

בס"ד

HIGHLIGHTS OF MOSHIACH

by Rabbi Abraham Stone

הועתק והוכנס לאינטרנט

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ע"י חיים תשס"ז

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Midrashic and classical

Rabbinic sources



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In Loving Memory

of my illustrious and esteemed Father-In-Law

HARAV ELIYAHU MACHLIS ZT"l

הרב אליהו ב"ר משה דוב מאכליס זצ"ל

Rav and Rosh-Yeshivah of Yeshivah Ohel Moshe in

Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, for almost 40 years,

until the day of his demise,

21 Teves, 5750

נפ' כ"א טבת תש"נ

His exemplary devotion to *chinuch*, and promulgation of Torah
and Yiddishkeit were a constant source of inspiration to me.

May his memory be a source of blessing for his Rebitzen תחי,

together with his children and grandchildren שיחי,

and Klal Yisroel.

In Loving Memory of

My Mother,

BASYA ETEL bas R' MOSHE AARON ה"ע

ELEANOR STONE

19 Tamuz 5752/1992

A true aishes-chayil — a devoted wife, mother, grandmother
and great-grandmother.

FOREWORD

“I believe in perfect faith in the coming of Moshiach; and although he may tarry, I await his coming every day” (one of *Rambam’s* 13 Principles of faith).

“Moshiach is on the way — he will be here any day.” These are more than mere slogans. The familiar call, expressed by young and old, “We want Moshiach now!” — is rooted in the basic teachings of Torah Judaism, one of the fundamental tenets of faith. The belief in Moshiach — a human being, a descendant of King David’s royal family, endowed with unique qualities of Torah scholarship and piety — who will bring the final and complete redemption to the Jews and to all mankind, is clearly set forth in the Code of Maimonides (*Rambam*), and in numerous Talmudic and Midrashic sources.

For over 1900 years, since the *churban*, the destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, Jews have always lived with this concrete belief: ‘I await the coming of Moshiach any day now.’ This theme is reiterated in our daily prayers, in *Shmoneh-Esrai*, wherein we say: ‘Speedily cause the scion of David Your servant to flourish..’ and “May our eyes see Your return to Zion with mercy.”

Throughout the generations, all of our esteemed Torah leaders have demonstrated this principle of faith and promulgated it to all Jews. In this century, the renowned Torah Sage, the Chofetz Chaim zt”l (Rabbi Yisroel Meir HaKohen) among others, strongly urged all Jews to express their continuous, strong and heartfelt faith in Moshiach, in light of the Talmudic question (Shabbos 31a): *Tzipisa L’yeshuah* — “Have you hoped and eagerly looked forward to the Messianic salvation?” Indeed, the Chofetz Chaim zt”l states:

“A Jew is obligated to *demand* that Moshiach come, just as a worker demands his daily wages!”

The story is told that wherever the Chofetz Chaim traveled, he carried with him a new, never-worn long black coat, neatly wrapped

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in a suitcase. Once, one of his close acquaintances asked him: ‘Why don’t you ever wear your new coat?’ Upon this the Chofetz Chaim replied: ‘I truly believe that Moshiach will come any day now, and I want to be sure that as soon as he comes I will be ready to greet him with this new garment.’

This level of steadfast belief in the coming of Moshiach is truly exemplary.

In recent times, particularly this year, 5751 (1991), we have witnessed profound, overwhelming miracles — the defeat of Iraq in the Gulf war, the salvation of Israel from the Scud attacks and the massive exodus of close to a million Jews from Russia and other countries of oppression. These events are seen as sure signs that Moshiach’s advent is imminent. Even the *Yalkut-Shimoni* (Isaiah #499), a classical Midrashic source, foresaw the time that one Arabic country will attack another one, arousing the unified concern and anger of the whole world, as a prelude to the advent of Moshiach.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi M. M. Schneerson Shlita, leader of the world-wide Chabad movement and mentor to hundreds of thousands of Jews, continues to reaffirm this belief — and demand — that Jews be ready to greet Moshiach now, without any delay.

In order to make this belief a reality, it is important to study the teachings of our Sages regarding Moshiach — his identity and his functions, some of which are presented in this volume. Certainly, this book has only touched the surface. If questions remain concerning the Messianic era, let Moshiach come and answer them himself (see *Rambam*, Hilchos Melachim — 12:1). Isn’t 1900 years long enough to have waited?! May we all merit to see Moshiach NOW!

Rabbi Abraham Stone
Brooklyn, N.Y.
Elul 5751 / Aug. 1991

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IDENTITY OF MOSHIACH

The *Rambam* states¹:

“..A King will arise from the house of (King) David, one who delves in Torah study and is occupied in mitzvos just as David his father, following the Written and Oral Torah; he will coerce and influence all Jews to go in its path and to strengthen its weakness, and he will fight the battle of G-d — this is a sign that he is Moshiach. If he succeeds, he will then rebuild the Beis Hamikdash (Holy Temple) in its place and will gather the ingathering of Jews from exile — then he is definitely Moshiach. He will also prepare the whole world to serve G-d together, as is written,² “Then will I change unto the people a pure language, that they may all call on the name of G-d, to serve Him with one accord.”

וְאִם יַעֲמֹד מֶלֶךְ מִבֵּית דָּוִד הַזֶּה בְּתוֹרָה וְעוֹסֵק בְּמִצְוֹת כְּדָוִד אָבִיו,
כְּפִי תוֹרָה שֶׁבְּכַתָּב וְשֶׁבְּעַל פֶּה, וְיִכּוֹף כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל לִילָף בָּהּ וּלְתוֹק
בְּדַקָּה וְיִלְחֶם מִלְחָמוֹת ה' — הָרִי זֶה בְּחֻזְקָת שְׁהוּא מְשִׁיחַ. אִם
עָשָׂה וְהִצְלִיחַ וְנִצַּח כָּל הָאוֹמוֹת שֶׁסָּבִיבּוּ וּבָנָה מְקֻדָּשׁ בְּמִקְוָמוֹ
וּקְבַץ גְּדוּחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל — הָרִי זֶה מְשִׁיחַ בְּנֹדָאֵי, וְיִתְקַן אֶת-הָעוֹלָם כְּלוֹ
לְעַבֹד אֶת-ה' בְּיַחַד, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: כִּי-אֶז אֶהְפֹּךְ אֶל-עַמִּים שְׂפָה בְרוּרָה
לְקַרְא כָּלֵם בְּשֵׁם ה' וְלְעַבְדוֹ שְׂכֵם אֶחָד (צפני' ג. ט).

