

# *Is the Rebbe Mashiach?*



Rabbi Efrem Goldberg  
Boca Raton Synagogue



- I. Introduction
  - a. Biographical information about the Rebbe, R' Menachem Mendel Schneerson
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- III. Chabad Emphasis on Mashiach
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  - b. Rashab (R' Shalom Dov Ber) – began to invoke strong Messianic rhetoric in beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. (see Miller book)
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    - ii. Then Mashiach ben Yosef will come from Galil, will lead military and be killed in battle and then Mashiach.
    - iii. Rambam melachim 11:4 – b'chezkas Mashiach: compel all of Israel to walk in the way of Torah, repair breaches in observance and fights the wars of Hashem.
      1. Rebbe himself wrote (Likutei Sichos vol 16, 304-305 n.49) fights wars of Hashem means literally wars including destroying Amalek.
    - iv. Mashiach vadai – build the Beis Ha'Mikdash, gather in the exile.
  - b. Yechi/Meshichist community
    - i. Feel the Rebbe already revealed himself as Mashiach
    - ii. Meshichists believe the Rebbe built a holy place at 770 and he gathered exiles by orchestrating immigration from Russia to Israel
      1. See Kuntras Mikdash Me'at
  - c. Evidence that he wasn't revealed Mashiach
    - i. If the rebbe was Mashiach, who was Mashiach ben Yosef?
    - ii. Iggeres Teiman – Mashiach will be anonymous figure
    - iii. Melachim 11:4 – if he does not succeed in these or was killed he is definitely not Mashiach.
    - iv. R' Pinchas HaLevi Horowitz (Sefer Ha'Bris 521) if he does not finish the job but dies or is broken or captured he is not Mashiach.

- v. Eruvin 43b – Eliyahu will come one day before Mashiach to announce his coming.
  - d. Did the Rebbe think he was Mashiach?
    - i. Yes
      - 1. David Berger attempts to bring evidence that the Rebbe considered himself Mashiach
      - 2. Mamesh & Miyad – initials for Menachem Mendel Schneerson
    - ii. No
      - 1. Telushkin book brings evidence that the Rebbe rejected that notion.
      - 2. Chaim Miller quotes the Rebbe as saying that these ideas drive people away from Chassidus and from those things necessary to bring Mashiach
  - e. Reaction to Meshichists
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      - 1. Kol Koreh
      - 2. NY Times (Telushkin 391)
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      - 1. Rav Aharon Soloveitchik
      - 2. Rav Aharon Feldman
      - 3. Rav Zev Leff
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- V. If he wasn't Mashiach while alive, can the Rebbe come back and be Mashiach?
- a. Can Mashiach come from the dead?
    - i. Sources indicate yes
      - 1. Sanhedrin 98b and see Rashi there
      - 2. Abarbanel – yeshuos malko
      - 3. Yerushalmi Berachos 2:4 – Dovid could be Mashiach
      - 4. Sdei Chemed vo 1, P'as Hasadeh Kelalim 70)
      - 5. Zohar shemos 54a – could be Moshe
    - ii. Alternative understanding
      - 1. See Ohr Ha'Chaim bereishis 49:11 – Dovid and Moshe not meant literally but symbolically
      - 2. Arizal – Dovid or Moshe in reincarnation
- VI. Conclusion
- a. Clearly, being a Meshichist is out of bounds and incompatible with Torah Judaism.
  - b. What about believing that the Rebbe can be Mashiach in the future?
    - i. Rabbi Immanuel Schochet – are you prepared to swear
    - ii. The Rebbe himself said not to focus on it and only to focus on doing what is necessary to bring Mashiach
    - iii. Rav Aharon Lichtenstein's hesped for Rebbe points out Rebbe is only gadol even considered telling us something about his remarkable life
    - iv. Mashiach is only a small part of the Rebbe's legacy. We should focus on his transformational leadership and incredible contributions to the Jewish people and world at large. Better to spend our efforts following his ways rather than debating his status.

1. *Rebbe Biography*  
Chabad.org

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## The Rebbe: A Brief Biography

By Chabad.org Staff

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel

The Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel  
Schneerson, of righteous memory

Schneerson, of righteous memory (1902-1994), the seventh

leader in the Chabad-Lubavitch dynasty, is considered to have been the most phenomenal Jewish personality of modern times. To hundreds of thousands of followers and millions of sympathizers and admirers around the world, he was -- and still is, despite his passing -- "the Rebbe," undoubtedly, the one individual more than any other singularly responsible for stirring the conscience and spiritual awakening of world Jewry.

The Rebbe was born in 1902, on the 11th day of Nissan, in Nikolaev, Russia, to the renowned kabbalist, talmudic scholar and leader Rabbi Levi Yitzchak and Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson. Rebbetzin Chana (1880-1964) was known for her erudition, kindness and extraordinary accessibility. Her courage and ingenuity became legend when during her husband's exile by the Soviets to a remote village in Asian Russia she labored to make inks from herbs she gathered in the fields -- so that Rabbi Levi Yitzchak could continue writing his commentary on kabbalah and other Torah-subjects. The Rebbe was named after his great-grandfather, the third Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, with whom he later shared many characteristics.

**To Save a Life:** There is a story told about the Rebbe's early life that seems to be almost symbolic of everything that was to follow. When he was nine years old, the young Menachem Mendel courageously dove into the Black Sea and saved the life of a little boy who had rowed out to sea and lost control of his small craft. That sense of "other lives in danger" seems to have dominated his consciousness; of Jews drowning in assimilation, ignorance or alienation--and no one hearing their cries for help: Jews on campus, in isolated communities, under repressive regimes. From early childhood he displayed a prodigious mental acuity. By the time he reached his Bar Mitzvah, the Rebbe was considered an *illuy*, a Torah prodigy. He spent his teen years immersed in the study of Torah.

**Marriage in Warsaw:** In 1929 Rabbi Menachem Mendel married the sixth Rebbe's daughter, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, in Warsaw. (The Rebbetzin, born in 1901, was chosen by her father, the sixth Rebbe, to accompany him in his forced exile to Kostroma in 1927. For sixty years she was the Rebbe's life partner; she passed away on 22 Sh'vat in 1988.) He later studied in the University of Berlin and then at the Sorbonne in Paris. It may have been in these years that his formidable knowledge of mathematics and the sciences began to blossom.

**Arrival in the U.S.A.:** On Monday, Sivan 28, 5701 (June 23, 1941) the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin arrived in the United States, having been miraculously rescued, by the grace of Almighty G-d, from the European holocaust. The Rebbe's arrival marked the launching of sweeping new efforts in bolstering and disseminating Torah and Judaism in general, and Chassidic teachings in particular, through the establishment of three central Lubavitch organizations under the Rebbe's leadership: *Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch* ("Central Organization For Jewish Education"), *Kehot Publication Society*, and *Machne Israel*, a social services agency. Shortly after his arrival, per his father-in-law's urging, the Rebbe began publishing his notations to various Chassidic and kabbalistic treatises, as well as a wide range of response on Torah subjects. With publication of these works his genius was soon recognized by scholars throughout the world.

**Leadership:** After the passing of his father-in-law, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, in 1950, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson reluctantly ascended to the leadership of the Lubavitch movement, whose headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn, New York. Soon Lubavitch institutions and activities took on new dimensions. The outreaching philosophy of Chabad-Lubavitch was translated into ever greater action, as Lubavitch centers and Chabad Houses were opened in dozens of cities and university campuses around the world.

**Passing:** On Monday afternoon (March 2, 1992), while praying at the gravesite of his father-in-law and predecessor, the Rebbe suffered a stroke that paralyzed his right side and, most devastatingly, robbed him of the ability to speak.

Two years and three months later, the Rebbe passed away in the early morning hours of the 3rd of the Hebrew month of Tammuz, in the year 5754 from creation (June, 12 1994), orphaning a generation.

