולם כולו מדברי המשיח ומדברי התורה ומדברי המצוות ופשטו דברים אלו באיים רחוקים ובעמים רבים ערלי לב והם נושאים ונותנים בדברים אלו ובמצוות התורה אלו אומרים מצוות אלו אמת היא וכבר בטלו בזמן הזה ולא היו נוהגות לדורות ואלו אומרים דברים נסתרות יש בהם ואינן כפשוטן וכבר בא משיח וגלה נסתריהם : וכשיעמוד המלך המשיח באמת ויצליח וירום וינשא מיד הם כולן חוזרין ויודעים ששקר נחלו אבותיהם ושנביאיהם ואבותיהם הטעום :

7. Rambam
Hilchos Melachim 11:4

If a king will arise from the House of David who diligently contemplates the Torah and observes its mitzvot as prescribed by the Written Law and the Oral Law as David, his ancestor, will compel all of Israel to walk in (the way of the Torah) and rectify the breaches in its observance, and fight the wars of God, we may, with assurance, consider him Mashiach.

If he succeeds in the above, builds the Temple in its place, and gathers the dispersed of Israel, he is definitely the Mashiach.

He will then improve the entire world, motivating all the nations to serve God together, as Tzechaniah 3:9 states: 'I will transform the peoples to a purer language that they all will call upon the name of God and serve Him with one purpose.'

If he did not succeed to this degree or was killed, he surely is not the redeemer promised by the Torah. Rather, he should be considered as all the other proper and complete kings of the Davidic dynasty who died. God caused him to arise only to test the many, as Daniel 11:35 states: 'And some of the wise men will stumble, to try them, to refine, and to clarify until the appointed time, because the set time is in the future.'

Jesus of Nazareth who aspired to be the Mashiach and was executed by the court was also alluded to in Daniel's prophecies, as *ibid.* 11:14 states: 'The vulgar among your people shall exalt themselves in an attempt to fulfill the vision, but they shall stumble.'

Can there be a greater stumbling block than Christianity? All the prophets spoke of Mashiach as the redeemer of Israel and their savior who would gather their dispersed and strengthen their observance of the mitzvot. In contrast, Christianity caused the Jews to be slain by the sword, their remnants to be scattered and humbled, the Torah to be altered, and the majority of the world to err and serve a god other than the Lord.

Nevertheless, the intent of the Creator of the world is not within the power of man to comprehend, for His ways are not our ways, nor are His thoughts, our thoughts. Ultimately, all the deeds of Jesus of Nazareth and that Ishmaelite who arose after him will only serve to prepare the way for Mashiach's coming and the improvement of the entire world, motivating the nations to serve God together as Tzechaniah 3:9 states: 'I will transform the peoples to a purer language that they all will call upon the name of God and serve Him with one purpose.'

How will this come about? The entire world has already become filled with the mention of Mashiach, Torah, and mitzvot. These matters have been spread to the furthestmost islands to many stubborn-hearted nations. They discuss these matters and the mitzvot of the Torah, saying: 'These mitzvot were true, but were already negated in the present age and are not applicable for all time.'

Others say: 'Implied in the mitzvot are hidden concepts that can not be understood simply. The Mashiach has already come and revealed those hidden truths.'

When the true Messianic king will arise and prove successful, his position becoming exalted and uplifted, they will all return and realize that their ancestors endowed them with a false heritage and their prophets and ancestors caused them to err.

8. Yechezkel 37

25. And they shall dwell on the land that I have given to My servant, to Jacob, wherein your forefathers lived; and they shall dwell upon it, they and their children and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever.

כה וישבו על הארץ אשר נתתי לעבדי
ליעקב אשר ישבו בה אבותיכם וישבו עליה
המה ובניהם ובני בניהם עד עולם ודוד עבדי
נשיא להם לעולם:

26. And I will form a covenant of peace for them, an everlasting covenant shall be with them; and I will establish them and I will multiply them, and I will place My Sanctuary in their midst forever.

כו וכרתי להם ברית שלום ברית עולם יהיה
אותם ונתתים והרביתי אותם ונתתי את
מקדשי בתוכם לעולם:

27. And My dwelling place shall be over them, and I will be to them for a God, and they shall be to Me as a people.

כז והיה משפני עליהם והייתי להם לאלהים
והמה יהיו לי לעם:

28. And the nations shall know that I am the Lord, Who sanctifies Israel, when My Sanctuary is in their midst forever."

כח וידעו הגוים כי אני יהוה מקדש את
ישראל בהיות מקדשי בתוכם לעולם:

9. Yeshayahu 43

5. Fear not for I am with you; from the east I will bring your seed, and from the west I will gather you.

ה אל תירא כי אתך אני ממזרח אביא זרעך
וממערב אקבצך:

6. I will say to the north, "Give," and to the south, "Do not refrain"; bring My sons from afar and My daughters from the end of the earth."

ו אמר לצפון תני ולתימן אל תכלאי הביאי
בני מרחוק ובנותי מקצה הארץ:

10. Yeshayahu 2

4. And he shall judge between the nations and reprove many peoples, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift the sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

ד ושפט בין הגוים והוכיח לעמים רבים
וכתתו חרבותם לאתים ותניתויהם למזמרות
לא ישא גוי אל גוי חרב ולא ילמדו עוד
מלחמה:

11. Zecharya 14

9. And the Lord shall become King over all the earth; on that day shall the Lord be one, and His name one.

ט והיה יהוה למלך על כל הארץ ביום ההוא
יהיה יהוה אחד ושמו אחד:

The Jews did not believe in Moses, our teacher, because of the wonders that he performed. Whenever anyone's belief is based on wonders, [the commitment of] his heart has shortcomings, because it is possible to perform a wonder through magic or sorcery.

All the wonders performed by Moses in the desert were not intended to serve as proof [of the legitimacy] of his prophecy, but rather were performed for a purpose. It was necessary to drown the Egyptians, so he split the sea and sank them in it. We needed food, so he provided us with manna. We were thirsty, so he split the rock [providing us with water]. Korach's band mutinied against him, so the earth swallowed them up. The same applies to the other wonders.

What is the source of our belief in him? The [revelation] at Mount Sinai. Our eyes saw, and not a stranger's. Our ears heard, and not another's. There was fire, thunder, and lightning. He entered the thick clouds; the Voice spoke to him and we heard, "Moses, Moses, go tell them the following:...."

Thus, [Deuteronomy 5:4] relates: "Face to face, God spoke to you," and [Deuteronomy 5:3] states: "God did not make this covenant with our fathers, [but with us, who are all here alive today]."

How is it known that the [revelation] at Mount Sinai alone is proof of the truth of Moses' prophecy that leaves no shortcoming? [Exodus 19:9] states: "Behold, I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people will hear Me speaking to you, [so that] they will believe in you forever." It appears that before this happened, they did not believe in him with a faith that would last forever, but rather with a faith that allowed for suspicions and doubts.