(רמב"ם הלי' מלכים פי"ב הי"ד)

1. Hilchos Melachim (Kings) 11:4

2. Tzphanyah 3:9

MOSHIACH'S DONKEY

In describing the advent of Moshiach, the Prophet states,³ “He will be lowly and riding upon a donkey.” *Pirkei D’Rav Eliezer*⁴ notes that this is the same donkey mentioned by Moses, as is written,⁵ “And Moses set them (his family) upon a donkey” and it is the same donkey used by Abraham, as in,⁶ “and he saddled his donkey” (in preparing for the *akeidah* — (the binding of Isaac upon the altar).

Is this factor, that Moshiach will ride on a donkey of such paramount importance? Does it matter how Moshiach will come? And of what significance is it to know *whose* donkey it is? Obviously, as our Sages see it, there is more to it than the physical animal itself.

In this comparative study we see that Abraham, Moses and Moshiach are a continuation of one central theme.

Abraham began the 2,000 year period of Torah.⁷ The *Talmud* states that the world exists for 6,000 years. The first 2,000 years were desolate; the second 2,000 years (beginning with Abraham) are devoted to Torah; and the last 2,000 years are the Messianic era.

Moses received the Torah at Sinai and transmitted it to Klal Yisroel.⁸ Although the verse that Moses set them upon a donkey took place before *Mattan-Torah* (Revelation at Sinai) yet, it relates to the Exodus from Egypt which is a prelude to *Mattan-Torah*, as G-d told Moses,⁹ “When you bring forth the people out of Egypt, you will serve G-d upon this mountain.”

The goal of *Mattan-Torah* will be revealed through Moshiach.

3. Zechariah 9:9

4. Ch. 31

5. Shmos 4:20

6. Bereishis 22:3

7. Talmud, Avodah Zorah 9a

8. Avoth 1:1

9. Shmos 3:12

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We find, however, a distinction in the use of the donkey by Abraham, Moses and Moshiach.

Abraham used the donkey for carrying the wood and knife for the *Akeidah*, while he and his servants went by foot. Only the wood and knife — he placed on the donkey.

With reference to Moses, the Torah relates that he set his wife and sons upon the donkey. A wife and children are obviously much closer to a person than wood and a knife. A wife is her husband's helpmate;¹⁰ she is even considered like his own body.¹¹ A son is his father's thigh,¹² this being the lowest part of the person's body itself.

With reference to Moshiach, *he himself* will be riding on the donkey.

Apparently, this donkey alludes to a higher spiritual dimension than the simple animal itself. The purpose of using and riding a donkey is to enable the person and his belongings to reach such a place which — due to its height or distance — would be unreachable without the donkey.

The same is true in the spiritual act of “riding on a donkey.” *Chamor* (a donkey) is linked with *chomer*, materialism. The purpose of a Jew, and every human being, is to refine the coarseness of this materialistic world, one's body, household, etc. through the study of Torah and observance of *mitzvos*. In so doing one is elevated to such a level that the soul, in and by itself, is unable to attain. Only when the soul enters the corporeal, physical body (at birth) does it have the challenge — and G-d-given powers — to refine the body and all materialistic aspects through a life devoted to G-dliness and Torah.

Each one, Abraham, Moses and Moshiach — set the examples for refining their physical lives and elevating themselves to spirituality. Moshiach will enable everyone to reach the peak of refinement, whereby “he rides on a donkey,” totally subjugating materialism to the Divine Will and Wisdom.

10. Bereishis 2:18

11. Talmud, Berachos 24a

12. Ibid., Eiruvim 70b

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The donkey is also an allusion to the physical aspects of the world which will be truly refined and elevated through Moshiach and his teachings.

MOSHIACH WILL REMOVE THE SPIRIT OF IMPURITY

The true height of purity will be attained only with the advent of Moshiach, at which time Zecharyah's prophecy will be fulfilled,¹³ "And the spirit of impurity I shall remove from the earth."

For, even when Moshiach comes, the spirit of impurity will still be here, as seen in the *Rambam's* description of Moshiach¹⁴: "Moshiach will *coerce* all Jews to study Torah and observe mitzvos."

The term "coerce" indicates that not everyone will return to Torah on their own, since there will still be the spirit of impurity (and the evil inclination). Moshiach's function will be (one of his many, multifaceted functions) to completely remove the spirit of impurity from the world.

Perhaps some might assume that we need do nothing now and just wait for Moshiach to do the job. This is not so! Rather, we must do everything possible now — each and every person — to infuse the spirit of purity within ourselves, our homes and community, as our Sages declare¹⁵: "Purity leads to the coming of Eliyahu the Prophet and Moshiach."

We can — and must — prepare for the imminent advent of Moshiach NOW!

13. Zecharyah 13:2

14. Hilchos Melachim 11:4

15. Talmud, Sotah/end

MOSHIACH WILL WAGE BATTLE AGAINST AMALEK

The eradication of Amalek (one of the 613 Commandments), in the physical sense, is not possible today. Some Authorities hold that this mitzvah is binding only upon the Jewish King, and that he must enlist the Jewish people to wipe out Amalek's kin.¹⁶ Today, however, we do not have a Jewish King.

Thus, *Sefer Yereim* states¹⁷:

The mitzvah to eradicate Amalek is relegated only to the King and not to all Jews. This is seen in the verse,¹⁸ “G-d swore by His throne” alluding to the throne of Kingship (i.e. when there will be a Jewish King) — then “G-d will have war with Amalek.”

*SMAG*¹⁹ also concurs with this:

This mitzvah applies only in the days of Moshiach, after the full conquest of Israel. Hence, today, when we have no Jewish King, this mitzvah is not in effect.

Ramban, too, confirms this Halachic viewpoint³:

When there will be a Jewish King sitting upon G-d's throne, he will then battle against Amalek ... for every Jewish King is obligated to battle against Amalek's kin until they are fully decimated. The *Rambam* also rules²⁰:

The King wages a mitzvah battle ... and the battle against Amalek.

Sefer HaChinuch,²¹ however, writes that this mitzvah is binding upon the entire Jewish community.

16. Commentary of Rav Perlow zt"l on Sefer HaMitzvos of Saadia Gaon — (aseh 59/262)

17. #435

18. Shmos 17:16

19. Sefer Mitzvos Gadol, lo taase 266

20. Hilchos Melachim 5:1

21. Mitzvah 558

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Yet, even according to those who opine that this mitzvah was given to all Jews, it is still not feasible today to eradicate Amalek in the physical sense, because:

1) This act is possible only when Jews are fully in control (and not dependent upon other nations — which is not the case today).

b) This mitzvah is effective only when we know for sure who belongs to, and descends from, Amalek's kin. Since Sancherib of Babylon came and mixed up the world, causing massive confusion among all ethnic identities,²² therefore, we assume that no one comes from Amalek.