## 2. Chabad Rebbes

- 1) Rav Shneur Zalman of Liadi<sup>1</sup> (1746 -1812) – *had a lineage going back to Rashi and through him to King David. The Alter Rebbe*
- 2) R. Dovber (R.S.Z's son) (1773- 1827) – *The Mittler Rebbe*
- 3) R. Menachem Mendel (R. Dovber's nephew) (1789-1866) – *The Tzemach Tzedek. Led the movement through a very difficult period. Intervened with the Czar on behalf of the Jews.*
- 4) R. Shmuel (R.M.M. son) (1834-1882) – *The Rebbe Maharash.*
- 5) R. Sholom Dovber (R. Shmuel's son) (1860-1920) – *The Rebbe Rashab.*
- 6) R. Yosef Yitzchok Schneerson (R. Sholom's son) (1880-1950) – *The Rebbe Rayatz. Built a strong organizational structure. Began many educational and outreach projects. Brought the movement to America.*
- 7) R. Menachem Mendel Schneerson<sup>1</sup> (R. Y.Y. son in law) (1902-1994)

3. Chassam Sofer 6:98

R' Moshe Sofer

1762-1839

האחרון. ומיום שחרב בהמ"ק מיד נולד אחד הראוי בצדקתו להיות גואל, ולכשיגיע הזמן יגלה אליו השי"ת וישלחו, ואז יערה עליו רוחו של משיח הטמון וגנו למעלה עד בואו, וכאשר מצינו בשאלו אחר שנמשח באה עליו רוח ממשלה ורוח הקודש אשר מלפנים לא הרגיש בעצמו, כן היה בגואל הראשון, וכן יהיה בגואל האחרון, והצדיק הזה בעצמו אינו יודע. ובעונותינו כי רבו כבר כמה וכמה מתו ולא זכינו שיערה עליהם רוחו של משיח, גם כי הם ראויים לכך אבל הדור לא היה ראוי לו, אולם כשיגיע אי"ה [העת] יגלה אליו ה' כמו למשה בסנה וישלחהו או לישראל לבד או למלך אחד כמו לפרעה לומר שלח עמי:

והנה בהא דביאת בן דוד צריך אני להציע הוצעה אחת, והוא כמו שהיה משרע"ה שהיה הגואל הראשון נדקק שמונים שנה ולא ידע ולא הרגיש בעצמו שהוא יהיה גואל ישראל, ואפי' כשאמר לו הקב"ה לכה ואשלחך אל פרעה [שמות ג' י'], מ"מ סירב ולא רצה לקבל על עצמו, כן יהיה אי"ה הגואל

"In every generation there is one righteous man (tzaddik) who merits to be the Messiah... and when the time comes, God will reveal Himself to him and send him."

4. R' Ovadia Bartemura on Rus

1445-1515

הוא שישנו האלצט על שלהבת עד שהיה מטיף ממנו דם לראות אם יש להם גבורה ואותם שלא היו יכולים לסבול לא היה מוליך עמו למלחמה וכו' והשחית רבים מישראל ועליהם נא' והשחית עלומים ועם קדושים העלומים שהיו הולכין עמו למלחמה והקדושים שלא היו יכולין לסבול ומ"ש ועל שכלו והלליה מרמה כשארז"ל על ר"ה המודעי שהיה מתפלל על ביתר שלא תחרב ולא היו יכולין לכבשה עד שטעם אותו כותי מרמה והרג בן כוזיבא לר"ה המודעי וכבשה העיר ועל זה אמר והלליה מרמה בידו ובלבבו יגדל שהיה חושב בלבו שר"ה קושר עליו והרגו ונ"ש בשלום ישחית רבים ר"ה היה ראוי להיות משיח אם היה נבוה עליו ידו ורוחו של הקב"ה להשחית נחלתו וכשהתחיל דניאל ברות אמר סורג שבה סה פלוני לנגנני סה ברתה שהגהונה שימיה הוח ביד הקב"ה בעלמו כדי שיהא שמו נודע ויכיר בין האומות וז"ש גאל לך אתה ר"ל אתה בהיות גואל את שמך אתגאל גם אתי וז"ש גאל לך אתה את גאולתי כי לא אובל וגאיל אמר ישראל אין בי כח שהסיה הגאולה בחוסן שאתה רולם וזו היתה סיבה בלא נחה רוח ה' על בן כוזיבא לפי שלא הי' לישראל זכות והיה צריך שיעשה למען שמו ית' וסיפרט מרשעים ולרחם על ישראל ההריך זמן הגאולה עד הבקר שלא יחזור להעריב לישראל ועד שיבא האור ששלם מיד הקב"ה ומראה הערב והבקר אשר רחית אמת הוא ר"ל שאע"פ שהגאולה של בן כוזיבא שהרחיטין למעלה לא היתה אמיתית הגאולה ביד הקב"ה היא היתה שלימה ואמיתית ואם תקשה ותאמר עתה אנו רשעים כמו שהיו בימי בן כוזיבא הטרות שעברו מאז ועד עתה ואותם שעברו הם מרוב עוונותינו ומם שחמרו חז"ל אין בן דוד עתה שיעקב דג לחולה ולא נמלא שנאמר ולא אשקיע מימיהם והטרות כשמן אוליד וכתיב בתריה ביום ההוא אלמית קרן לבית ישראל כיונת מנאמר דע שמתע שאלו בגלות אנו חולים מחולי נחש הקדמוני ומזה נרמז לנו בבן כוזיבא שנמלא נחש בלוטו ארבע אמות שהיה מקבל אות' אבני בליסטראות לאורו' שמה שאמר דניאל עליו ופלס פחו ולא בכחו שלא נאסר לנו רח של הקב"ה בעון שנמלא בישראל שהיא גורם לנו מיחה ולרות וזה החולי עד עתה לא יוכל להרפא וזה שנמטב שלא תמה יחם של הקב"ה על משיח בן דוד שכל דור ודור נולד א' מזרע יהודה שהוא ראוי להיות משיח לישראל אם היו מרשאים

In every generation is born a progeny of Judah fit to be Israel's Mashiach!



5. Chafetz Chaim - Likuttei Michtavim

R' Yisroel Meir Kagan

1838-1933

השמים משם יקבצך ד' אלקיך ומשם יקחך והביאך וגו'. ואף שאין אנו יודעים בבירור זמן ביאתו באיזה שנה יבא, אך לפי מה שמסרו לנו חז"ל בגמרא סימנים, שעתידים להיות קודם ביאת משיח צדקנו, אנו רואים שכמעט נתקיימו כולם, ועל כן ברור שלא רחוק היום ההוא, וכי ימינו אלה המה עיקבתא דמשיחא.

"our days are the days of Messiah's coming. Hear my brothers and friends; these are the days of Messiah. It is clear that our days are the days of Messiah's coming"

These four factors which would have made a deep impression on Ramash—Rayatz's gratitude for personal salvation, positive vision for America, declining health, and the opportunity to direct personalized organizations—no doubt resonated strongly, but they had been present, in one form or another, in the past. Rayatz had, after all, saved his son-in-law from the perils of Communist Russia; the Rebbe's health had been in serious decline for over a decade, and there had been plenty of opportunity for a positive vision and to work on outreach at Rayatz's side in Latvia and Poland. (In fact, Latvia, like America, was a democratic country in the 1930s and Chabad conducted some considerable outreach work there which was, in many ways, a precursor to Chabad activities in America.<sup>20</sup>)

There was, however, a totally unprecedented fifth element which came to the fore in 1941, something that was arguably Ramash's strongest motivator: the acute Messianism of Rayatz.

While the Messianic idea is as old as the Bible itself, with apocalyptic yearning filling the books of the Prophets and capturing the imagination of the Talmudic Rabbis, Chasidism had initially muted the Messianic impulse. Hopes for a global redemption were, of course, never abandoned, but the thrust of Chasidism shifted focus from the global to the individual, to acquiring an awareness of the Divine in every moment, event and thing. Reaching a state of awakened consciousness, the Chasidic worshipper achieves a level of *personal* redemption, perceiving G-d in even the most mundane strata of the universe; but this has the concurrent effect of rendering the urge for global redemption less urgent. If G-d is tangibly present in the here and now, then why worry about anything else?<sup>21</sup>

The Kabbalah, which was a precursor to Chasidut, *did* place much emphasis on a global, apocalyptic event to be precipitated by a critical mass of good deeds and Jewish rituals throughout history; and while this general model was upheld in Chabad,<sup>22</sup> the main emphasis shifted to personal growth through prayer, contemplation and the study of Chasidut.

Around the turn of the Twentieth Century, Rabbi Shalom Dov Ber (Rashab) began to invoke some strong Messianic rhetoric for the first time, particularly in his critique of secular Zionism. His vision, however,

## 6. Turning Judaism Outward R' Chaim Miller



er, remained at it be proactive in routines of Russia.