12. Rambam
Hilchos Yesodei Ha'Torah 8

א משה רבינו לא האמינו בו ישראל מפני האותות
שעשה. שהמאמין על פי האותות יש
בלבו דופי שאפשר שיעשה האות בלאט וכשוף. אלא
כל האותות שעשה משה במדבר לפי הצורך עשאו,
לא להביא ראיה על הנבואה. צרך להשקיע את
המצריים, קרע את הים והצלילם בו. צרכנו למוזון,
הוריד לנו המן. צמאו, בקע להם את האבן. כפרו בו
עדת קרח, בלעה אותם הארץ. וכן שאר כל
האותות: ובמה האמינו בו. במעמד הר סיני
שעינינו ראו ולא זר ואזנינו שמעו ולא אחר, האש
והקולות והלפידים, והוא נגש אל הערפל והקול
מדבר אליו ואנו שומעים משה משה לך אמור להם
כך וכך. וכן הוא אומר פנים בפנים דבר יי עמכם.
ונאמר לא את אבותינו כרת יי את הברית הזאת:
ומנין שבמעמד הר סיני לבדו היא הראיה לנבואתו
שהיא אמת שאין בו דופי. שני הנה אנכי בא אליך
בעב הענן בעבור ישמע העם בדברי עמך וגם כך
יאמינו לעולם, מכלל שקודם דבר זה לא האמינו בו
נאמנות שהיא עומדת לעולם אלא נאמנות שיש
אתריה הרהור ומחשבה: ב נמצאו אלו ששולח

13. Rabbi Dr.
Meir Soloveitchik

*"Redemption and the
Power of Man"*
Azure, Winter 2004



Although Catholics and Protestants have long debated the nature and meaning of salvation, the doctrine of redemption through Jesus—of a messiah who saves humanity because it cannot save itself—unites all traditional Christians. A joint statement issued in 1998 by Evangelicals and Catholics Together, a group that includes some of America's most influential Catholic and Evangelical theologians, articulates this shared theological belief:

God created us to manifest his glory and to give us eternal life in fellowship with himself, but our disobedience intervened and brought us under condemnation. As members of the fallen human race, we come into the world estranged from God and in a state of rebellion. This original sin is compounded by our personal acts of sinfulness. The catastrophic consequences of sin are such that we are powerless to restore the ruptured bonds of union with God. Only in the light of what God has done to restore our fellowship with him do we see the full enormity of our loss.

14. Devarim 30

1. And it will be, when all these things come upon you the blessing and the curse which I have set before you that you will consider in your heart, among all the nations where the Lord your God has banished you,

א והיה כי יבאו עליך כל הדברים האלה
הברכה והקללה אשר נתתי לפניך והשבת
אל לבבך בכל הגוים אשר הדיחת יהוה
אלהיך שמה:

2. and you will return to the Lord, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul, and you will listen to His voice according to all that I am commanding you this day you and your children,

ב ושבת עד יהוה אלהיך ושמת בקלו בכל
אשר אנכי מצוך היום אתה ובניך בכל לבבך
ובכל נפשך:

3. then, the Lord, your God, will bring back your exiles, and He will have mercy upon you. He will once again gather you from all the nations, where the Lord, your God, had dispersed you.

ג ושב יהוה אלהיך את שבותך ורחמך ושב
וקבצך מכל העמים אשר הפיצך יהוה אלהיך
שמה:

The Gemara resumes its discussion about the advent of the Messiah:

רב אמר רב – Rav said: כלו כל הקיצין – All the “Ends” have passed,^[46] – ואין הדבר תלוי אלא בתשובה ומעשים טובים – and the matter of the Messiah’s arrival depends only on repentance and good deeds.^[46]

A dissenting view:

אמר רב – But Shmuel says: לא יתעורר באבלו – It is enough for the mourner to endure his period of mourning.^[47]

The Gemara notes that this issue has been debated by Tannaim:

רבנן – This dispute between Rav and Shmuel is parallel to the following dispute between Tannaim: רבי אליעזר אומר – R’ ELIEZER SAYS: אם ישראל עושין תשובה נגאלין – IF THE JEWISH PEOPLE REPENT, THEY WILL BE REDEEMED; – ואם לאו אין נגאלין – AND IF NOT, THEY WILL NOT BE REDEEMED.^[48]

אמר רבי יהושע – R’ YEHOSHUA SAID TO [R’ ELIEZER]: אם אין עושין תשובה אין נגאלין – IF THEY DO NOT REPENT, THEY WILL NOT BE REDEEMED?! אלא תקדוש ברוך הוא מעמיד להן מלך שגזרותיו – RATHER, THE HOLY ONE, BLESSED IS HE, WILL APPOINT A KING OVER THEM WHOSE DECREES WILL BE AS HARSH AS those of HAMAN,^[49] – וישראל עושין תשובה – AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE WILL REPENT. – AND in this way [GOD] WILL BRING THEM BACK TO THE RIGHT path.^[50]

15. Sanhedrin 97b

ושמואל אמר דיו לאב"ה ברי. ר"ל דיו שאובו ישראל מלד אצלן וזולתן ויש קץ לדבר כשיבא זמן גאולה מעמיד להן הקב"ה כו' ומחזירן למוטב שיטשו תשובה וז"ש אר"א אס ישראל עושין תשובה דהיינו תשובה רלונית מלד עמלן שנאמר אבו בניס אובדים ואז ארפא משבוחם והשיב לו רבי יהושע דההוא קרא בתשובה הכרחית קאמר כדאמר לעיל מעמיד להם מלך וכו' ומחזירן למוטב ומייתי חגס נמכרתם דהיינו דומיא דגזירת המן שאמר ליה המלך להמן הכסף נתון לך והעם לעשות צו וגו' וז"ש צעזעזתם כוכבים שהשתחוו לאלם של המן כדאמרינן בפ"ק דמגילה. ואמר וז"ל בפסוק תגאלין לא בתשובה ברי. לכאורה ארבעה הכי משמע לא בכסף

16. Maharsha
R' Shmuel Eidels
1555-1631

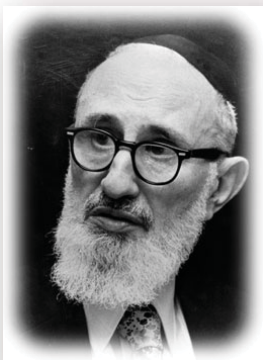
17. Rambam
Hilchos Teshuva 7:5

All the prophets commanded [the people] to repent. Israel will only be redeemed through Teshuvah.

The Torah has already promised that, ultimately, Israel will repent towards the end of her exile and, immediately, she will be redeemed as [Deuteronomy 30:1-3] states: "There shall come a time when [you will experience] all these things... and you will return to God, your Lord.... God, your Lord, will bring back your [captivity]."

מעולם מפני שהן כובשין יצרם יתר מהן : ה' כל הנביאים כולן צו על התשובה. ואין ישראל נגאלין אלא בתשובה. וכבר הבטיחה תורה שסוף ישראל לעשות תשובה בסוף גלותן ומיד הן נגאלין, שני והיה כי יבאו עליך כל הדברים האלה הברכה והקללה אשר נתתי לפניך והשבות אל לבבך בכל הגוים אשר הדיחך יי' אלהיך שמה ושבת עד יי' אלהיך ושמעת בקולו ככל אשר אנכי וגו' ושב יי' אלהיך את שבותך וריחמך ושב וקבצך מכל העמים אשר הפיצך יי' אלהיך שמה : ו גדולה תשובה

18. *Al Ha'Teshuva*
Rabbi Yosef Dov
Soloveitchik
1903-1993



Maimonides supports Rabbi Eliezer in this controversy: "Israel cannot be redeemed without repentance" (Laws of Repentance, Chapter 7, Section 5). But it is not that simple, as this postulation threatens to topple our faith in the advent of the Messiah, which is one of the cornerstones of the Jewish belief, which Maimonides himself laid down as the final and concluding rule of his Thirteen Principles. If we accept Rabbi Yehoshua's opinion that both those who have and those who have not repented will be redeemed, the matter can rest. We would then have a basis for our belief that the Messiah will arrive whatever happens. It would then be possible to declare with assurance: "I believe with complete faith in the advent of the Messiah and though he may tarry I will await his coming every day." But if one accepts Maimonides' opinion and sides with Rabbi Eliezer who says that the coming of the Messiah is dependent upon repentance and that if it does not take place then there will be no redemption, how is it possible to declare, "I believe with complete faith in the advent of the Messiah

and though he may tarry I will await his coming every day"; it is possible that he will tarry indefinitely if Israel does not repent; what sense is there in awaiting his coming daily?