Only when Moshiach comes, at which time Jews will have full power and autonomy, and it will be clearly defined who descends from Amalek's kin, Moshiach will then eradicate all aspects of Amalek *en toto*²³ — “male and female.”

Eradicating The Spiritual Amalek

The aforesaid is only in the physical sense. In the spiritual realm, however, this endeavor is applicable even now, as is known that all Jews are obligated to remember the act of Amalek; even women who do not go into battle, are also required to participate in this remembrance. — This remembrance is included in the Six Daily Remembrances, recited after *Shacharis* (the daily Morning prayer).

The mitzvah to remember the brazen act of Amalek is not just once a lifetime or once a year but this is obligatory *every day*²⁴: Each one should bear this in mind when reciting before *Shema* — “You brought us near to Your Great Name”. This clearly shows how

22. Talmud, Berachos 28a; Yoma 54a

23. Samuel I 12:3

24. Shulchan Aruch HoRav, Orach Chaim 60:4

important the remembrance of Amalek's act is, at least in the spiritual sense, in serving G-d at all times.

The concept of Amalek in the spiritual sense is expressed in the verse,²⁵ *asher karcha* — lit. “he — Amalek — met you by the way;” it also means “he cooled you off,” i.e. he cooled off your enthusiasm for Torah and *mitzvos*. Thus the *Midrash* relates²⁶:

Amalek cooled you off in the presence of others. This may be likened to a boiling hot bath, which no person could enter, for fear of being scalded. One roughneck came along and jumped into the steaming water. Although he became scalded, he cooled it off for others; now others will say that it's possible to enter this hot bath. Likewise, when the Jews left Egypt, at the time of the Exodus, G-d split the Sea for them and all the Egyptians were drowned in it. At that time, the fear of the Jews — and G-d — fell upon all nations of the world, as is written,²⁷ “Then were frightened the Dukes of Edom..”

But, as soon as Amalek came and attacked the Jews, although he was badly defeated, he cooled down their fearsome power in the eyes of the other nations (who now felt that the Jews were vulnerable and attackable).

The ‘cooling off’ of Amalek is also evident in one's spiritual life, in Torah and *mitzvos*. In serving G-d, one must wage a “battle” against this spiritual Amalek every day. It does not suffice that yesterday one was enthused with Torah study and *davening* (prayers); today one must rise up again and battle against the cooling effect of the spiritual ‘Amalek’.

One must begin with warmth and zeal in *davening*, which will enable him to face the outside world with proud identity as a Torah Jew.

This daily spiritual activity — never permitting ‘Amalek’ to cool off our *hislahavus*, our zeal for Torah and *mitzvos* — is the

25. Devorim 25:18

26. Tanchuma, Ki Teitze/end

27. Shmos 15:15

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preparation for eradicating Amalek and his kin in the physical sense, with the speedy advent of the King Moshiach.

A SPARK OF MOSHIACH WITHIN EACH JEW

In Bilaam's prophetic vision, he states,²⁸ "There steps forth a star from Jacob and there arises a scepter out of Israel." *Targum Onkelos* notes that this "star" alludes to Moshiach. The *Jerusalem Talmud*,²⁹ however, learns that this term alludes to every Jew, inasmuch as Jews are likened to the stars. How do we reconcile these seemingly contradictory interpretations?

Actually, both meanings are correct. The star in our verse alludes to both Moshiach and to every Jew, as the *Meor Aynayim*³⁰ writes, in name of Baal Shem Tov, that within each and every Jew there is a 'spark' of the soul of Moshiach. This reconciles both aforesaid interpretations. As such, every Jew today has the ability to rectify the 'spark' of Moshiach within the soul, which originates from the first human being — Adam. Adam (אדם) is an acrostic for: Adam (א), David (ד) and Moshiach (מ).

Since the Jerusalem Talmud makes its comment on the verse "there steps forth (a star)" and "there arises," this indicates that it is a revealed aspect: Every Jew has the power to reveal the 'spark' of Moshiach within him.

In practical terms this means that everyone has the ability, through Torah and mitzvos — to hasten the actual revelation of Moshiach. For, through Torah and mitzvos one effects a refinement within himself and within the world at large, thereby decreasing — slowly but surely — the spirit of impurity,³¹ until we shall see the realization of the prophecy,³² "And the spirit of impurity I shall remove — completely — from the earth," in the advent of Moshiach.

28. Bamidbar 24:17

29. Maaser Sheni 4:6

30. Parshas Pinchas/end

31. As in Shmos 23:30

32. Zecharyah 13:2

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This personal and world refinement is also expressed in the Talmud with reference to the first Biblical commandment,³³ “to procreate and have children”:

“The son of David (i.e. Moshiach) will not come until all souls will be brought forth from the spiritual treasure called *guf* (“body” in the heavens above),” which at the time of birth, becomes vested into a physical, corporeal body.

It does not suffice that the *neshamah*, the soul, remain in its lofty soul-treasure called *guf*, or the way it stands beneath the Throne of Glory (from where all souls come forth), but the soul must descend to earth (through birth), and then must use the soul-powers to refine and elevate the materialistic world in and around the person. Through this endeavor we will bring Moshiach, a descendant of David.

33. Bereishis 1:28; Talmud, Yevamos 62a

MOSHIACH—PEAK OF SCHOLARSHIP, PEAK OF HUMILITY

Moshiach will combine two extreme features: He will manifest the peak of Torah wisdom and scholarship, and, at the same time, he will show the peak of humility in relating to the poor and suffering people.

In essence, Moshiach will teach Torah to all Jews, even to the Patriarchs and to Moses, as explained in *Likkutei-Torah*.³⁴

With reference to Moshiach, Isaiah states,³⁵ in G-d's name, "Behold My servant shall be scholarly, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be placed very high." He shall be exalted — above Abraham and Isaac; and placed very high — *me 'od*, an acrostic for Adam, Moshe and David. His scholarship will transcend even the wisdom of Adam and Moses, as noted in *Sefer Hagilgulim*³⁶ by the *Ari Z"l*.