Now that Raytz expanded to include by for the four an were being merc million Jews in H annihilation; and fully—but quite i

What was the Providence had what could be d in Europe whose Sixth Rebbe drew

Rayatz encapsulated the Messianic ideal in a catchy slogan for his American audience: *le-alter le-teshuvah, le-alter le-gevulah*. ("Immediately to *teshuvah*, immediately to redemption"). In a series of "urgent appeals" published in newspapers during the early 1940s,<sup>24</sup> the Sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe made his case: The Jewish people are one organic entity and Judaism classically affirms mass *teshuvah* as a tool of redemption from global catastrophe. Jews in America could possibly avert an imminent catastrophe in Europe if they would recommit themselves, in some serious measure, to observant Judaism, which was their precious inheritance.

Chabad outreach now took on a far greater scope and urgency than ever before. *Teshuvah* in America was seen as crucial for the entire world—and it needed to be invoked immediately, as millions of Jews faced their deaths.

Even if Rayatz's message failed to inspire the majority of American Jews, it did succeed in utterly captivating his younger son-in-law. By Ramash's own admission, thoughts of global redemption had fascinated him since childhood, and this historically unprecedented, acute Messianic call emanating from such an elevated soul as Rayatz resonated with him deeply. Ramash would even sign off his correspondence, "with blessings for *le-alter le-teshuvah, le-alter le-gevulah*."

Even after a few years, when the urgency of the message had passed and the Jewish people had suffered the tragic losses of the Holocaust,

and parochial: Chabad Chasidim should additional observance in the Jewish community to America, his constituency had extended to the entire Jewish world. He still cared deeply for the Jews trapped in his native Russia, who had been executed by Stalin; for the three and a half million Jews of Poland, who stood on the verge of annihilation; and for the five million Jews who resided peacefully in his new home, the United States.

thread binding these three domains which Rayatz's direct sphere of influence? And the terrible plight of the millions of Jews in danger? To answer these questions, the Messianic idea.<sup>25</sup>

Ramash did not perceive Rayatz's Messianic awakening of the early 1940s as an unsuccessful campaign of the past. In the Seventh Rebbe's view, Rayatz had *permanently* redefined Chabad from a parochial movement into a global-universal force. There had been an irreversible shift in Chabad's sense of mission: From now onwards, the scope and intensity of Chabad outreach would be energized by the heightened Messianic consciousness that Rayatz had kindled.

"From the time that I was a child attending Cheder, and even before, the vision of the future Redemption began to take form in my imagination -- the Redemption of the Jewish people from their final Exile, a redemption of such magnitude and grandeur through which the purpose of the suffering, the harsh decrees, and annihilation of Exile will be understood."

7. Letter from Rebbe to Israeli President Yitzha Ben-Zvi

8. Ma'amar Basi L'Gani (1951)

Rebbe Inaugural

The fact that our Sages say that "all those who are seventh are cherished" rather than "all those who are cherished are seventh," indicates that the seventh's primary quality lies in his being seventh. In other words, he is cherished not on account of his choice, desire, or spiritual service, but because he is seventh - and this is something that he is born into. Yet the fact remains that "all those who are seventh are cherished." It was for this reason that it was Moshe who was privileged to have the Torah given through him...

This, then, is why the seventh is so cherished: it is he who draws down the Shechinah, in fact -- the essence of the Shechinah; moreover, he draws it down into this lowly world. It is this that is demanded of each and every one of us of the seventh generation -- and "all those that are seventh are cherished": Although the fact that we are in the seventh generation is not the result of our own choosing and our own service, and indeed in certain ways perhaps contrary to our will, nevertheless "all those who are seventh are cherished." We are now very near the approaching footsteps of Mashiach, indeed, we are at the conclusion of this period, and our spiritual task is to complete the process of drawing down the Shechinah - moreover, the essence of the Shechinah - within specifically our lowly world.

During the last year of the Rebbe's public sermons he spoke at length about the global redemption (*Geulah*) and the coming of the Messiah (*Mashiach*) almost every week. This represented the climax of increasingly frequent discussions, which had intensified throughout the 1980s.

In 1980, he adopted the phrase "We want Mashiach now!" to promote a sense of urgency and longing for Judaism's time of future promised bliss, and the slogan became a popular song at children's rallies.<sup>70</sup>

In a sermon printed in 1982, he alerted the public that the current Jewish year, 5742, had been identified by one Rabbinic author as an auspicious time for the coming of Mashiach.<sup>71</sup> In the following years, these kinds of associations gradually increased.

9. Turning Judaism Outward

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10. Rabbi Soloveitchik in 1942



"The Lubavitcher Rebbe speaks and publicizes about the Mashiach and a tumult has erupted, an uproar and an outcry. What is wrong, I ask? That people who are heretics decry him; I understand. That those who violate the Shabbat decry him; I understand. But that those who study the Talmud and Chassidus decry him; this is inconceivable...Are we not allowed to talk about the belief in the Mashiach anymore?"



היכא מיימי נה :

11. Rambam

1138-1204

Hilchos

Melachim 11:4

רשע ואפיקורוס : ד' ואם יעמוד מלך מבית דוד, הוגה בתורה ועוסק במצוות כדוד אביו כפי תורה שבכתב ושבעל פה, ויכוף כל ישראל לילך בה ולהזקק בדקה וילחם מלחמות י"י הרי זה בחזקת 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 לצורף בהן ולברר וללבן עד עת קץ כי עוד למועד : אף ישוע הנצרי שדמה שיהיה משיח ונהרג 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 מצותן, וזה גרם לאבד ישראל בחרב ולפזר שאריתם ולהשפילם ולהחליף התורה ולהטעות רוב העולם לעבוד אלוה מבלעדי י"י : אבל מחשבות כורא עולם אין כח באדם להשיגם כי לא דרכינו דרכיו ולא מחשבותינו מחשבותיו. וכל הדברים האלו של ישוע הנצרי ושל זה הישמעאלי שעמד אחריו אינן אלא ליישר 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 היו 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 :

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 Tzephaniah 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 Tzephaniah 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.

12. Likutei Sichos 16: page 304  
Lubavitcher Rebbe



49) וכ"ה הסדר דג' מצות אלו בבנין בית השלישי כברמב"ם רפ"א מהלכות מלכים המלך המשיח וכ"ו ובונה המקדש. ובה"ד שם: יעמוד מלך כ"ו וילחום מלחמות ה' (סתם) — כולל מלחמת עמלק ולאחר הכרתת זרעו כ"ו ומצב דמנוחה —) כ"ו, אם עשה והצליח ונצח כל האומות שסביביו (תיבות אלו נשמטו ע"י הצנזור) — אז — ובנה מקדש במקומו. וראה הר המור"י שם סק"ב. אבל בנוגע לבנין בית שני דלא ה"י שם מלך וכ"ו (רמב"ם פ"ו מהל' ביהב"ח ה"ד, וברמב"ם שם, ובמה נתקדשה בקדושה ראשונה כו"), אולי י"ל דאין צריך כיון שהוא המשך דבית המקדש הא'. וראה קונטרס דרישת ציון וירושלים בשורת שאילת דוד בתחלתו. ולהעיר מרמב"ם הלכות מלכים פ"א ה"ז, כיון שנמשח דוד וכ"ו והרי המלכות לו ולבניו כו"ו ובה"ט שם. וראה צפע"נ סנהדרין שם. ועוד. ואכ"מ.