Maimonides was not oblivious to this contradiction and he went on to say: "The Torah has already assured us that Israel will finally repent at the end of their exile and immediately be redeemed." Though this is not an unconditional promise regarding the advent of the Messiah there is an assurance that *Knesset Israel* as an entity will not be extinguished and will never be exterminated. This promise has dual significance: *Knesset Israel* will never be wiped out physically and will never terminate its existence through spiritual assimilation or contamination. True, there are countless numbers of Jews who have wandered afar and gone astray in alien pastures, but "in the end Israel will repent." It emerges from this that *faith in the coming of the Messiah is dependent upon our faith in Knesset Israel*. This implies that however far the Jewish people may go

astray and become alienated from Judaism and fall prey to assimilation, in the end it will be restored. If we allow this faith to waver, then our entire belief in the coming of the Messiah is undermined! “The Torah has already promised that Israel will finally repent at the end of their exile and immediately be redeemed, as it is written, ‘And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse . . . and you shall return unto the Lord thy God’”; and then: “That when the Lord your God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon you, and will return and gather you from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God has scattered you.”

The concluding and most difficult credo, “I believe in the coming of the Messiah” is thus based upon faith in *Knesset Israel*. It is not an easy faith.

Let me confess: sometimes, in bed at night, when I cannot sleep and my mind wanders, I am assailed by sober thoughts

and overtaken by worry concerning the Jews in Eretz Israel and the fate of Diaspora Jewry. As far as the Diaspora is concerned, it seems to us that despite all of our great efforts, despite the growth of the yeshivas and the flowering of wonderful religious youth, we are a very small portion of the Jewish population of America, a tiny percentage, lonely island in a vast sea. And doubt gnaws away: will we not also be swept away by these strong waves of assimilation which rage around us in America? Thus, doubt gnaws away, but nonetheless I am very much distressed when Jews from Eretz Israel come and claim this as being so, and say that all hope is lost and that Jewish life in America is disappearing. Such a view, in my opinion, strikes a blow and wounds our faith in *Knesset Israel* which we are commanded to keep. This faith is not limited to the community in Eretz Israel, but to all Jews wherever they may be. For this is something we have been told: “If any of you be driven out unto the outmost ends of the horizon, from thence will the Lord thy God gather you.” “If any of you be driven out” does not necessarily refer to the Jew living at a great geographical distance; the reference to those driven out “unto the outmost ends of the horizon” is to the spiritually estranged, to Jews who have deserted, assimilated and have become extremely alienated from other Jews and Judaism. Even regarding these we have a standing assurance that “if any of you be driven out unto the outmost ends of the horizon, from thence will the Lord thy God gather you.” Every prediction about “spiritual extinction” and “complete assimilation” is contrary to faith in *Knesset Israel*, which is the same as faith in the advent of the Messiah, a foundation-stone of Judaism! And as has already been affirmed, “in the end Israel will repent.”

Another problem, similar to the first but graver still (I even fear to express it!) is our anxiety about the Jews in the Land of Israel. Here the danger to Jewish existence is more physical than spiritual. The State of Israel is surrounded on all

sides by enemies who seek its destruction. In this regard too, our only strength and security is our firm faith in *Knesset Israel*, in the spiritual sense in the Diaspora, and in the physical sense in Eretz Israel.

A Jew who has lost his faith in *Knesset Israel*, even though he may personally sanctify and purify himself by being strict in his observance of the precepts and by assuming prohibitions upon himself—such a Jew is incorrigible and totally unfit to join in the Day of Atonement which encompasses the whole of *Knesset Israel*, in all its components and all its generations. Only the Jew who believes in *Knesset Israel* may partake of the sanctity of the Day and the acquittal granted to him as part of the community of Israel. The Jew who believes in *Knesset Israel* is the Jew who lives as part of it wherever it is and is willing to give his life for it, feels its pain, rejoices with it, fights in its wars, groans at its defeats and celebrates its victories. The Jew who believes in *Knesset Israel* is a Jew who binds himself with unseverable bonds not only to the People of Israel of his own generation but to the community of Israel throughout the ages. How so? Through the Torah which embodies the spirit and the destiny of Israel from generation to generation unto eternity.

How ought we approach God in repentance? What should our orientation be when we beg forgiveness from the Almighty? Jesus' answer is that we come before God not merely as men who have sinned and now wish to repent, but rather as sinners, whose sins reveal something ontologically awry, a metaphysical flaw in ourselves, that we cannot repair on our own.

19. Rabbi Dr.
Meir Soloveitchik
"Redemption and the
Power of Man"

20. Siddur

<p style="text-align: center;">אֱלֹהִי</p> <p style="text-align: center;">נְשַׁמָּה שְׁנַתַּת בִּי טְהוֹרָה הִיא.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">אֶתָּה בְּרֵאתָהּ, אֶתָּה יִצְרָתָהּ, אֶתָּה נִפְחַתָּהּ בִּי</p> <p style="text-align: center;">וְאֶתָּה מְשַׁמְרָהּ בְּקִרְבִּי, וְאֶתָּה עֹתִיד לְטַלְהָ מִמֶּנִּי</p> <p style="text-align: center;">וְלִהְיוֹתָּהּ בִּי לְעֹתִיד לְבוֹא.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">כָּל זְמַן שֶׁהַנְּשַׁמָּה בְּקִרְבִּי, מוֹדָה / women מוֹדָה / אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ</p> <p style="text-align: center;">יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי</p> <p style="text-align: center;">רְבוֹן כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים, אֲדוֹן כָּל הַנְּשָׁמוֹת.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַמְּחַיֵּי נְשָׁמוֹת לְפָגְרִים מֵתִים.</p>	<p>My God, the soul You placed within me is pure. You created it, You formed it, You breathed it into me, and You guard it while it is within me. One day You will take it from me, and restore it to me in the time to come. As long as the soul is within me, I will thank You, LORD my God and God of my ancestors, Master of all works, LORD of all souls. Blessed are You, LORD, who restores souls to lifeless bodies.</p>
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21. Shmuel 2:12

<p>13. And David said to Nathan: "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan said to David, "Also the Lord has removed your sin; you shall not die.</p>	<p>יג וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל נָתָן חֲטָאתִי לַיהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר נָתָן אֶל דָּוִד גַּם יְהוָה הֶעֱבִיר חֲטָאתְךָ לֹא תָמוּת:</p>
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22. Shmuel 2:24

<p>17. And David said to the Lord when he saw the angel that smote among the people, and he said, "Behold I have sinned, and have acted iniquitously; but these sheep, what have they done? I beg that Your hand be against me, and against my father's house."</p>	<p>יז וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל יְהוָה בְּרֵאתוֹ אֵת הַמַּלְאָךְ הַמֶּכֶה בְּעַם וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי חֲטָאתִי וְאֲנֹכִי הַעֲוִיתִי וְאֵלֶּה הַצֹּאן מֶה עָשׂוֹ תְהִי נָא יָדְךָ בִּי וּבְבֵית אָבִי:</p>
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23. Midrash
Bereishis Rabba 22:6

„ואליה תשוקתו ואתה תמשל-בו“ (ד, ז). ר' סימון אמר: אם
בא יצרך להשחיקה, שמחהו בדברי תורה, שנאמר: „יצר
סמוך“; ואם עשית כן, מעלה אני עליה, כאלו בראת את שני
העולמות. „תצר שלום“ לא כתוב כאן, אלא „שלום, שלום“.

24. Midrash
Bereishis Rabbah 41:4

§4 הָיָה צֹאן וּבָקָר וְאֹהֳלִים – ALSO LOT WHO WENT WITH ABRAM HAD FLOCKS, CATTLE, AND TENTS.