Moshiach will teach everyone, all Jews, *pnimiyut HaTorah*, the inner esoteric realm of Torah. For, if we take it literally, that he will teach the revealed parts of Torah (only), how is this possible? In the Messianic era, at the time of the Resurrection of the Dead, Moses and all the esteemed Torah Sages who already know the entire Torah will rise from the dead. However, these thousands of Torah scholars already know the entire Torah. Moshiach, in essence, will teach the inner parts of Torah, whose teachings are far-reaching and practically limitless.

Thus the *Midrash* states³⁷: "The Torah which one studies now is considered as vanity in contrast to the Torah of Moshiach."

Yet, together with his profound wisdom, Moshiach will also be concerned with the poor, as is written,³⁸ "He shall judge with

34. Vayikra 17a

35. Isaiah 52:13

36. Ch. 19

37. Koheles Rabbah 11:8

38. Isaiah 11:4

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righteousness the poor.” *Likkutei-Dibburim*³⁹ (by the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe zt”l) clarifies the judgment process of Moshiach:

Isaiah states:⁴⁰ “He shall be animated by the fear of G-d; not after the sight of his eyes shall he judge, and not after the hearing of his ears shall he decide. He shall decide with equity the suffering ones of the earth.”

This underscores the judicial format of Moshiach, a format which transcends nature.

The usual process of judgment is based only on what the Judge sees and hears. When one person judges someone else, whether it be a public judgment or a judgment within the heart, the ruling is founded only upon that which one sees and hears. In essence, the Judge does not enter into the life-style of the one who is being judged. He does not take into consideration what his status and environment are. This means that he, the Judge, does not delve into the accused’s inner life and does not contemplate upon the causes which led him to such a nefarious life. He judges him only on the basis of what he sees and hears, but not on the trials and tribulations which he — the accused — faces.

Such a judgment is not true judgment. It is a dry ruling, based on weak, human premises (although one follows the definitive rulings set forth in Jewish law).

True judgment is when the Judge places himself in the same situation as the one who is being judged. He labors to find out all the causes which brought the individual to such a sinful situation.

This is expressed in Hillel’s concise declaration:⁴¹ “Do not condemn and judge your fellowman until you have stood in his place.” When you see a fellow Jew stumble in spiritual matters and he is unable to withstand the sinful temptations, do not be quick to condemn him until you can picture yourself going through everything he — the accused — is experiencing.

39. II:633

40. II:3

41. Avoth 2:4

To judge someone accurately, one must place himself in the other person's situation and experience what he is feeling and encountering.

The judgment of Moshiach will not be limited to that which he sees nor to that which he hears. His judgment will not be cut and dry, based only on that which one sees and hears.

Moshiach, with his extra sensory perception, will also see and feel the multifaceted causes which led the person to sin; he will also realize that the sinner really did not want to sin but was unable to control his sensual, materialistic desires.

In this way Moshiach will defend all Jews during the era of exile, and will show them the way to *teshuvah*, true and wholesome penitence.

As such, Moshiach will embrace all Jews — from the greatest Torah scholars to the simplest, unlearned Jews. With profound wisdom he will inspire the Sages, and with profound compassion and humility he will uplift the sinners and alienated Jews, showing them the path to G-d and Torah.

MOSHIACH WILL GATHER THE INGATHERING OF EXILES

In the *Rambam's* Code we find a clear ruling pertaining to the order of events through Moshiach:⁴²

“He will rebuild the Beis Hamikdash in its place and then will gather the ingathering of exiles.”

It is known that the *Rambam* shows significance and meaning even in the *order* of his rulings, as is also seen in the beginning of this Chapter:⁴³

“The King Moshiach will arise and will fully restore the Kingdom of David to its original esteemed sovereignty; then he will rebuild the Beis Hamikdash and will gather the remnants of Jews in exile.”

No posek (Codifier) disagrees with this order and ruling. And the Halachic principle is⁴⁴ that wherever the Commentaries on *Rambam* do not disagree with him, it is *proof* that they agree with his ruling. In our case, this refers to the renowned Codifiers — *Raavad, Kesef Mishneh, Radvaz*, etc. (who show no disagreement with this ruling re: the order of Moshiach's activities).

Practical, legal rulings are found and authenticated only in the works of *Poskim*, and not in Midrashic or Talmudic sources. And *Rambam* is the classical authoritative Codifier, especially in the area of Moshiach.

As such, Moshiach will usher in the final end of exile and then will come the beginning of redemption, followed by the true and complete redemption. After this, Moshiach will bring the ingathering of the exiles to our homeland, Israel.

42. Hilchos Melachim 11:4

43. 11:1

44. Mishneh L'Melech, Hilchos K'layim 9:11; Sdei Chemed, Poskim 6:1

MOSHIACH — BEGINS WITH A ‘MEM’

The Hebrew letter *mem*, both the “open” *mem* and the “closed” *mem* (at the end of the word) relate to exile and redemption.

Rabbeinu *Bachye* expands on this theme⁴⁵:

In *Tanach* it states⁴⁶: “L’MARBEH — (this is a closed *mem*) — “For promoting the increase of the government, and for peace without end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom.” Here, the *mem* (in L’marbeh) (in the middle of a word), which should be open, is closed to indicate that the full glory of Jewish government is concealed during the era of exile. In another verse,⁴⁷ we find an open *mem* at the end of a word,

“I was viewing the walls of Jerusalem” — Nechemyah states — “which *haim* (they; this *mem* is open in the text) were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed by fire.” The *Midrash* comments:

“When the walls of Jerusalem will be closed (and solidified), unlike now when they are open and cracked during exile, then shall the Jewish government be fully opened (with full unrestricted power) unlike now when it is closed (and restricted).

Thus both *mems*, written in an unusual manner in these two verses, allude to the Messianic era.

On the verse in Isaiah — *l’marbeh* — with an enclosed *mem* (“For promoting the increase of government”) the *Talmud* comments:⁴⁸

G-d wanted to close up and bring an end to all Jewish adversities by designating King Chizkiyah as Moshiach. Yet, the attribute of justice claimed: ‘Here is Chizkiyah, for whom You

45. Bereishis 47:28

46. Isaiah 9:6

47. Nechemyah 2:13

48. Sanhendrin 94a, Rashi

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performed so many miracles and yet, he failed to offer a song unto You.’ With this, his fate as Moshiach became closed and concealed.

In the Oral Torah, too, we see the significance of *mem*:

The six Orders of *Mishnah* begin and end with *mem*. There is an open *mem* in the beginning of Mishnah — *Me’eymasai*,⁴⁹ and a closed *mem* at the end of Mishnah, in the word *shalom*, as it cites the verse,⁵⁰ “G-d shall bless His people with peace.” Thus these two *mems* will usher in a period of everlasting peace.