13. Kuntrus Mikdash Me'at

ו. עפ"ו יש לבאר כהנ"ל בנוגע ל"בית רבינו שבבבל" בזוהר זה - ביתו (בית הכנסת ובית המדרש) של כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו:



ובהקדים פתגם כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר<sup>33</sup> ש"עשר גליות גלתה ליובאוויטש"<sup>34</sup>, מליובאוויטש [שבה ה' גילוי פנימיות התורה כפי שנתבארה באופן של הבנה והשגה (,יתפרנסו"ן<sup>35</sup>) ע"י תורת חסידות חב"ד במשך כמה דורות]<sup>36</sup> לרסטוב, מרסטוב לפטרבורג<sup>37</sup>, ומפטרבורג גלתה מחוץ למדינה ההיא, ללטיביא<sup>38</sup> ואת"כ לפולין<sup>39</sup>, ועד לגלות אמריקא<sup>40</sup>, ובאמריקא גופא בכמה מקומות, עד להמקום הקבוע ד"בית רבינו", בית הכנסת ובית המדרש שלו, המרכז של ליובאוויטש במשך עשר שנים (תקופה שלימה) האחרונות (,הכל הולך אחר החיתום"<sup>41</sup>) דכ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו בחיים חיותו בעלמא דין, וגם לאחרי הסתלקותו קדושה לא זזה ממקומה<sup>42</sup>, ואדרבה, באופן ד"מעלין בקודש", מוסיף והולך<sup>43</sup>, עד ביאת גואל צדק,

"רבינו", נשיא הדור, הוא גם המשיח (גואלן של ישראל) שבדור<sup>44</sup>, כמו משה רבינו (הנשיא הראשון), גואל ראשון הוא גואל אחרון<sup>45</sup>, כידוע<sup>46</sup> שבכל דור ישנו "א' הראוי מצדקתו להיות גואל, ולכשיגיע הזמן יגלה אליו השי"ת וישלחו כו"<sup>47</sup>, ומסתבר לומר שהוא נשיא הדור, כמפורש בגמרא<sup>48</sup> בנוגע לרבי יהודה הנשיא: "אמר רב"י אי מן חייא הוא כגון רבינו הקדוש", "אם משיח מאותן שהיו עכשיו ודאי היינו רבינו הקדוש", הנשיא שבדור<sup>49</sup>.



ואולי יש לומר, שמרומז בלשון הרמב"ם (בהלכות מלך המשיח<sup>50</sup>) "ובנה מקדש במקומו" - דלכאורה: מהו הצורך להשמיענו כאן שבנין המקדש הוא במקומו? ולאידך, למה אינו מפרש המקום, "ובנה מקדש בירושלים"? - ש"במקומו" רומזי גם על מקומו של מלך המשיח בזמן הגלות (לפני ש"הרי זה "בתי כנסיות ובתי מדרשות שבבבל" היא נוסף על מעלת בית הכנסת ובית המדרש שבבית רבינו) גם מצד היותו "בית רבינו"<sup>51</sup> ("רבינו" (סתם) דכל בני, נשיא הדור, ו"רבינו שבבבל", רבן של כל בני הגולה<sup>52</sup>), ביתו של נשיא הדור, ש"הנשיא הוא הכל"<sup>53</sup>:

העשירים את כספם לעניים, כאילו יש לפתור את שאלת הצדקה בסדור הזה. המשיח עתיד להתגלות בארץ ישראל ואיש לא ידע אותו לפני התגלותו. רק במעשיו המדהימים את יושבי תבל יתברר כי הוא המשיח. ואיך יעלה על הדעת כי אדם ריק מתורה שהופיע בתימן ומשתדל לגנוב את לב העם הוא הגואל המקוהו? אין טוב להם מלתפוס אותו ולפרסם שגעונו לגוים, הכזה יצילו גם את נפשו גם את נפשם. למד למדנו מן הנסיון המר כי גם בהחרישנו ובשאתנו חורפתנו וכבוד הישמעאלים לא גימלט מתגרת ידם ומקשי לחצם, כי לא היתה אומה קשה לישראל כאומה זו, ולמה נמיט עלינו רעה כסולה ומכופלת בחסיסות שלא באה עתק

Regarding how and where Moshiach will arise, he will arise specifically in the land of Israel and there will begin his revelation... Regarding how he will arise, he will not be known at all before his arising while he is not the Moshiach, so that it would be said about him such-and-such from such-and-such family. Rather, a man will arise who will be unknown before he is revealed.

14. *Iggeres Teiman*  
Rambam

15. *Sefer Ha'Brís*  
R' Pinchas Ha'Levi Horowitz  
1731-1805

We are obligated to believe that if a Jewish man comes and begins to save the Jews and he completes the salvation of Israel in that generation, if he finishes the job then he is [Moshiach]. However, whoever does not finish the job but dies or is broken or is captured then he is not [Moshiach] and G-d did not send him.

אנו חייבים להאמין שבא יבא איש יהודי והוא יחל להושיע את ישראל והוא יגמור ישועת יעקב באותו הדור, ומי שיגמור הדבר הוא הוא ומי שלא יגמור באותו הדור ומת או נשבר או נשבה אינו הוא ולא אלקים שלחו.

16. *Eruvin 43b*

The Gemara answers that there is another reason for this: שאני קתם – There, in the case of the Messiah, it is for a different reason that he cannot come on the Sabbath and Yom Tov. ר'אמר – For the verse says in a prophecy relating to the Messiah's arrival: *Behold, I will send to you Elijah the prophet etc. [before that great and awesome day will arrive]*,<sup>[2]</sup> – and we see that Elijah did not come the previous day, on the day before the Sabbath or Yom Tov.<sup>[3]</sup>

17. Dr. David Berger

*“Did the Rebbe Identify Himself as the Messiah—and What Do His Hasidim Believe Today?”  
Tabletmag.com*

In fact, the Rebbe’s assurances were far stronger than this portrait suggests, and the messianists’ belief that he is the messiah is far less equivocal. What I am about to present here is material provided with his mother’s milk to every child in a messianist family but remains virtually unknown to all but a minuscule sliver of the outside community. It is impossible to understand Lubavitch messianism or assess its staying power without awareness of this information.

Here then is a sampling of statements made by the Rebbe that combined to generate a deep conviction among the Hasidim that he is the messiah. Except in some cases where I provide a link to a website, all of these statements—and many more—appear with precise annotation in one or more of the following Hebrew collections: *Ve-hu Yig’allenu* (Brooklyn, 1994, translated into English as *And He Will Redeem Us* [Brooklyn, 1994]); *Ha-Tekufah ve-ha-Geullah be-Mishnato shel ha-Rebbe mi-Lubavitch* (Kfar Chabad, 1999); *Be-Emunah Shelemah* ed. by S. Shmida (Jerusalem, 2000); *Ha-Nekudah ha-Habadit 2* (Marcheshvan 5764 [2003]).

In 1965, Rabbi Avraham Parizh, an elder Chasid who had been with the movement from the time of the Fifth Rebbe, printed letters stating:

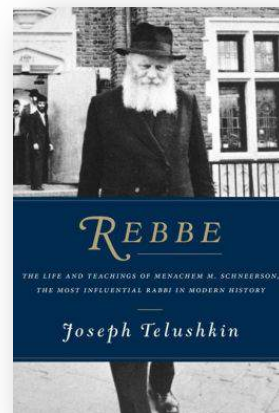
“With great joy, we can inform you that King Messiah, for whom we have waited so many years, is already among us. He is the holy Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the King Messiah. His address is 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York. He does not need us to choose him since God has chosen him.” Rabbi Parizh printed up many of these letters and started handing them out in Israel. According to one account, Parizh also distributed these letters by dropping them out of a helicopter.

When the Rebbe learned of the letter, he instructed his secretariat to immediately dispatch a telegram to Parizh, dated June 24, 1965: “We were shocked by the letter [you wrote and handed out] and ask that you immediately cease distributing it. Gather and send to the secretariat all copies of the letter, every last one, and please confirm immediately that you have fulfilled this instruction.” Chasidim tell how Parizh spent several weeks scrounging around the streets of Tel Aviv looking for every such sheet he could find.

But did the Rebbe continue to remain opposed to such declarations throughout his life? The answer apparently is yes, certainly as long as he possessed the ability to communicate clearly.

18. Rebbe

Joseph Telushkin



More than twenty-five years later, when Chasidim started talking of the Rebbe as a Messianic figure—though in a less extreme manner than had Parizh—the Rebbe’s reaction was no less pointed. In 1991, Rabbi Aharon Dov Halprin, the editor of Chabad’s Israeli magazine, *Kfar Chabad*, wanted to print an article explaining why the Rebbe was worthy of being considered the presumed Messiah. When the Rebbe learned of this he responded sharply, “If you, God forbid, [plan to write] anything even remotely similar, it is preferable that you shut down the periodical completely” (*hadima sheyisgor ha-michtav-et legamrei*).<sup>16</sup>

In an urgent audience to which the Rebbe summoned Chabad activist Rabbi Tuvia Peles, the Rebbe rebuked those who were making Messianic claims about him, saying, “They are taking a knife to my heart” and “they are tearing off parts of me.” It is hard to imagine a more anguished and pained expression for a Chasid to hear from his Rebbe.