Owning tents does not appear to be a sign of wealth. The Midrash therefore gives a homiletical explanation:

R' Toviya son of R' Yitzchak said: רַבִּי טוֹבִיָּה בֶר רַבִּי יִצְחָק אָמַר – שְׁנֵי אֹהֳלִים רוּת הַמּוֹאֲבִיָּה וְנַעֲמָה הָעַמּוֹנִית – *Tents*, in the plural, refers to two “tents”: Ruth the Moabitess^[42] and Naamah the Ammonitess.^[44]

Similar to this, it is written, *The angels urged Lot on saying, “Get up, take your wife and your two daughters who are present (lit., found), etc.”* (below, 19:15).

And here, too, R' Toviya son of R' Yitzchak said that the reference is to two tents – i.e., these illustrious descendants of Lot: רַבִּי יוֹסֵי בֶרְבִּי – R' Yose son of R' Yitzchak said: שְׁתֵּי מִצִּיאוֹת רוּת – The phrase *your two daughters who are found* refers to the two “finds”^[45] – Ruth the Moabitess and Naamah the Ammonitess.^[46]

It is written, *I have found David, My servant (Psalms 89:21).* הֵיכַן – R' Yitzchak said: מִצִּיאוֹת דָּוִד עַבְדִּי – *And where did I (God) “find” him?*^[47] In Sodom.⁸

25. Midrash
Bereishis Rabba 85:1

ר' שְׁמוּאֵל בֶּן נַחֲמָן פָּתַח: «כִּי אֲנֹכִי יִדְעָתִי אֶת-הַמַּחְשָׁבָה, אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי חָשַׁב עֲלֵיכֶם» (ירמיה כט, יא) – שְׂבָטִים הָיוּ עֲסוּקִים בְּמַכִּירְתוֹ שֶׁל יוֹסֵף, וְיוֹסֵף הָיָה עֲסוּק בְּשִׂקּוֹ וּבְתַעֲנִיתוֹ, וְיַעֲקֹב הָיָה עֲסוּק בְּשִׂקּוֹ וּבְתַעֲנִיתוֹ, וְיִהְיֶה הָיָה עֲסוּק לְקַח לוֹ אִשָּׁה, וְהַקְבָּה בּוֹרָא אוֹרוֹ שֶׁל מֶלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחִים: «וְהִי בָעֵת הַהִיא וַיֵּרֶד יְהוּדָה» וְגו':

26. Tzidakas Ha'Tzadik
R' Tzadok Ha'Kohen of Lublin
1823-1900

והוא הנפש האחרון שבגוף והיותר סמוך לרע ככל מיני תוקף. ובעולם הזה הדורות הולכים ומתקטנים, אבל אז כשיתוקן יהיה בטוב סוף מעשה במחשבה תחילה, בסוד החיות רצוא ושוב כמראה הבזק, שממקום שפוסק משם חוזר ומתחיל להאיר ונעשה זה ראש ונתהפכו תחתונים למעלה, וכמו שאמרו ז"ל (פסחים ג.) עולם הפוך ראיתי.

The redemption will emerge precisely from a place of lust and sin, by means of repentance (teshuvah). The Talmud says, in Sanhedrin 98a, “The son of David [i.e., the Messiah] will come only in a generation that is entirely wicked.” David is the archetype for the messianic soul because he showed how to make repentance into a life principle... And just that is the realization of ultimate fulfillment – that the root of evil will be transformed to good... At that time, the lowest will become the highest.”

[קיא] בעקבתא דמשיחא העיקר הוא רק להוציא יקר מזולל, ורק במקום יצר הרע ותגבורת עוונות משם יקחך דייקא על ידי תשובה. כמו שאמרו בחלק (סנהדרין צח.) בן דוד בא בדור שכולו חייב, ונפש כזה הוא מחלקו של משיח, וכן דוד המלך ע"ה נקרא שהקים עולה של תשובה. כידוע דכנסת ישראל רגליה ירודות וכו' (למקום הטומאה) רחמנא ליצלן, ובעקבי משיח הנפשות מן הרגליים, ושם תגבורת הרע והיצר, ולכך דוד של נפשות כאלו דייקא יזכו למשיח, כמו שאמרו ז"ל (בר"ר ט) טוב מאד זה יצר הרע. וכן משיח עצמו נולד ממקום כזה, כידוע מה שאמרו במדרש הנעלם פירשת וירא על בנות לוט ולוט, שהם שורש כח היצר הרע ומשם נצמח שורש בן דוד. והיינו שזהו תכלית השלימות שיהיה אז, שיתהפך שורש הרע לטוב, שזה שחיטת היצר דאיתא בסוכה (נב.),

Moreover, Maimonides here expands on the connection between the messianic redemption and the worthiness of those who will be redeemed. In *Laws of Repentance*, we were informed of the prophets' promise that the Jews would repent. Now, however, Maimonides takes up a more universal theme: The preparation for the messiah involves not only Israel, but also the influence of Jewish teaching on humanity. This may not require that all mankind become righteous in the period prior to the end of days. Nevertheless, Maimonides' vision insists not only that the redemption of Israel is dependent on the repentance of the Jews, but also that humanity, at least partially, will first have to become worthy. In the messianic era, the world will finally, of its own accord, learn to worship God with "one consent," with no salvational messiah taking its sins upon himself.

This, then, is the theological essence of Judaism: A belief that man has been blessed with the ability to become deserving of redemption, an ability that man's sinfulness does not foreclose. Reflecting on this contrast between Maimonides and the New Testament, Haifa University philosophy professor Menachem Kellner noted that Paul, "because of his revolutionary, un-Jewish view of human nature as necessarily falling short of the glory of God, was led to ask the wrong question. The question that Jews must ask is: What must we do in order to make the world messiah-worthy?"⁴¹ For Christians, the messiah arrived because man could not conquer his own lust. Judaism, in contrast, has always insisted that the redeemer will not arrive until man has learned to rule himself—and that man has the ability to do so.

27. *Rabbi Dr.
Meir Soloveitchik*

*"Redemption and the
Power of Man"
Azure, Winter 2004*



28. *Jewish Impact
on the World*

"To [the Jews] we owe the idea of equality before the law, both divine and human; of the sanctity of life and the dignity of the human person; of the individual conscience and so of social responsibility...and many other items which constitute the basic moral furniture of the human mind. Without the Jews it might have been a much emptier place."

Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews*

"I will insist the Hebrews have [contributed] more to civilize men than any other nation. If I was an atheist and believed in blind eternal fate, I should still believe that fate had ordained the Jews to be the most essential instrument for civilizing the nations ... They are the most glorious nation that ever inhabited this Earth. The Romans and their empire were but a bubble in comparison to the Jews. They have given religion to three-quarters of the globe and have influenced the affairs of mankind more and more happily than any other nation, ancient or modern."