Moshiach’s name, too, begins with a *mem* (similar to the beginning and end of the Mishnah). Thus, our Sages tell us:⁵¹ “The exiles will be ingathered in the merit of (studying) *Mishnah*.”

49. Beginning of Tractate Berachos

50. Uktzin/end, Psalms 29:11

51. Vayikra Rabbah 7:3

MOSHIACH AND MOSES — A CONTRAST

No one in the annals of our Prophets and Kings could emulate the noble status of Moses, upon whom it is written,⁵² “And there arose not a Prophet since then in Israel like Moses.”

The *Talmud* elucidates on this:⁵³

King Solomon desired to attain the status of Moses. A Heavenly voice came forth and cited this verse, “There arose not a Prophet in Israel like Moses” — neither a Prophet nor a King (can emulate the status of Moses). Others say, no other Prophet arose, but a King (like Moses) can arise.

This indicates that Moshiach, a King, can attain the status of Moses. *Rambam*, however, offers a somewhat different description:⁵⁴

All Jews, including their Prophets and Torah scholars, desire to see the Messianic era, in order to be freed from the oppression of the nations who do not permit them to study Torah and to observe *mitzvos* properly. For, the King who will rise up from King David’s progeny will be a man of wisdom on a higher level than King Solomon, and he will be a great Prophet *close to* the status of Moses. Therefore, he will teach all the people and will guide them in the path of G-d.

It seems that *Rambam* concurs with the Talmudic opinion that even among Kings, no one will rise up like Moses.

Yet, with reference to the status of a King — the *Talmud* describes Moshiach⁵⁵ as a person who will judge with his sense of smell, as is written,⁵⁶ “and he shall be animated — *v’haricho* (power of smell) with the fear of G-d.” Said Rava: This means he will be

52. Devorim 34:10

53. Rosh Hashanah 21b

54. Hilchos Teshuvah 9:2

55. Sanhedrin 93b

56. Isaiah 11:3

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able to detect the truth of a person's statement and will truthfully judge who is guilty, as is written — “not after the sight of his eyes shall he judge.” Upon this the Talmud relates:

Bar Kochba (a King from the family of Hordos) reigned for 2 1/2 years. He then told the Rabbis, ‘I am Moshiach.’ But, they replied: ‘With reference to Moshiach it states that he will judge with the sense of smell; let's see if you are capable of doing this.’ When they saw that this King, Bar Kochba, does not have this extra-sensory perception — the criteria of Moshiach — he was sentenced to death.

Even according to the Talmudic opinion that there may arise a King like Moses, such as Solomon, yet, he was only able to judge on the basis of witnesses. Moshiach will judge with an extra-sensory perception, in the capacity of a King — not as a Prophet — since a Prophet cannot judge with his power of prophecy.

This status of Moshiach vis-à-vis Moses is also seen in *Midrash Tanchuma*,⁵⁷ which comments on the verse:⁵⁸

“Behold, My servant shall be wise, he shall be exalted and placed very high.”

Moshiach is called “the great mountain,”⁵⁹ inasmuch as he is greater than the Patriarchs. “He shall be exalted” — more than Abraham. “And uplifted” — higher than Isaac. “And placed very high” — higher than Jacob. Moreover, even “Higher than Moses.”

Eitz-Yosef clarifies Moshiach's esteem:

In his battle against the Kings, Abraham saw a miracle, when he and his servants attacked them at night.⁶⁰ The *Midrash* relates that Abraham spread out a little dirt which miraculously turned into swords, and the straw turned into arrows, as is written,⁶¹ “he places dirt as his sword, as stubble his bow.” With these miraculous

57. Toldos 14

58. Isaiah 52:13

59. Zechariah 4:7

60. Bereishis 14:15

61. Isaiah 41:2

weapons he overpowered all the Kings. Moshiach, however, will be higher than Abraham. For, Abraham needed dirt and straw to begin with, whereas regarding Moshiach it states,⁶² “He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.”

“And he shall be higher than Moses:” For, Moses did not have an everlasting leadership upon the Jews, inasmuch as he himself transferred the reins of leadership to Joshua. Whereas with reference to Moshiach it states, “And David My servant shall be a leader forever.” This alludes to Moshiach, a descendant of King David.

Another explanation of Moshiach’s superiority over Moses is: In the future, the miracles of the Exodus will be secondary in comparison to those of Moshiach.⁶³ Our Sages note that the Exodus will not lose its place in our history but it will be secondary in significance to the final redemption, due to the profound, overwhelming miracles which will be performed in the Messianic era.

62. Ibid. 11:4

63. Talmud, Berachos 12b

MOSHIACH IS LOOKING IN AT THE WINDOWS

The last generation of Jews in exile is called “the heels of Moshiach.”⁶⁴ During this era, Jews can hear and feel Moshiach,

“..standing behind our wall, looking in at the windows, seeing through the cracks.”⁶⁵

The *Midrash* comments: “Our wall” alludes to the Western Wall of the Beis Hamikdash. Why? Because G-d took an oath that this wall will never be destroyed.

In the literal sense, the wall of exile has windows and cracks. And Moshiach is looking through these windows, peeking through the cracks.

Indeed, Moshiach is looking and watching us; he sees us but we don't see him, only because *our wall* obstructs his sight. It is the wall of the evil inclination and impurity which blocks his view. As the forces of purity and holiness grow ever stronger, the walls of exile will crumble and we will see Moshiach, swiftly, with our own eyes.

64. Mishnah, Sotah/end

65. Song of Songs 2:9

COMPLETE TRUST IN MOSHIACH'S COMING

Every Jew believes — and should believe — in the coming of Moshiach. This is one of the 13 Principles of Faith set forth by the *Rambam*.⁶⁶

This complete faith and trust in Moshiach's coming should be in the manner exemplified by King Chizkiyah. He showed full trust in G-d's salvation, when victory seemed impossible, until Chizkiyah said to G-d:⁶⁷

'I have no strength — not to kill, not to run and not even to offer a song; rather, I shall lie down to sleep on my bed and You do Yours!' G-d responded: 'I shall do mine!'

At this point, *Sancherib*, the ruthless King of Babylon, arch-enemy of Israel, had surrounded Jerusalem with his mighty army, and he promised to make peace with Israel under certain conditions, as he declared:⁶⁸

"Hearken not unto Chizkiyah, for thus has said the King of Assyria, make a treaty of peace with me and come to me ... that you may live and not die, and hearken not unto Chizkiyah, for he will mislead you, saying, G-d will deliver us."