On one occasion in 1991, as the Rebbe was leaving the evening prayers, some Chasidim began singing one of the Rebbe’s favorite songs, but with an added twist: They attached the words *Yechi*—“Long live our master, our teacher, our Rebbe, King Moshiach”—clearly identifying “our Rebbe” as the Messiah. As the Rebbe continued walking, he signaled his encouragement of the singing—Chasidim would sing Chasidic melodies before and after each service—and the Messianists celebrated, thinking that they had finally received the Rebbe’s acquiescence.

But they hadn’t. The next morning, he refused to go down to the synagogue until he was assured by Rabbi Groner that there would be no such songs sung again. And, indeed, the song was never again sung in front of the Rebbe until some months after a stroke felled him and removed his ability to speak or write.

Several months later, however, and still before the stroke, a few people present at a *farbrengen* did start singing an older song that implied, without stating explicitly, that the Rebbe was the Messiah. The Rebbe heard the words and responded in a grave manner: “Really, I should get up and leave. Even if some people consider it disrespectful that I would need to [be the one to leave], I don’t need to reckon with the views of a small number when [what they are singing] is the opposite of reality. Unfortunately, though [even if I leave] it will not help anyway. Further, it will disrupt the good feeling of brothers sitting together [*shevet achim gam yachad* (Psalms 133:1)], for if I were to leave, others will leave, too.”<sup>17</sup>

Needless to say, this singing, too, was not repeated.

Perhaps the most poignant public pronouncement of the Rebbe on the Messiah issue was on April 11, 1991, less than a year before his first stroke (March 2, 1992): “What more can I do to motivate the entire Jewish people to cry out and demand that Moshiach should come? All that has been done until now has not helped. We are still in exile. . . . I have done everything I can. From now on you must do whatever you can. Now, all of you must do all you can to actually bring Moshiach here and now, immediately”

Whatever else one might say about this pronouncement, these words do not sound like the pronouncement of a man who feels that he himself is the Messiah.

Some months later, and shortly before the Rebbe's stroke, the Alaskan-based *shliach*, Rabbi Yosef Greenberg (author of *Y'mei Bereishit*), brought a letter to be given to the Rebbe in which he referred to him as "King Messiah." Later that same day, Rabbi Groner told Greenberg that the Rebbe had looked at the letter, thrown it down in frustration, and wrote on it, "Tell him that when the Moshiach comes, I will give him the letter."

An even more definitive statement of the Rebbe on this same issue occurred at around the same time. An Israeli journalist, Sarah Davidowitz of the *Kol Ha'ir* newspaper, approached the Rebbe and said, "We appreciate you very much, we want to see you in Israel; you said soon you will be in Israel, so when will you come?" The Rebbe responded: "I also want to be in Israel." The journalist insisted, "So when will you come?" The Rebbe responded, "That depends on the Moshiach, not on me." The journalist persisted, "You are the Moshiach!," to which the Rebbe responded, "I am not."<sup>18</sup>

Rabbi Leibel Groner, one of the Rebbe's secretaries, reports a conversation he had with the Rebbe in 1992. The Rebbe asked him one morning about the Messianic talk going on in the community. Groner responded that "the Rebbe certainly seems most suitable." The Rebbe, in turn, said, "The one who is the Messiah will have this revealed to him from Above. This has not been revealed to me."

The Rebbe might well have feared that if he repeated what he said to Groner in a public setting, it would only cause the Messianic zealots to further pressure him to "acknowledge" that he was the Messiah in the hope that it would then be revealed to him from Above that he was. This seems to be what he was alluding to months earlier when he said that if he left the *farbtungen* due to the Messianic singing going on, it would not help anyway: The Messianists would simply say what they wanted to say even against his wishes! Rabbi Sholom Wolpo, a leading Israeli Messianist and author of the Messianist handbooks *Yechi ha-Melech ha-Moshiach* and *Mevaser Tov* (both published after the Rebbe's stroke and inability to comment), went to great lengths to explain, in his books, "why everyone must still consider and proclaim the Rebbe as the Messiah despite the fact that he himself never said he was." Wolpo tries to explain the Rebbe's negative reactions to such claims being made on his behalf and insists that it is nevertheless incumbent upon everyone to proclaim the Rebbe as the Messiah. "Acceptance of the Messiah must be done by the people, and not by the King [Messiah]."

The Rebbe understood the mind-set of the Messianists, and he knew that whatever he would say would somehow be construed by them as further "proof" that he was the Messiah.

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 implies<sup>108</sup>—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*<sup>109</sup>) 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 Baal 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 Baal 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.<sup>110</sup>

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

But at a *farbrengen* later in 1991, the scenario from 1984 repeated itself. After some of the participants chanted the same song in the Rebbe's presence intimating him as the Messiah, he reacted critically: "It's absurd that you should sing this song, with these words, while I sit here by the table. The truth is, I should have walked out."<sup>113</sup>

In written communications from the period, the Rebbe was even more reprimanding. To the editors of *Kfar Chabad* magazine, who proposed to publish an article speculating about the identity of Mashiach, the Rebbe wrote, on 30th April 1991: "If you will, G-d forbid, do anything resembling this, it would be better to close down the magazine completely."<sup>114</sup>

To another author, who wished to publish a treatise on identifying Mashiach, the Rebbe wrote on 17th February 1992: "I have already responded to you that articles such as these alienate many people from the study of Chasidut, reversing efforts to disseminate it to broader audiences."<sup>115</sup>

19. Turning  
Judaism  
Outward  
  
R' Chaim  
Miller



His position was consistent with the 1968 letter: If we can only be sure of Mashiach's identity after the Temple has been built and the Jewish people are living in Israel, as Maimonides rules, then what would be the point in discussing his identity before then? If one person is alienated from Chasidut, a necessary tool to bring the Redemption, we have thwarted our intentions.

What, then, *did* the Rebbe hope to achieve with his stirring 1991 address? Two weeks later, as the question of what to do next continued to burn, the Rebbe proposed what he deemed to be the most straightforward way to bring the Redemption: to study about it. He simply recommended people to absorb discussions of the topic from the Scriptures, Talmud, Zohar and teachings of the Chabad Rebbes.<sup>116</sup> It was far from radical, but consistent with his message all along: We need to elevate the way we think. We need to hone our intuition.

20. Kol Koreh

ועד הרבנים הכללי (המרכזי)  
של רבני חב"ד-ליובאוויטש בארה"ב וקאנאדה  
CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF CHABAD-LUBAVITCH RABBIS  
IN UNITED STATES AND CANADA

לשכת בית דין  
Office of the Bais Din  
Phone: (718) 493-8143  
Fax: (718) 774-3975

**STATEMENT**

משרד ועד ההנהלה  
Office of the Executive Committee  
Phone: (718) 604-1839  
Fax: (718) 493-1931

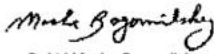
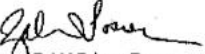
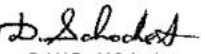

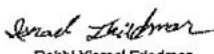
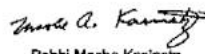
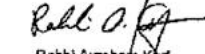
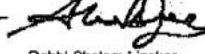
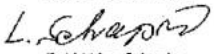
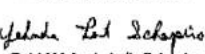
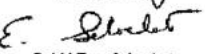
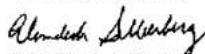

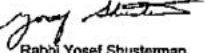
Recently a number of individuals have made pronouncements regarding the position of Chabad-Lubavitch on the issue of Moshiach. The following statement is issued by the governing board of the central rabbinic organization of Chabad-Lubavitch:

- The deification of any human being is contrary to the core and foundation of the Jewish faith.
- The various Talmudic, Midrashic and other sources which seem to ascribe superhuman spiritual attributes to certain righteous people, were never meant to be deification and great care must be taken when quoting them.
- Belief in the coming of Moshiach and awaiting his imminent arrival is a basic tenet of the Jewish faith. It is clear, however, that conjecture as to the possible identity of Moshiach is not part of the basic tenet of Judaism.
- The preoccupation with identifying the Rebbe שליט"א as Moshiach is clearly contrary to the Rebbe's wishes.

Together with the whole of *Klal Yisrael* we pray for the fulfillment of our collective yearning for Moshiach, in the spirit of the timeless Jewish declaration: "...I await his (Moshiach's) coming each and every day."