- John Adams, Second President of the United States
(*From a letter to F. A. Van der Kemp [Feb. 16, 1808] Pennsylvania Historical Society*)

29. Sanhedrin 97b

The Gemara discusses the verse cited at the beginning of the Baraisa:

“מאי .. ויפח לקץ ולא יזכוב” – **What is the meaning of: *It shall speak of the End, and it shall not lie?***^[27]

The Gemara answers:

R' Shmuel Bar Nachmani said in the name of R' Yonasan: **תיפח עץמן של – May the very essence of those who calculate “Ends” suffer agony**^[28] – **שהיו אומרים – For they say:** **“Since the date of the End that**

calculated has arrived and [the Messiah] did not come, **שוב – Rather, one should wait for him,** **אָלֵא תָּבֵהּ לוֹ – he will never come!**^[29] **– as it is said: if he tarries, wait for him.**^[30] **– שְׂמָא תֵּאמֵר – Lest you counter that** **אָנוּ מְחַבְּיָן וְהוּא אֵינוּ מְחַבֵּהּ – we are awaiting the Messiah, but [God] is not awaiting him,**^[31] **– תִּלְמוּד לומר – Scripture therefore states:** **וְלָבֵן יִחְבֶּה ה' לְחַנּוּכָם וְלָבֵן יָרוּם – And therefore HASHEM waits**^[32] **– to grant you favor; and therefore He is exalted – to grant you mercy.**^[33] **– וְכִי מֵאַחַר שְׂאֵנוּ מְחַבְּיָם מִי מַעֲבֵב – And if you ask that since we are awaiting the Messiah** **– וְהוּא מְחַבֵּהּ – and God is awaiting him,** **– מִדַּת הַדִּין מְעַבְּרָת – the answer is that the Divine Attribute of Justice is preventing him from coming.**^[34] **– וְכִי מֵאַחַר שְׂמִדַּת הַדִּין מְעַבְּרָת אָנוּ לְמַדָּה מְחַבְּיָן – And if you ask that since the Divine Attribute of Justice prevents him from coming, why do we await him**^[35] **– לְקַבֵּל – the answer is that we await him in order to receive**

reward.^[36] **– שְׂמָא תֵּאמֵר, אֲשֶׁרֵי כָּל־חֹבֵי לוֹ” – as it is stated:** **Fortunate are all who wait for him.**^[37]

Our Sages taught: "There will be no difference between the current age and the Messianic era except the emancipation from our subjugation to the gentile kingdoms."

The simple interpretation of the prophets' words appear to imply that the war of Gog and Magog will take place at the beginning of the Messianic age. Before the war of Gog and Magog, a prophet will arise to inspire Israel to be upright and prepare their hearts, as [Malachi 3:22](#) states: 'Behold, I am sending you Elijah.'

He will not come to declare the pure, impure, or to declare the impure, pure. He will not dispute the lineage of those presumed to be of proper pedigree, nor will he validate the pedigree of those whose lineage is presumed blemished. Rather, he will establish peace within the world as *ibid.* 3:24 continues: 'He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.'

There are some Sages who say that Elijah's coming will precede the coming of the Mashiach. All these and similar matters cannot be definitely known by man until they occur for these matters are undefined in the prophets' words and even the wise men have no established tradition regarding these matters except their own interpretation of the verses. Therefore, there is a controversy among them regarding these matters.

Regardless of the debate concerning these questions, neither the order of the occurrence of these events or their precise detail are among the fundamental principles of the faith. A person should not occupy himself with the *Aggadot* and homiletics concerning these and similar matters, nor should he consider them as essentials, for study of them will neither bring fear or love of God.

Similarly, one should not try to determine the appointed time for Mashiach's coming. Our Sages declared: 'May the spirits of those who attempt to determine the time of Mashiach's coming expire!' Rather, one should await and believe in the general conception of the matter as explained.

30. Rambam
Hilchos Melachim 12:2

משל ומה ענין רמזו בהן ב אמרו חכמים אין בין העולם הזה לימות המשיח אלא שעבוד מלכיות בלבד : יראה מפורטן של דברי הנביאים שבתחילת ימות המשיח תהיה מלחמת גוג ומגוג. ושקודם מלחמת גוג ומגוג יעמוד נביא לישראל לישר ישראל ולהכין לבם. שני הנה אנכי שולח לכם את אליה הנביא. ואינו בא לא לטמא הטהור ולא לטהר הטמא ולא לפסול אנשים שהם בחזקת כשרות ולא להכשיר מי שהוחזקו פסולין, אלא לשום שלום בעולם שני והשיב לב אבות על בנים : ויש מן החכמים שאומרים שקודם ביאת המלך המשיח יבא אליהו. וכל אלו הדברים וכיוצא בהן לא ידע אדם היאך יהיו עד שיהיו, שדברים סתומים הן אצל הנביאים. גם החכמים אין להם קבלה בדברים אלו אלא לפי הכרע הפוסקים ולפיכך יש להם מחלוקת בדברים אלו. ועל כל פנים אין סדור הויית דברים אלו ולא דקדוקן עיקר בדת : ולעולם לא יתעסק אדם בדברי ההגדות ולא יאריך בדברי מדרשות האמורים בעניינים אלו וכיוצא בהן ולא ישימם עיקר, שאינן מביאין לא לידי אהבה ולא לידי יראה. וכן לא יחשוב הקצין, אמרו חכמים תפוח דעתן של מחשבי קצין. אלא יחכה ויאמין בכלל הדבר כמו שבארנו : ג בימי המלך

31. *Turning Judaism Outward*
R' Chaïm Miller

Biography of Lubavitcher Rebbe
R' Menachem Mendel Schneerson
1902-1994



All this, the Rebbe felt, was not something to be completely relegated to the future, but must be initiated in the current era, as a “bridge” to the Era of Redemption. As we have seen, the Rebbe viewed the Messianic event as largely in the hands of G-d, but also as something that required human participation (see p. 330). In order that the Redemption should not represent a rupture of history by G-d, it is crucial that man first become receptive and actively prepared for it. In the Rebbe’s view, this “preparation” encompassed two key areas: a.) increased *mitzvah* observance, and b.) broadening the study and application of Chasidut.¹⁰²

That was, more or less, the full extent of his practical message. He did not favor any this-worldly efforts to rebuild the Third Temple in Jerusalem.¹⁰³ He did not encourage *aliyah* (emigration to Israel) as an activity that would hasten the coming of Mashiach.¹⁰⁴ He did not point to any physical “Wars of G-d” to be fought.¹⁰⁵ He certainly did not encourage

any changes in Jewish law, which he consistently encouraged to be observed meticulously. And while he upheld the traditional belief that the Mashiach would be a man of flesh and blood, he did not deem the identification of Mashiach’s identity as important.

This last point seems to have been based on Maimonides’ ruling¹⁰⁶ that Mashiach’s identity cannot be known with certainty until the Third Temple has been built and the exiles gathered in. As the Rebbe stressed in a 1968 letter, that even after Mashiach has

impelled all the Jewish people to study the Torah and to mend its fences, we are still not sure and require a further sign, namely, *and built the Holy Temple in its place* (clearly in the holy city of Jerusalem, indicating that there would be a large Jewish population in that city, yet we are still not certain of the end of the *Galut* (Exile), so a further factor must be fulfilled, namely), *and he gathers in the dispersed ones of Israel—then he is certainly the Mashiach.*¹⁰⁷

What frustrated the Rebbe throughout this latter period, when he vigorously stressed the need to pray for the Redemption and pointed at signs of its imminence, was the recurring tendency of his followers to place the ball back in his court.

A striking example took place at Sunday dollars on 14th April 1991. “Rebbe,” one lady burst forth, “we have relied on you all the years that you would bring the Mashiach.... The task is too great for us. We want you to bring Mashiach.”

“If it’s something too difficult for the Jewish people,” the Rebbe responded, “how could it be possible for me? I am just one person.”

The lady persisted. “But you are our Rebbe! You must bring the Mashiach.”

The Rebbe pointed to himself and said, “If I am Rebbe, then I have spoken clearly that this needs to be done by the Jewish people, including you.” Pointing to the people standing around, he continued, “and this person, and this person.”⁸⁹

The Rebbe did not want to be perceived as a soothsayer who had predicted an event that people were simply waiting to unfold.⁹⁰ The point of the Messianic arousal had been to stimulate growth among the people, to radically uplift their standards of worship. Arguably, he

Unlike Christianity, where belief in a particular individual as the Messiah is seen as a crucial condition of Redemption, the normative view of Judaism, as codified by Maimonides, is that the identity of the Messiah cannot be known with certainty before he completes his work. He will eventually be identified only as the *result* of this activity, from which it follows that, to bring the Redemption, we need to focus on the work and not on the persona. As we have seen, in the Rebbe's view this work consisted primarily of spreading Torah and *mitzvot*, disseminating Chasidut, and encouraging the belief in, and yearning for, the future era.