Even Shavna and his colleagues, who constituted the majority of the *Shanhedrin* at that time, said that according to the Torah it is necessary to make peace and to follow a natural course. Yet, King Chizkiyah heard from Isaiah, G-d's prophet, in the name of G-d,⁶⁹

"Be not afraid of the words which you have heard ... for I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land."

Upon hearing this, Chizkiyah placed his full trust in G-d — while the enemy was at his doorstep, so much so that he went to

66. Commentary on Mishnah; Sanhedrin, Perek Chelek, Principle 12

67. Midrash, Eichah Rabbah 4:15

68. Kings II 18:31

69. Ibid. 19:7

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sleep, filled with wholesome faith in G-d. He didn't act like a frightened person who is worried and cannot sleep. His faith and trust in Divine salvation permeated his entire being — and G-d waged the battle, as is written,⁷⁰ “Then went out an Angel of G-d and struck at the camp of Assyria.” Overnight, thousands of the enemy forces lie dead on the battlefield.

Similarly, everyone today should show and demonstrate full trust in the coming of Moshiach, without the slightest doubt — that *now*, Moshiach is coming, although logical calculations may show otherwise. This wholesome, undiminished hope and assurance itself will hasten the speedy advent of our Righteous Moshiach.

70. Isaiah 37:36

MOSHIACH BEFORE ELIYAHU

There is a tradition that Eliyahu (Elijah the Prophet) will come before Moshiach, to inform the world of the advent of Moshiach. Is this showing of Eliyahu a mandatory pre-requisite for Moshiach?

The *Talmud* relates:⁷¹

Once, Rabbi Joshua met Moshiach and asked him: ‘When are you going to come?’ Moshiach replied: ‘Today!’

Rabbi Joshua then met Eliyahu, who asked him: ‘What did he (Moshiach) tell you?’ Said Rabbi Joshua: ‘He lied to me, for he told me that he is coming today, but he didn’t come!’

Said Eliyahu: ‘He didn’t lie, but this is what he really meant: He will come “Today, if you hearken to the voice of G-d.”’⁷²

Maharsha explains that if Moshiach comes today, we assume that Eliyahu came yesterday to the Supreme Beth Din (in Tiberias).

Another explanation is that if we merit, and Moshiach comes sooner (before the appointed time), he may then come on his own *before* the revelation of Eliyahu. This is presented in *Krayti U’playti* (by Rabbi Yonason Eibschutz):⁷³

Rambam posits⁷⁴ that it is not a certainty that Eliyahu must come before Moshiach. Although some Sages maintain that before the advent of Moshiach, Eliyahu will appear, yet, there is no definite basis for this.

This poses a difficulty, inasmuch as the Talmud states⁷⁵ that Eliyahu will come first, and as is seen in *Tanach*,⁷⁶ “Behold I send

71. Sanhedrin 98a, Rashi

72. Psalms 95:7

73. Yoreh Deah 110, Bais Hasafek/end

74. Hilchos Melachim 12:2

75. Eiruvim 43b

76. Malachi 3:23

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unto you Eliyahu the Prophet.” How do we reconcile these two statements re: the coming of Eliyahu?

The answer is seen in the timing of Moshiach, as the Talmud cites the verse:⁷⁷ “In its time will I hasten it” — If Jews do not merit, Moshiach will come in his appointed time; but if they merit, then Moshiach will come sooner, in haste.

Rambam holds that there is an order to the coming of Moshiach, that Eliyahu comes first to foretell of his coming. This, however, is effective only when Moshiach comes in his appointed time. But when Jews merit and the redemption is hastened, as expressed in,⁷⁸ “He is leaping over the mountains, skipping over the hills” — G-d then changes the order, as a sign of His love for Jewish merits and good deeds. This is expressed in the *Rambam*’s concise words.

The Sages note that Eliyahu comes first, to convey the news of Moshiach; yet, this is not definite. For, perhaps G-d will have mercy and bestow His holy spirit upon the Jews to serve Him with a full heart; then He will swiftly bring Moshiach without the need for Eliyahu’s message.⁷⁹

77. Isaiah 60:22; Sanhedrin 98a

78. Song of Songs 2:8

79. Otzar Blum, Sanhedrin ibid.

DETAILS OF MOSHIACH'S IDENTITY

(From *Rambam*⁸⁰)

“*A King will arise:*” Apparently, this King — Moshiach — will not be appointed by a Beth Din of 70 men and a Prophet, as is required for every King.⁸¹ This is seen in the *Rambam's* historical proof⁸² that Rabbi Akiva referred to Bar Kochba as the King Moshiach — although there was no Prophet at that time.

“*He will delve into Torah:*”

Until it becomes *his* Torah, part and parcel of himself, as the Talmud states:⁸³ First it is called G-d's Torah; then, when one delves into it, it is called his — the person's Torah, as is written:⁸⁴ “Whose delight is in the Torah of G-d, and in His Torah does he delve day and night.”

Said Rava: First one should study Torah, and then he should delve into it.

Rashi explains that one should first study from his Rav until the subject is fully clear to him. Then he should delve deeply into it, to make comparisons, to raise questions and provide answers. This is the height of Torah study.

*Pirkei D'Rav Eliezer*⁸⁵ notes that “the voice of Jacob” nullifies the harmful effects of Esau's hands⁸⁶; this voice of Jacob is expressed through “*delving* into Torah.”

80. Hilchos Melachim 11:4

81. Rambam, *ibid.* 1:3

82. *Ibid.* 11:3

83. Avodah Zorah 19a

84. Psalms 1:2

85. Ch. 32

86. Bereishis 27:22

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“Just like King David his Father:”

This means that Torah study should be in a manner of accepting the yoke of Torah. And the observance of mitzvos should be preceded by the yoke of *teshuvah*, as in the familiar phrase: “*Teshuvah* and good deeds.” This pattern was established by King David, as the *Talmud* comments on the verse in *Nach*:⁸⁷

“These are the words of David, and these are the words of the man who was raised on high” (*al*) — These are the words of David who established *ula*, “the yoke of *teshuvah*” which uplifts the person to the greatest heights and closeness to G-d.

Midrash Shmuel notes: “David accepted and carried the yoke of Torah together with the yoke of Kingship.”