23 Shevat, 5758  
February 19, 1998

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

 Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky BROOKLYN, NEW YORK	 Rabbi Zalman Posner NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE	 Rabbi David Schochet TORONTO, CANADA	 Rabbi Zelig Sharfstein CINCINNATI, OHIO
OS OS OS			
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788 Eastern Parkway #202 / Brooklyn, New York 11213



21. NY Times Ad

“WITH REGARD TO SOME RECENT STATEMENTS AND DECLARATIONS BY INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS CONCERNING THE MATTER OF MOSHIACH AND THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE, RABBI MENACHEM MENDEL SCHNEERSON, OF SAINTED MEMORY, LET IT BE KNOWN THAT THE VIEWS EXPRESSED [BY THOSE WHO PROCLAIM THAT THE DECEASED REBBE IS THE MESSIAH] . . . ARE IN NO WAY A REFLECTION OF THE MOVEMENT’S POSITION . . . THEY ARE IN FACT MISLEADING AND A GRAVE OFFENSE TO THE DIGNITY AND EXPRESSED DESIRES OF THE REBBE.”

—New York Times, February 9, 1996; ad taken out by Agudas Chasidei Chabad, the umbrella organization of the movement

## The Sage and Miss Lagnado

22. Letter of R' Aharon Soloveitchik to the Forward



I am addressing you in connection with an article written by your distinguished correspondent Lucette Lagnado (“Rabbis Blast Lubavitcher Messianism,” Forward, Dec. 2). Everything that this distinguished correspondent wrote in my name is fairly accurate. However, the context in which she wrote it tends to give the impression to people who are not knowledgeable in Torah and Jewish matters that I too consider the Lubavitch movement as a cultist movement whose followers are convinced that the late Lubavitcher Rebbe will be resurrected shortly and that he will redeem the Jewish people from exile. Such a notion is so unrealistic that it is the antithesis of the truth.

Your distinguished correspondent quotes me correctly: “Rabbi Soloveitchik, however, was contemptuous, denouncing Rabbi [Butman] as ‘a little fanatical,’ someone who ‘means well but, out of desperation, conjures non-rational ideas.’ The late Rebbe, said Rabbi Soloveitchik, ‘can’t be the Messiah — he is not living — a Messiah has to living — a living Messiah, not a dead Messiah.” All the words of this quotation are perfectly accurate. I have no complaints against your distinguished correspondent; my complaint consists in the fact that the tone of the article implies that in her opinion the Lubavitch movement is a cultist movement. This is despicable; especially despicable is the fact that your distinguished correspondent put into the Forward the picture of Shabbetai Zvi. My intention was to relate my understanding that the overwhelming majority of the Lubavitcher Chasidim do not ascribe to the notion that the Rebbe will be resurrected as the Messiah.

Please allow me to clarify my position on the Lubavitch movement. As I said in my eulogy over the Rebbe zt”l, that unlike any other Chasidic Rebbe or any Rosh Yeshiva, who is the rebbe of a single group in Jewry, large or small, the late Lubavitcher Rebbe was the Rebbe of *Klal Yisrael*. The reason for this is the fact that in his generation, the late Lubavitcher Rebbe was an unparalleled spiritual leader, and due to his vision, his foresight and especially because of his *ahavas Yisrael* and *ahavas habrios* (love of Israel and love of humanity), he was able to reach out unto

the most assimilated sections of Jewry. Because of his unusual inspiration he was able to make thousands of *baalei teshuvah* in the Diaspora and in Eretz Yisrael, even in remote places like Australia, New Zealand and India. The thousands of *baalei teshuvah* in Soviet Russia are exclusively due to the self-negating sacrifices of the Lubavitch *shetuchim*.

There is a traditional friendship and attachment between the Beis Horav and Beis Lubavitch. Reb Chaim of Volozin, the most outstanding disciple of the Gaon of Vilna, was the one who lifted the

ban that the Gaon of Vilna imposed upon the Chasidic movement. Reb Itzele of Volozin had a close relationship with the Tzemach Tzedek. Reb Chaim Brisker had a close relationship with the Rashab; and my brother Reb Yosef Ber with the late Rebbe.

I hope that this will dispel all the spiritual pollution that exists in the secular Jewish community, and even in some groups of the Orthodox Jewish community, in respect to the evaluation of the Lubavitch movement.

Ahron Soloveitchik  
Chicago, Ill.

## Myopic Report on Moshiach

Your recent article on Lubavitch (“Rabbis Blast Lubavitcher Messianism,” Forward, Dec. 2) forcefully argues against the dangerous elements inherent in contemporary Lubavitch messianism. As a scholar of Chasidism and Kabbalah, I must take issue with the nature of your argument. First of all, those interviewed in the article were never very sympathetic to Lubavitch even before the death of the Rebbe. Alan Nadler’s sometimes vehement anti-Chasidic attitude is well known in the scholarly community. His irreverent and, in my

connection to the Shabbatean heresy in the 17th century is well-founded. However, many prominent rabbis in 17th-century Central and Eastern Europe believed Shabbetai Zvi to be the Messiah, only deeming his teachings heretical after his problematic halachic innovations and his subsequent conversion to Islam. I have not seen any deviance in halachic behavior even among the most ardent Lubavitch “messianists.”

*For American Jews, it is not Lubavitch messianism that is ‘repugnant’ but messianism in general.*

In short, the individuals interviewed in the article were never willing to entertain the possibility of the late Rebbe

view, inaccurate review of recent scholarly works on Chabad-Chasidism some years ago in The New Republic attests to that. David Berger, whom I admire and respect, was never very sympathetic to Jewish messianic movements in general and Lubavitch in particular. In short, I felt the article was one-sided and Jewishly myopic.

More substantively, Rabbi Ahron Soloveitchik’s comment that the rise of *Moshiach* from the dead is “repugnant to everything Judaism represents” is highly problematic in light of the fact that a similar assertion is made in the Zohar, a medieval kabbalistic text attributed to the rabbinic sage Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai and one of the most influential texts in Jewish history. The

as Messiah when he was alive, nor are they willing to acknowledge the centrality of the deep-seeded messianism latent in the kabbalistic teachings of the Zohar and the 16th-century Safed kabbalist, Rabbi Isaac Luria. For many American Jews of all persuasions, it is not Lubavitch messianism that is “repugnant” but messianism in general. However, to paraphrase the 20th-century Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig, it is the continued emergence of false messianism in Judaism that keeps the messianic idea alive.

Shaul Magid  
Anna Smith Fire Professor of Jewish Thought  
Rice University  
Houston, Texas

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23. Letter of  
R' Aharon Feldman



ROSH HAYESHIVA  
NER ISRAEL RABBINICAL COLLEGE

ראש הישיבה  
ישיבת נר ישראל

בס"ד ג' שלח כג בסיון תשס"ג, באלטימאר יצ"ו  
לכב' ה"ה גיל סטודנט נר"ו שלו וכל טוב סלה,  
בתשובה למכתבך אלי ובו אתה מבקש לדעת איך צריכים להתייחס לאלה מחסידי  
חב"ד המאמינים שהאדמו"ר המנוח שלהם יקום לתחי' כמשיח צדקנו (המכונים  
"משיחיסטים"), ולא להאמין מהם שאף מאמינים שעצם האלקות התלבשה ברבם וגם מתפללים  
אליו ויש שמכנים אותו "בוראנו" (המכונים "אלוקיסטים"), היה ראוי שבדברים כאלה  
הנוגעים לכלל ישראל יביעו את דעתם גדולי הדור שאין אני נמנה אפילו מתלמידיהם, אבל  
מכיון שאתה מבקש הדרכה בענין ולא מצאת כדי מידתך מאדם אחר, אביע לך את דעתי.  
לפענ"ד אמונת האלוקיסטים היא הכחשה באחד מי"ג עיקרי האמונה והרמב"ם בה'  
תשובה פסק שהם בכלל המינים, וממילא שחיטתם ועדותם (כולל עדותם על כשרות) פסולות  
ואין לצרף אותם למנין, ואע"פ שמאמינים כן בשגגה כבר ידוע בשם הגר"ח מבריסק ז"ל שגם  
המחזיק דעה אפיקורסית בשוגג נחשב לאפיקורוס וכן הכריע הגר"מ"פ בספרו אגרות משה ח"ד  
או"ח צא ס"ק ו'.