Ironically, any focus on the persona of Mashiach is liable to *detract* from the work of bringing the Redemption. After Judaism's long history of false and failed Messiahs, especially the huge debacle of Shabbatai Zvi in the 17th Century, Jews have tended to view any Messianic pretender with intense suspicion and distrust. If we do not need to know, and cannot know with certainty, who the Messiah is—as Maimonides implies¹⁰⁸—then this potentially contentious issue ought to be avoided.

This was the Rebbe's view, articulated in a memorable 1984 sermon. When some of his followers began to sing a song in his presence identifying him as the Messiah, he interrupted them and said:

I would like to speak about something negative that requires fixing... There are some overzealous Chabadniks (*shpitz Chabad*¹⁰⁹) who imagine that *they* are the ones who know what needs to be done, and how it should be done. They are unmoved when those around them sometimes attempt to dissuade them from something negative. They think to themselves: Who are these people to tell me what to do? Not one of them is *shpitz Chabad!*

What I am referring to is those who, as a result of their statements, verbal and printed, and their songs, have alienated many Jews from the teachings of the Ba'al Shem Tov, the study and approach of Chasidut. In fact there are Jews who had begun to study Chasidut and as a result of these individuals' activities, they have stopped doing so. Not only are they failing to bring Jews closer, they are alienating those who have already begun to come close....

Let it therefore be known that anyone who continues with such activities, fights a war against Chabad Chasidut, against the Rebbe [Rayatz], against the Ba'al Shem Tov, and against Mashiach himself, who wants to come but is waiting for the further dissemination of Chasidut. These people, on the other hand, are distancing Jews from studying Chasidut, G-d forbid.

May G-d spare me from having to repeat this directive again.¹¹⁰

The sermon made a very strong impression and effectively silenced any attempts to publicly identify the Rebbe as a potential Mashiach for several years.

The Gemara presents an alternative exposition of this verse:
אמר רבא – Rava said: – When they escort a person to his final, Heavenly judgment after his death,
נשאת ונתת [the Heavenly tribunal] says to him: – אומרים לו – Did you conduct your business transactions faithfully?
– Did you set aside fixed times for Torah study?⁽³⁶⁾ – Did you engage in procreation?⁽³⁶⁾ – Did you wait in hope for the Messianic salvation? – Did you delve into wisdom?
– When you learned Torah, did you learn it deeply, and infer one thing from another?⁽³⁷⁾
– But even so, all this is only of limited consequence; – if fear of God was [this person's] “storehouse,” then yes, his judgment is favorable; – and if it was not, then no, his judgment is not favorable.

32. Shabbos 31a

33. Sha'arei Teshuva
 OC 118

כמ"ס בשם האר"י ז"ל. וענין חמירה נחם נט"כ יבואר ח"ו"ה כהל' ת"צ. ובאומרו ישועתך קוינו וכוון למה שזאלים אחר מיתהו לפי ליטועה ולכן תכוון שחיה מן המקיים ליטועהו וכחז מהר"י למה ז"ל וגם אני מכוון לנפוח ליטועה ה' שבוכה עמו להיילנו ממנה פגעים רעים בכל יום ובכל רגע ומוחתי חועלת גדול כמה פעמים לטהות ברה בזה עכ"ל:

התעוררות להתגלות כבוד ה'.

הנה ידוע לכל, שיכול הקדוש ברוך הוא לשלח לנו משיח צדקנו בכל יום, וכדמצינו בגמרא (עריבין מ"ג): האומר: הריני גזיר, ביום שכן דוד בא בו, אסור ביני בכל הימים, שמא הוא בא באותו יום. עוד אמרו ת"ל (סנהדרין צ"ח): שאלו למשיח צדקנו, אימתי יבוא, והשיב: יכול אני לבוא בכל יום, אם רק תזכרו לזה, והיננו (תהלים צ"ה ו'): "היום אם בקולו תשמעו". גם כתיב (במלאכי ג' כ"ג): "הנה אנכי שלח לכם את אליה הנביא". וכאשר גדיק היטב, נראה, דלא כתיב לשון אשלח, שמשמע לעתיד, אלא כתיב "שלח" בחולם - לשון הנה. ובגמרא: יכול אני לשלח אותו לכם בכל עת ובכל זמן, רק אם תזכרו לזה. הנה מכל הנ"ל נראה שחפץ הקדוש ברוך הוא, שנכין עצמנו בכל מה דאפשר, ובמאמר (שיר השירים רבה ה'): פתחו לי פתח במחט של סדקית, ואני אפתח לכם פתח פתחו של אולם.

34. Zachor L'Miriam 18
 Chafetz Chaim
 R' Yisroel Meir Kagan
 1838-1933

היה אם שאול ישאלנו: כמה נתקן, וכמה עלינו להיות נכונים לביאתו של משיח צדקנו? ואען ואמר, שאין הקדוש ברוך הוא רוצה ממנו גדולות, ודברים שאי אפשר לנו להשיגם. אלא כל אחד ואחד, לפי מה שהוא כפי יכולתו. אם יכול ללמד משנה, צריך לקבץ לו זמן בכל יום, שבאותו זמן תפנה מעסקיו וילמד שעור משנה שלו. וכן אם יש לו לב להכין ציון יצקב, מדרש וכהאי גוונא, ילמד מה שיש ביכולתו. וכל שכן אם הוא איש שיש לו ביכלת להכין גם בגמרא ובהלכה, מחזיב גם כן לקבץ לו זמן ללמוד הגמרא והלכה.

כן הדבר בענינו. הקדוש ברוך הוא השנה שכינתו אצלנו בבית ראשון, ואחר כך בבית שני. ומפני עונותינו הסיר שכינתו מאתנו, ואין ברצונו לשוב אלינו, אם לא שנושב מדרבננו הרעה, שהלכנו עד פה, ולא נשוב לכסלה עוד. ונרגיל עצמנו להיות זהירים בקדשת בית המדרש ובית הכנסת, שהם לעת עתה מקדש שלנו, כמו שנאמר (ויקרא י"א ט"ו): "ואהי להם למקדש מעט", והנה תקון בזה על העבר. ואז קרוב ליראיו ישעו לשכן כבוד בארצנו". רוצה לומר, אז קרובה ישועת ה' לבוא ולשלח לנו משיח צדקנו, ונשוב לארצנו במהרה בקימינו.



על כן, אחי ורעי, צריכים אנו להכין את עצמנו בכל מה שיש בכוחנו לביאת משיחנו. וכל אחד ואחד יתחזק לשוב בתשובה שלמה לפני ה', כדי שנוזף להתגלות כבוד ה' בעולם כרצונו, במהרה בקימינו, אמן.



35. Sfas Emes – Rosh Hashana 5641
R' Yehudah Aryeh Leib Alter
1847-1905

Since the Temple was destroyed by baseless hatred, therefore, it will surely be rebuilt by loving our fellow Jews.

כיון שע"י שנאת חנם נחרב. כ"ש שע"י אהבת ישראל
יהי נבנה בעזה"י.

36. Chasam Sofer Haqddah
R' Moshe Sofer
1762-1839

If you will ask, "What have we gained in being freed from Egypt, we are back in exile!" Rather, the difference is that when we were enslaved in Egypt we did not have the capability to expedite our redemption; however, in this exile we are capable of ending it through acts of kindness. That is why [at the beginning of the Passover Seder we invite guests into our homes saying], "Whoever is hungry come and join the Seder." In that merit [we can rebuild the Temple] and be "Next Year in Jerusalem!"