“Moshiach will study Torah according to the Written Torah and the Oral Torah:” Why does *Rambam* add these words? This follows the end of Halachah 3 (in uncensored editions): “Whoever adds to or deletes from Torah, or interprets Torah incorrectly, taking mitzvos out of their literal context, he is certainly an evildoer and a heretic (this negates any belief in Yeshu as the Messiah).

“He will coerce all Jews:” This is linked with the rectification for the *churban* (destruction of the Holy Temple), as the *Talmud* relates⁸⁸:

Jerusalem was destroyed because the people did not admonish each other. Rather, the Jews in that generation stuck their heads in the ground and didn’t admonish those who sinned and deviated from a Torah life.

“To go in its path and to strengthen its weakness:” To go in its path — is directed to those who didn’t sin — i.e. the *tzaddikim*. And to strengthen its weakness — to those who transgressed and repented — i.e. *baalei teshuvah*.

“And he will build the Beis Hamikdash:” As the *Midrash* notes,⁸⁹ Moshiach will build the Beis Hamikdash:

87. Samuel II 23:1; Avodah Zorah 5a

88. Shabbos 119b

“When the King Moshiach who is in the north will arise, he will come and build the Beis Hamikdash which is situated in the south”⁹⁰ (i.e. the south part of the Temple Mount).

Rashi and *Tosphos*, however, maintain that the Beis Hamikdash will come down from Heaven, as they state:⁹¹

The Third Beis Hamikdash which we eagerly await is already built and furnished; it will be revealed and come from Heaven, as is written,⁹² “Your Sanctuary, O G-d, which Your hands have established.”

This is also underscored in *Tanchuma*:⁹³ G-d swore that He himself will rebuild it, as is written,⁹⁴ “G-d builds Jerusalem.”

“*The Beis-Hamikdash in its place:*” Although, in general, only the Altar can never be changed from its place,⁹⁵ yet, the whole Temple of the future must be in its original place, as specified in Ezekiel. Also, this will determine who Moshiach really is, by showing the precise site of the Beis Hamikdash.

“*And he will bring the ingathering of Jews:*” At the end. As *Rashi* states:⁹⁶ First “G-d will build Jerusalem” — then “He will gather the ingathering of all Jews.”

89. Vayikra Rabbah 9:6

90. Isaiah 41:25; Mishnah, Midos 2:1; Jerusalem Talmud, Megillah 1:11

91. Succah 41a

92. Shmos 15:17

93. Parshas Noach 11

94. Psalms 147:2

95. Rambam, Hilchos Beis Habechirah 2:1

96. Berachos 49a

MOSHIACH WILL BUILD THE BEIS HAMIKDASH (HOLY TEMPLE)

We find two contrasting viewpoints re: the rebuilding of the Third Holy Temple.

Rashi and *Tosfos* state that the Third Holy Temple will be revealed and sent down from Heaven — completely built and furnished. Whereas *Rambam* maintains that Moshiach will build the Holy Temple.⁹⁷ How do we reconcile these diverse opinions?

In *Eichah* it is written,⁹⁸ “Sunk into the ground are her gates.” The *Midrash* notes:⁹⁹ The gates of the Holy Temple were concealed in its place underground.

Upon this verse, the *Talmud* remarks:¹⁰⁰ David (and Moses) merited that the enemies did not have full control of the edifices they built. For, with reference to David it states, “Sunk into the ground are her gates.”

Torah Temimah asks, how is the Beis Hamikdash and its gates attributed to David, when he didn’t even build it, but his son, King Solomon, built it? But the *Talmud* states,¹⁰¹ since David exerted utmost effort and self-sacrifice to find the appropriate site for the Holy Temple — it is therefore called upon his name.

The reason why the gates remained intact is seen in the *Midrash*:¹⁰²

The gates gave honor to the holy Ark. For, when King Solomon made the Ark, he made it 10 cubits long, and the entrance gates of the Temple Sanctuary were 10 cubits wide. Thus, it wasn’t possible for the Ark to fit through the gates. At that time, King Solomon

97. Hilchos Melachim 11:1,4; Jerusalem Talmud, Megillah 1:11

98. 2:9

99. Bamidbar Rabbah 15:13; Eichah Rabbah 2:13

100. Sotah 9a

101. Zevachim 54b

102. On Eichah; Also in Shmos Rabbah 8:1

called out,¹⁰³ “Raise your heads, O gates, and let the King of glory enter,” alluding to the Holy Ark and the Tablets therein. In response to Solomon’s plea, the gates uplifted themselves and permitted the Ark to enter. For this reason, the enemy forces did not destroy the gates but they sunk (intact) into the ground.

In light of the above, it seems that the Holy Temple itself will come down from Heaven. Its gates, however, which sunk into the ground, will rise up — and Moshiach will fasten them to their place. The rule is that, in the process of building, the one who puts up the doors or gates is considered as having built the entire edifice.¹⁰⁴

Just as the Temple gates were spared from destruction due to their honor of Torah, so, too, through our wholesome dedication to Torah study and its honor, we shall merit to see the gates rise up and be fastened to the Third Holy Temple through our Righteous Moshiach.

103. Psalms 24:7

104. Talmud, Baba Bathra 53b

LINK BETWEEN MOSHIACH AND MOSES

Our Sages state:¹⁰⁵

“Moses was the first Redeemer and he is the final Redeemer.”

This does not mean that Moses himself will be the final Redeemer, since Moses is a Levite, whereas Moshiach will come from the family of King David — from the Tribe of Judah.¹⁰⁶ What, then, does this Midrashic statement mean?

Rather, our Sages teach us that through the power of Moses, who was the first Redeemer, shall come Moshiach — the final Redeemer.

The major qualification of Moshiach is assiduous Torah study.¹⁰⁷ Thus, his power and merit to redeem all Jews is through Torah, which is called¹⁰⁷ “the Torah of Moses” and as G-d told him:¹⁰⁸ “Since you are humble it shall be called upon your name.” Likewise, the power of Jews to bring the final redemption today is through increased Torah study and its observance.

In the numerical sense, we also find the connection between Moshiach and Moses, as is written,¹⁰⁹ “Until Shiloh comes” — *yavo Shiloh*, and Moshiach is also called *Shiloh*.¹¹⁰

The Hebrew words *yavo Shiloh* are the numerical value of Moshiach; and Shiloh is the numerical value of Moshe.¹¹¹

This teaches us that the merit and power for bringing Moshiach is dependent upon the ideal role of Moses — through a wholesome dedication to Torah study and mitzvos.