ומה ששאלת שיש הרבה אלוקיסטים שמסתירים את דעותיהם ואיך צריכים להתנהג  
מספק, לפי מה שנראה אין רובם מאמינים כן והולכין בתר רוב שסתם חסיד חב"ד אינו מהכת  
הזה.

אבל המשיחיסטים אין להם דין אפיקורוס והם בכלל עמיתך ועדותם ושחיטתם כשירות  
ומותר לצרף אותם למנין. אלא שסכנה גדולה כרוכה באמונתם, כי היא חותרת מתחת לאמונה  
במשיח בישראל.

מקודם, אמונתם היא נגד מה שאמקובל בישראל מדור דור ואין לה מקור בתורה  
שבכתב ושבוע"פ ולא במסורת היהודית (המקורות שמביאים הם דברי הבל ומה שהביאו מסנהדרין צח  
ב' לפירוש א' ברש"י שהמשיח יהיה מן המתים ויהיה כמו דניאל, היא ראייה לסתור כי האם אנו עוסקים במי  
שהוא כמו דניאל שחז"ל אומרים עליו שהיה עדיף בהשגתו מחגי זכריה ומלאכי?) ועוד שהרמב"ם בפ"א  
מה' מלכים הכריע שאפילו מי שיש מקום לחשוב עליו שהוא משיח אם נהרג הרי זה הוכחה  
ברורה שאינו משיח (ומקורו מדברי חז"ל כמבואר בנו"כ).  
אי לזאת, אם כי אין המשיחיסטים בכלל האפיקורסים, אסור לתת יד לחזק או לפרסם  
את דיעותיהם, כי אסור לתמוך בשקר וכל שכן בנידון דידן שיש סכנה שאמונתם תתפשט  
בישראל וכך תופר תורה מישראל ח"ו.

ולכן כשנמצאים במקום שנוהגים מנהגים שמטרתם לחזק את אמונתם (לדוגמא  
כשאומרים "יחי אדוננו המלך המשיח" בסוף התפלה), מחוייבים לצאת או, אם אפשר, למחות  
בהם.

זאת ועוד, לדעתי ברור שאע"פ שאין המשיחיסטים בכלל האפיקורסים, מכל מקום הם  
בחזקת אנשים חסרי דעת תורה שאי אפשר לסמוך על הכרעותיהם בעניני תורה גם במה שאינו  
נוגע למשיח. מי שמאמין שמכל שוכני עפר במשך הדורות (הכולל נביאים, תנאים, אמוראים,  
ראשונים וגדולי הדורות עד לדורות שלנו) הרבי המנוח כראש תנועת חב"ד הוא המוכשר  
ביותר להיות גואל צדקנו, מוכיח בעליל שחסר לו בהשגה נכונה בערכי התורה וכלי השגה זאת  
אי אפשר לו לשקול מה חשוב ומה טפל בעניני תורה. אדם כזה אי אפשר לסמוך עליו להביע  
דעה בכל עניני התורה וכ"ש לסמוך עליו להיות רב או מנהיג בישראל. וכן אין ללכת לשמוע  
את דרשותיו כי דבריו הם בחזקת טעות, וגם כי עצם ההליכה אליו תכבד אותו בעיני הבריות  
ותגרום שדבריו יתקבלו כשידבר בעניני משיח.

והנני מסיים בתפלה שהקב"ה יסיר ממנו כל דעה כוזבת וכל מחלוקת, וישלח לנו  
במהרה בימינו את משיח צדקנו להאיר לנו את האפילה ויתקייים בנו ומלאה הארץ דעה כמים  
לים מכסים.

בכבוד רב,  
אהרן פעלדמן

24. R' Zev Leff

Ask Rabbi Leff A Question (<http://www.rabbileff.net/shiurim/ask/index.htm>)

Rabbi Zev Leff



Excerpt from #413:

Q: Is the Lubavitcher Rebbe Moshiach?

A: The Lubavitcher Rebbe is no longer alive. The Rambam says very clearly that if someone claims to be Moshiach and he dies before he builds the Temple and brings all Jews back to Eretz Yisrael, then it is clear that he was not Moshiach. So according to the Rambam the Lubavitcher Rebbe cannot be Moshiach... Also, even if people will claim to have found sources that seem to say that Moshiach can be somebody who died and will come back from the dead to become Moshiach, those sources are not obviously what the sources means because for 2,000 years one of our objections to Christianity across the board was that the concept of a dead Moshiach who comes back to be Messiah is not a Jewish concept.

Excerpt from #373:

Q: May one eat in a restaurant whose proprietor feels that the Lubavitcher Rebbe is the moshiach, if it is under a widely accepted hashgacha? Furthermore, is it permitted for a person to daven in a shul where the majority of the congregants feel that the Rebbe zt"l is moshiach, and perhaps participate in the recitation of Yechi?

A: The restaurant really depends on who the supervision is and if it is a reliable supervision. Even if the proprietor is not Jewish, certainly if he is Jewish and has wrong ideas about Yiddishkeit, you can eat in that restaurant. On the other hand, to daven in a shul where the majority have crooked ideas about Yiddishkeit and recite things that have no place as part of the davening, better not to daven in a shul like that.

26. Rashi

מלורב של בית רבי : אי מן חייה  
הוא כגון רבינו הקדוש . אם משיח  
מאותן שחיים עכשיו ודאי היינו רבינו  
הקדוש דכובל תחלואים והסיד גמור  
היה כדלמרינן בבבא מלישא (דף סב-)  
ואם היה מאותן שמתו כבר היה  
דניאל איש חמדות שנזון ביסורין  
כגון אריות והסיד גמור היה והאי  
כגון לאו דווקא ל"א כגון רבינו  
הקדוש כלומר אם יש דוגמתו בחיים  
היינו רבינו הקדוש ואם דוגמא הוא  
למתים היינו כגון דניאל איש חמדות :  
דוד אחר . שעמיד למלך עליהם :  
אקים . הקים לא נאמר אלא אקים :

25. Sanhedrin 98b

If [the Messiah] is among the living, he is someone like me, – as it is stated: *And their prince shall be one of their own, and their ruler shall emerge from their midst.*<sup>[40]</sup>  
Rav Nachman said: – אמר רב נחמן

If [the Messiah] is among the living, he is someone like Rabbeinu HaKadosh.<sup>[41]</sup> – אמר רב  
If he is among the dead, he is someone like Daniel the Greatly Beloved.<sup>[42]</sup>  
Rav said: – אמר רב



27. Sdei Chemed  
R' Chaim Hezekiah Medini  
1834-1905  
(Translation R' Gil Student)

The above story of demons taking away the boy is very simple. In my opinion, the explanation is that they took him to a place in this world to

be with a righteous scholar who would raise him and teach him from his youth to be a great righteous man and a tremendous Torah scholar... However, when he reached old age and the nation had still not merited Moshiach he died. Because, as the Gemara in Sanhedrin 98a says, there is one way [for Moshiach to come] – that he will be righteous and poor, riding on a donkey – and they also said, “Today if you listen to His voice.” For that way, Moshiach must be one of the righteous people of the generation (if they merit it a little). There should therefore be in each generation one righteous person who, if they merit it, will be the messenger by way of Eliyahu [i.e. Moshiach]. If they do not merit it, he will be no different from other righteous people. If one dies then there will be another worthy man in the generation to take his place... There is another way [in which Moshiach can come] and that is through a great merit. Then he will come on clouds of the sky like a man, as it says in Sanhedrin 98a. They said regarding this way in Sanhedrin 98b, “If he is from the dead, Daniel ‘the most desirable man.’”