בהא לחמא עניא וכו'. י"ל בשנין אחר
שאנו עתה בגלות מה הרווחנו
בגאולת מצרים, עד שאנו מרבים לקפר כ"כ
צ"מ ואנחנו בחוץ הגולה. י"ל דצמצרים לא
הי' צידנו לקרב גאולתינו בשום אופן מזמן
שהי' קצוב לאאט"ה, והקצ"ה שדילג על הקץ
היינו ע"י שחיטת מלידת יצחק או קישוי
השיעבוד השלים, או שארי תירושים שהזכירו
המפרשים, משא"כ בגלות זה שאין לו זמן
קצוב היום אם שקולו תשמעו [כסנהדרין ל"ה
ע"א], ואין הדבר תלוי אלא בנו, ויש כמה
מנות קלות מאוד כשמקיים אותם מקרב
הגאולה, והקלה שכולן אחז"ל [צ"ב י" ע"א]
גדולה דקה שמקרבת הגאולה, שמרו משפט
ועשו דקה כי קרובה ישועתי לצוא ולדקתי
להגלות, וה"ל כמי שיש לו פת בצלו, ואינו
נחשב לגלות כלל נגד גלות מצרים, והיינו
דקאמר כהא לחמא עניא די אכלו אצבתא
וכו', פ"י שזאת המנה היא ממש כאותו לחם
עוני שאכלנו צמצרים, שהרי גם עתה אנחנו
בגולה אלא שמ"מ עתה צידנו לקרב
גאולתינו ע"י מנות דקה שכשאלו אומרים
כל דכפין ייתי ויכול צזכות זה השתא הכא
לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל.

37. Shemiras Ha'Lashon
Chafetz Chaim

It is written in the name of the Holy Zohar that even one congregation that maintains peace properly can merit bringing the Mashiach. Therefore, the coming of the Mashiach is dependent upon us. And it is known that preserving peace can only be accomplished if we are careful in avoiding both baseless hatred and speaking derogatorily of one another. Each individual who endeavors to rectify these shortcomings will have a share in rebuilding the future Temple; without this, the Temple could remain destroyed forever, God forbid.

והנה כתבו הספרים בשם הזוה"ק דבי כנישתא חדא
אם היו שומרים מדת השלום כדבעי יכולים לזכות
לביאת המשיח, אם כן ביאת המשיח תלויה בידינו.
וידוע שבמדת השלום אין אנו יכולים לזכות בה רק
אם נהיה זהירים מתחלה מעון שנאת חנם ולשה"ר וכל
אחד שיתחזק לתקן החטא הזה יהיה לו חלק בבית
הבנוי לעתיד, דכלתם היה הבית הרב לעולם ח"ו.

Despite this prohibitive setback in the campaign, the Rebbe's overall reaction to the issue is important as it provides some insight into his views on Messianism, an issue which would dominate his sermons increasingly in the coming years.

From this response, and others, we see that the Rebbe viewed Messianism as sitting at the intersection between current events and religious belief. Rather than understanding the future utopia promised by the prophets as an outright rupture of history and escape from reality, the Rebbe adopted Maimonides' view that redemption would occur *within* history and be heralded by political regimes and their constituents embracing monotheism and Torah principles.²⁶

The point has two important ramifications. First, it means that Jews ought to be involved in the cultural and political landscape of their host cultures and utilize their influence to guide their societies towards monotheism and Biblical morality (as the above example shows). In this way, the redemption is not hoped for as an isolated Divine intervention, but, in whatever way possible, it is initiated within history.

Second, when a major shift occurs and a non-Jewish government radically embraces monotheistic and Torah values, it should be interpreted as a proto-Messianic act of Divine grace. While we must do all we can to influence the world's decision makers, ultimately, *"the heart of kings is in the hand of G-d"* (Prov. 21:1), and a sweeping change of sentiment among human rulers should be seen as reflecting a Divine intention to facilitate redemption in the near future.

For the Rebbe, then, Jewish Messianism was seen as a blend of both *proactive* and *responsive* elements. We ought to influence the culture as best we can toward the goal of universal morality and faith; but since only Providence can bring history to its climax, there needs to be an equal measure of trust in Divine power. When politics, especially of a global Super Power, takes a major turn in the direction of Judaism's utopian vision, it ought to validate our perception that Divine power is at work, and heighten expectation for the next overture. G-d looks to our hearts to see if we react to these gestures, and His further activity may depend on our eager response. If the hand of Providence is going to act *through* history, it is crucial that humans consciously mirror its strokes.

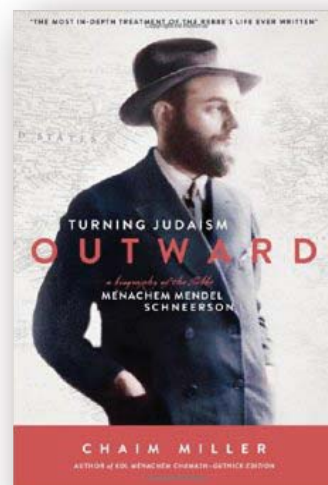
(Interestingly, the Maimonidean position on this issue is at odds with the view generally espoused by Chabad Chasidut, following Nachmanides, that the future era *will* be characterized by a rupture of the natural order.²⁷ However, in a seminal essay on the topic first published in 1985,²⁸ the Rebbe argued that miracles, even when they occur, do not *define* the goal of Jewish Messianism or the process by which it is brought about.²⁹ Our task is to perfect the world order, not to supplant it. Miraculous activity has no integral role in the redemption or the goal of history, representing a sign of additional Divine satisfaction resulting from some exemplary activity.)³⁰

These two facets of the Rebbe's Messianism—the requirement to be both socially *proactive*, and emotively *responsive* to Divine Providence—correspond very roughly to two periods in his sermons. From 1983³¹ to 1987 he spoke consistently about the need to vigorously disseminate Jewish values to the broader culture, following the framework of the Seven Universal Laws of Noah. From 1987 onwards his rhetoric shifted more to a "responsive" Messianism, as he marveled at the wondrous collapse of Communist Russia and the Gulf War, and en-

couraged his followers to "open their eyes" to discern the Divine hand in other current events. But, as we have seen, the "proactive" and the "responsive" impulses are two sides of the same coin, both envisioning the Messianic perfection of humanity as having a political axis. We must do our part, and sometimes we will observe G-d doing His, but the goal is the same, *"that they may all call upon the name of G-d, to serve Him with one consent"* (Zeph 3:9). Or, as Reagan had put it, "I recognize we must be cautious in claiming that G-d is on our side, but I think it's all right to keep asking if we're on His side."

38. Turning Judaism Outward R' Chaim Miller

Biography of Lubavitcher Rebbe
R' Menachem Mendel Schneerson
1902-1994



Bringing non-Jews closer to God was not a goal that would have occurred to, let alone preoccupy, many Jewish leaders. Indeed, throughout the Jewish people's millennia-long history in exile, they generally did little to make known their religious teachings to the non-Jewish world. As a rule, Jews encountered so much hostility in the societies in which they lived that their primary hope was simply that the non-Jewish world would leave them alone. And so the Jewish people generally made no effort to discuss the notion of God and His demands of human beings with non-Jews. Therefore, when the Rebbe launched his campaign in 1983 to bring knowledge of the *sheva mitzvot b'nai Noach* (the Seven Noahide Laws) to the non-Jewish world, many Jews, particularly in the Orthodox world, were surprised and some were upset.