(Sdei Chemed, vol. 1 P'as HaSadeh Kelalim 70)

שמה שמוזכר בעובדא הנ"ל  
שרוח נשאו להילד פשוט  
מאד לענ"ד שפי' שנשאו

למקום א' בעוה"ז אצל  
חכם בתורה וצדיק להתגדל  
שם שילמדוהו תור  
ויחנכוהו מנעוריו להיות  
צדיק נשגב וגדול מאד  
בתורה... ובאחרית ימיו  
כשלא זכו הדור נסתלק מן  
העולם ולפי שאמרו בגמרא  
דסנהדרין צ"ח ע"א שיש  
אופן א' שיהי צדיק ונושע  
עני ורוכב על החמור וגם  
אמרו שם היום אם בקולי  
תשמעו ובאופן הנ"ל ראוי  
להיות רק א' מצדיקי הדור  
(היינו אם יזכו רק מעט)  
וצריך להיות בכל דור הא'  
הראוי אם יזכו הוא יהי  
השליח ע"י אלי' ואם לא  
יזכו יהי כשאר הצדיקים  
בלא הפרש ובמת ר"ל אחד  
צ"ל אחר בדור במקומו  
שיהי' ראוי... ולפי שיש  
עוד אופן בזכות גדול דעם  
ענני שמיא כבר אינש אתא  
וכמ"ש בסנהדרין צ"ח ע"א  
לכן אמרו על אופן זה  
בסנהדרין שם צ"ח ע"ב אם  
מן מיתה הוא דניאל איש  
חמודות.

28. Yerushalmi Berachos 2:4

Having mentioned the return of the Davidic dynasty, the Gemara cites an Aggadic teaching regarding the Mashiach: **The Rabbis said: – אָהֵן מְלָכָא מְשִׁיחָא – This king, the Mashiach, – אין מִי חַיִּיא הוּא – if he is from the living, – דָּוִד שְׁמֵיהּ – David is his name; – אין מִי דְמָכֻיָא הוּא – if he is from the deceased,<sup>[7]</sup> – דָּוִד שְׁמֵיהּ – David is still his name, i.e. the original King David son of Yishai.<sup>[8]</sup>**

The Gemara adds: **R' Tanchuma said: – אָנָּא אֶמְרִית טַעְמָא – I stated a source for this: „וְעָשָׂה־חֶסֶד לְמִשְׁיחוֹ לְדָוִד” – And He does kindness for His Mashiach, for David. His Mashiach will be named David.<sup>[9]</sup>**

Other views regarding the Mashiach's name: **R' Yehoshua ben Levi said: – רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי אָמַר – Tzemach is his name. – רַבִּי יוּדָן בְּרִיהַ דְּרַבִּי אִיבּוֹ אָמַר – R' Yudan the son of R' Aivu said: – מְנַחֵם שְׁמוֹ – Menachem is his name.<sup>[10]</sup>**

30. Likuttei Sichos 2:518



שאלו אותי על מה שהנני אומר שבקרוב יקויים היעוד "והקיצו ורננו שוכני עפר" והוא (כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר) הרבי, יוציאנו מהגלות. הרי הסדר הוא: שתחלה הוא ביאת המשיח, ימות המשיח, ורק לאחר משך זמן יהי תחיית המתים. וכן מובא גם בתורת החסידות.

והמענה על זה הוא: אף שבכלל הסדר הוא: ביאת המשיח, בנין ביהמ"ק, קבוץ גליות, תח"מ. אבל תח"מ של יחידים – ה' בעבר ויהי גם בעתיד קודם לכן (לזמן תח"מ). וכידוע כמה סיפורים בש"ס ומדרשים ומצדיקים שהחיו מתים. וכמארז"ל זוטי דאית בכו מחי מתים<sup>[1]</sup>.

29. Pnei Moshe

וַגִּדְּ: "אֵין מִי חַיִּיא. אִם מִן הַמֵּיִט" הוּא יִהְיֶה שְׁמוֹ דָּוִד וְאִם מִן הַמֵּיִט הוּא יִהְיֶה דָּוִד צַעֲמָנוּ: לְמִשְׁיחוֹ.

ט. מען האָט ביי מיר געפרעגט: וואָס זאָג איך, אָז עס וועט זיין בקרוב והקיצו ורננו שוכני עפר והוא בתוך כם, און דער רבי וועט אונג אַרויס-פירן פון גלות – דער סדר איז דאָך: ביאת המשיח וימות המשיח, און ערשט אין אַ צייט אַרום וועט זיין תחיית המתים. אָזוי ווערט דאָך געבראַכט אין חסידות אויך.

דער ענטפער אויף דעם: כאָטש בכלל איז דער סדר<sup>[1]</sup>: ביאת המשיח, בנין בית המקדש, קבוץ גליות, תחיית המתים, אָבער תחיית המתים פון יחידיים איז געווען און וועט זיין פריער אויך. וכידוע כמה סיפורים בש"ס ומדרשים ומצדיקים שהחיו מתים. וכמארז"ל זוטי דאית בכו מחי מתים<sup>[1]</sup>.

31. *Ohr Ha'Chaim*  
R' Chaim Ibn Attar  
1696-1743  
*Bereishis 49:11*

וְיָא יקשה בעיניך שאנו מחלקים דברי הכתוב, חלק בימי  
משה וחלק בימי המשיח, כי הלא ידעת דברי הזוהר  
הקדוש (שמות קג.) כי משה הוא הגואל אשר גאל את  
אבותינו הוא יגאל אותנו וישיב בנינו לגבולם דכתיב (קהל  
א ט) מ'ה ש'יהיה ה'זא ש'יהיה, ר"מ "משה", ולא יקשה  
בעיניך דבר זה באומרוך הלא מלך המשיח משנט יהודה  
מזרעו של דוד המלך ע"ה, וי"א דוד עזמו מלך המשיח  
דכתיב (יחזקאל לו ד) ועבדי דוד מלך עליהם, כמשמעו,  
וא"כ היאך אנו אומרים שהוא משה, הנה משנט לוי:  
יש לך לדעת כי בחינת נשמת משה ע"ה היא כלולה  
מי"צ שבטי ישראל, כי כל הס' ריבוא היו ענפים  
ע"ה, וענף שבטו של דוד במשה הוא, ולזה תמצאו בארץ  
מדבר שהיה מלך וכהן ולוי ונביא וחכם וגבור, שהיה כולל  
כל הענפים שבקדושה. ולעמיד לנא תתגלה בעולם שורש  
המלכות שבמשה, שהוא עזמו מלך המשיח והוא דוד,  
והוא ינון ושילה:

32. *Rabbi Jacob Immanuel Schochet*

My final comment is on a lighter note. Dr. Berger wants Chabad hasidim excommunicated unless they are prepared to say "without equivocation: 'The Rebbe is not the Messiah'." (p. 51) They are not to be hired unless they will first swear that "the Rebbe is not and will not be Moshiach" (p. 144).

This tragi-comical tantrum of Professor Berger, reminds me of an encounter with a fervent messianist, during the time of the Rebbe's final illness when the messianist group first dared to raise its head unbridled. I concluded the debate with a simple question: "Are you prepared to swear with a Torah-scroll in your hand that the Rebbe is definitely Mashiach?" In visible shock he hemmed and hawed, and remained silent. I offer the same challenge to Dr. Berger: "Are you prepared to swear with a Torah-scroll in your hand that the Almighty will definitely not designate the Rebbe to be Mashiach?"

No doubt, today one may find individuals, among both the extremist messianists and the mitnagdim, and most likely Dr. Berger himself, prepared to give such oaths. For their god is one who is made in their image and likeness and restricted to abide by their prejudices.

When William Wordsworth, the great English poet, passed away in 1850, another great author wrote that if he had died ten years earlier he would have earned much greater admiration and unconditional respect. For many of us, including those sitting here, there is a sense that if the Lubavitcher Rebbe z"l had died five years ago, before the Messiah issue became so intense – whether he was in fact the Messiah or only "b'chezkat Messiah" – it would have been easier for us to feel the depth of the loss wholeheartedly and to relate to it better.

This point, which stirred up harsh criticism in certain circles - to the point of a battle to crush the phenomenon as it involves the Rebbe, the Chabad movement and every element and aspect of it - has definitely cast a shadow in recent years over the way that many people think of both the man and his movement.

This truly was a serious problem. However, in my opinion, this development, terrible as it may be, must not be allowed to overshadow our veneration – in retrospect – of the man and his movement and make us forget their tremendous achievements and the lofty status they attained.

I want to begin from precisely this problematic point. It never occurred to anyone to declare that Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, Rabbi Aharon Kotler, or the Rav was the Messiah. And did they not have followers? Did they not have a tradition? Were they not part of a long dynasty? They certainly did. It seems to me that at the root of the matter, the concept of Messianism attached itself to the Rebbe because of his image and status – **their positive aspects**. The Rebbe embodied – and in a powerful way – a certain combination in which one who wished to could see the reflection of a reflection of the Messiah King.

33. *R' Aharon Lichtenstein*  
1933-2015