Indeed, if going out into the world with religious teachings was a value, they wanted to know, why do we not find efforts by earlier Chabad Rebbes, scholars such as the Alter Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek, and the Rebbe's own father-in-law, the Frieddiker Rebbe, to educate non-Jews about God's expectations of them.⁴ The Rebbe's response was that his program did not represent a change in ideology but a recognition of a change in historical circumstances. God, he asserted, has always wanted Jews to reach out to the non-Jewish world—He is, after all, the God of all humankind, not just of the Jews—but until now there was no opportunity to do so; the environments in which Jews lived were too hostile. In Czarist Russia where Chabad originated, the government orchestrated pogroms against the Jews and sometimes organized campaigns to convert Jews to Russian Orthodoxy. In such a society, there was no openness on the part of non-Jews to Jewish teachings. And in Communist Russia, the successor government to the Czars, the government's decades-long campaign to wipe out Judaism (and other religions as well) would have made any Jewish effort at educating non-Jews about God a suicide mission.

But America, the Rebbe concluded, was different.⁵ A nation of high ideals—the Rebbe routinely referred to the United States as a “government of kindness” (*malchut shel chesed*)—he saw America as perhaps the first society in which there was a hope of carrying out Judaism's universal mission: not to make the whole world Jewish but to bring the world, starting with the United States, to a full awareness of One God, Who demands of human beings moral behavior. The Rebbe was deeply impressed by the fact that the country's currency carried the words, “In God we trust,” and he was struck as well by yet another of America's foundational principles, *e pluribus unum* (“from many, one”). At yet another meeting with Mayor Dinkins, during a tense period following anti-Jewish rioting in Crown Heights in which a Jewish man, Yankel Rosenbaum, had been murdered in the aftermath of a car accident in which a black child, Gavin Cato, had been killed, the Rebbe expressed the hope that the mayor would be able to bring peace to the city. “To both sides,” Dinkins responded. The Rebbe replied, “We are not two sides. We are one side. We are one people living in one city under one administration and under one God. May God protect the police and all the people of the city.”⁶ For the Rebbe, and he emphasized this on different occasions, “From many, one” and “In God we trust” were the bedrock of the United States' power and specialness.

This is why the Rebbe reacted with such concern and upset when the

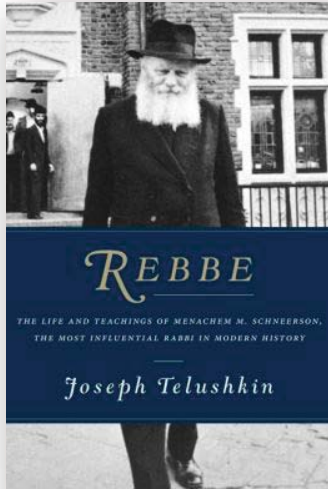
39. Rebbe

Joseph Telushkin

Biography of Lubavitcher Rebbe

R' Menachem Mendel

Schneerson



The Seven Laws of the Children of Noah:

1. Prohibition of idolatry
2. Prohibition of blasphemy
3. Prohibition of homicide
4. Prohibition of incest
5. Prohibition of robbery
6. Prohibition of eating the limb of a living animal
7. Institution of courts of justice (*Sanhedrin* 56a, based on Genesis 9).⁷

The text continues, “The Jewish people were assigned the task and the obligation of disseminating and promoting the Seven Noahide Laws in their immediate society and in the world at large.”

Mindel’s draft of the speech made reference several times to the “Gentile world” and the obligation of the Jews to bring God’s teachings to them. The Rebbe repeatedly crossed out the word “Gentile”; he was not interested in emphasizing a Jewish/Gentile dichotomy but in establishing that God’s message is directed to all humanity.

Similarly, the fundamental factor motivating the launching of the 1983 Seven Noahide Laws (*Sheva Mitzvot*) campaign was to make God and his ethical demands known to the world. When Jews are spoken of as “the Chosen People,” the Rebbe believed, it is this mission—to bring knowledge of God into the world—for which they were chosen. (Whether or not one believes that the Jews were in fact chosen by God for this mission, it is historically undeniable that it is through the Jews that the concept of One God became known to humankind.)

Making God and His moral demands of human beings known to non-Jews was regarded by the Rebbe as equal in significance to promoting knowledge and practice of the commandments (*mitzvot*) among Jews, a universalist position that one does not find, to say the least, echoed widely in traditional Jewish circles.⁸

Perhaps the cause with which the Rebbe became most associated in the American mind was with his emphasis on education. In the late 1970s, the Rebbe’s *shliach* Rabbi Avraham Shemtov organized a campaign to help establish the Department of Education as a separate cabinet-level position (until then, education was subsumed into the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare), which President Carter subsequently did. In honor of the Rebbe’s involvement in this cause, the president declared the Rebbe’s seventy-sixth birthday in 1978 as the first Education

The Jewish people have not given up the dream of reforming, changing, and transforming humanity. The *Malkhuyot* section of the Rosh Ha-Shanah *Amidah* is devoted exclusively to our idea and vision that someday, no matter how distant it may be, we will achieve our objective. This is the idea of the Messiah. We are interested in the coming of the Messiah not only as Jews but also as human beings, to save the world, to wipe out evil.

The Torah was not given to non-Jews directly, but the Almighty has offered it to all of mankind indirectly, as a promise, a vision, an eschatological expectation, the ultimate end of history. The Torah was given to us so many millennia ago. Our task was and still is to teach the Torah to mankind, to influence the non-Jewish world, to redeem it from an orgiastic way of living, from cruelty and insensitivity, to arouse in mankind a sense of justice and fairness. In a word, we are to teach the world the seven *mitzvot* that are binding on every human being.

But we have also been assigned another mission: to be the message carrier and mentor not only of the seven *mitzvot* that apply to the descendants of Noah, that is, to the human race as a whole, but also of a total outlook on life, the entire moral system to which Jews are committed. The non-Jewish world is expected to take note of the Torah life we lead, to admire our

ways, our customs and mores, our *mishpatim* and *hukkim*, both our rational and non-rational commandments. The Jews must stand out in society as exemplars; our way of life must impress and attract people and fascinate their curiosity. The Jew must always bear witness to his peculiar relationship with God.

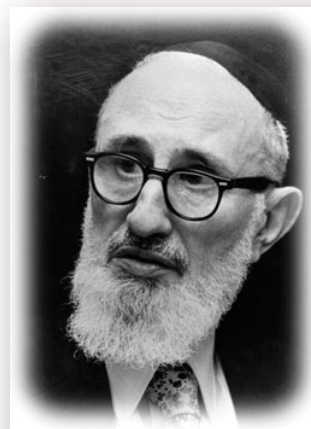
Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should act accordingly in the land whither you go to possess. Observe therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, that, when they hear all these statutes, shall say: "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people" (Deut. 4:5-6).

This principle underlies the commandment of *kidush ha-Shem*, sanctification of the Divine Name, and the prohibition of *hillul ha-Shem*, desecration of the Divine Name.

Mattan Torah, the giving of the Torah, initiated the messianic process of redeeming the world from its crudity and profanity. The Torah was given to the Jew, who was told to disseminate the word of God among pagans, atheists, agnostics, and hedonists, thereby bringing them to their Maker. It is a piecemeal, slow movement. Nevertheless, it will be consummated in the messianic era, when "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains" (Isa. 2:2).

Mattan Torah is bound up with the Messiah, who will possess the heroism of his grandmothers whom the Almighty found in the non-Jewish world. They represented the heroism of loneliness, the heroism of universal commitment, and the heroism of faith and waiting. The ideal of *mattan Torah* will be fully realized only in the time of the Messiah. This great vision of a redeemed world would have been impossible had Lot's daughters been destroyed in Sodom.

40. Abraham's Journey
Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik
1903-1993





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