105. See Shmos Rabbah 2:4; Zohar I 253a

106. Rambam, Hilchos Melachim 11:4

107. Malachi 3:22

108. Talmud, Shabbos 89a

109. Bereishis 49:10

110. Sanhedrin 98b

111. Baal HaTurim, Bereishis ibid.

MOSHIACH WILL COME WHEN UNEXPECTED

There are those that argue that our generation — with all its problems, weaknesses, and apathy — is not fit for Moshiach. For, how is it possible that our generation, which does not have the illustrious Torah Sages of previous times, shall be fit to see the revelations of the future redemption, revelations of such magnitude that the glorious and noble generations of the past — with all their Torah scholarship and piety — did not merit to see? Is our generation better than the preceding ones?!

Actually, this itself is proof that *now* is the time for the revelation of Moshiach, as our Sages state:¹¹² “Moshiach will come *B’hesech hadaas*” (lit. “in a time of forgetfulness,” when we aren’t expecting him).

In a deeper sense this means: When we find ourselves in a condition wherein our logic and understanding see no possibility for the final redemption; this “lack of logic” is a sure sign that the redemption is imminent.

Certainly, this statement does not mean that we should — G-d forbid — stop thinking and waiting for the redemption, thereby creating a condition of “forgetfulness.” On the contrary — this is a major tenet of Jewish belief: ‘I await his coming *every day!*’ (one of *Rambam’s* 13 Principles of Faith). Rather, this means, that notwithstanding the fact that our understanding and our mind see no possibility for Moshiach, yet, we have full, undiminished faith — transcending logic — that Moshiach will be here any day and any moment!

112. Sanhedrin 97a

MOSHIACH AND THE RED HEIFER

In the Holy Temple era, a red heifer was burned and then mixed with water, used for a special mitzvah-process for purifying those who came in contact with a dead human body. The *Rambam* rules:¹¹³

“Nine red heifers were performed (through burning etc.) from the time the Jews were given this mitzvah¹¹⁴, until the destruction of the Second Holy Temple. The first heifer was performed by Moses. The second one was performed by Ezra (who was a kohain). And there were another seven red heifers performed from Ezra until the destruction of the Second Holy Temple. The 10th red heifer will be performed by the King Moshiach — may he speedily be revealed, Amen, so may be the will of *Hashem*.”

What does it mean that “it will be performed by Moshiach?” This is similar to “(the first one) was performed by Moses,” i.e. he directed its burning etc., whereas the actual performance was done by Elazar the kohain¹¹⁵. Likewise, the actual performance of the 10th red heifer will be done by a kohain, whereas the directives and instructions for it will be given by the King Moshiach.

The *Rambam*'s ruling is cited in the *Mishnah*¹¹⁶, wherein there is a polemic as to how many red heifers were performed until the destruction of the second Holy Temple — whether seven or nine. The *Mishnah* also lists the names of the kohanim who burned these red heifers, as it states:

“The Rabbis opine, there were seven red heifers from Ezra and further. Who performed them? 3-4): Shimon the Tzaddik. 5-6): Yochanan the High Priest. 7) Eliyahu-Ayni ben Hakuf. 8) Chananel the Egyptian. 9) Yishmael ben Piani, or Pabi.”

113. Hilchos Parah Adumah 3:4

114. Bamidbar 19:2

115. Ibid. 19:3

116. Parah 3:5

Rambam rules according to the Rabbis, that there have already been nine red heifers and then adds: “The 10th red heifer will be performed by the King Moshiach.”

This raises a question: The *Rambam’s Mishneh-Torah* is not a book of Jewish history but is a *Halachic* work, as *Rambam* writes in his Introduction. If so, why is it necessary, in Halachah, to conclude: “The 10th red heifer will be performed by the King Moshiach — may he speedily be revealed, amen, so may be the will of Hashem?” This question is not directed on the *Mishnah*, which often brings themes which are not Halachic rulings.

We do find various aspects, where the number 10 will take place in the Messianic era, or through Moshiach, such as: The 10th song;¹¹⁷ the Jewish conquest of territory belonging to the 10 Canaanite nations;¹¹⁸ 10 chords in the future harp in the Holy Temple.¹¹⁹

Kiryas Sefer (on *Rambam*) notes: The 10th red heifer, by Moshiach, is alluded to in the ten verses from the beginning of Parshas *Parah* until¹²⁰ “for an eternal statute,” referring to the burning-process of the red heifer.

Yet, the question remains, why does *Rambam* add: “May he (Moshiach) speedily be revealed, amen, so may be the will of Hashem?” Why does he insert in a Halachic work a *plea and prayer* for the coming of Moshiach?

This is not the same as *Rambam’s* wording in his *Commentary On Mishnah*:¹²¹ “The Messianic era, may it speedily be revealed.” Similarly, *Bachye*¹²² lists the nine red heifers and concludes: “The 10th one will be burned by the King Moshiach, *speedily in our days.*” *Ramban*,¹²³ too, offers a prayer:

117. Targum, Song of Songs 1:1

118. Rashi, Bereishis 15:19

119. Talmud, Erchin 13b

120. Bamidbar 19:1-10

121. Sanhedrin Ch. 10; the 2nd group.

122. Bamidbar 19:2

123. Ibid. 19:16

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“We, due to our sins, are defiled in exile (i.e. the era of exile) and we know not the purity of holiness (as was previously in effect), until G-d¹²⁴ “pours a spirit upon us from on High” and He will sprinkle upon us pure waters and we shall be purified — amen, and so may it be the will of Hashem, speedily in our days.”

Praying For Moshiach

In his other writings, *Rambam* does bring the Halachah that a Jew must pray for the coming of Moshiach, as seen in his *Commentary On Mishnah*.¹²⁵

“The Messianic era; one should believe and confirm that Moshiach will come, and pray for his coming; one should not assume he will delay. If he tarries, wait for him. One should not set a date for his arrival and should not use deductive analysis from Torah verses to ascertain the date of his coming. One should also believe that he — Moshiach — will have a superior quality and esteem over all previous Kings in history, as seen in the prophecies on Moshiach conveyed by all the Prophets from Moses until Malachi. A person who has doubts about Moshiach or whose esteem is belittled in his eyes, thereby denies the authenticity of the Torah, which specifically foretells his coming and noble status, in Parshas Bilaam (i.e. Parshas Balak which relates of Bilaam’s prophecy) and Parshas *Nitzavim*. Included in this Principle is the fact that there will be no other King for the Jews besides one stemming from King David’s family and from the seed of King Solomon. Whoever contests this royal family tree thus defies G-d’s Name and the words of His Prophets.

Similarly, *Rambam* cites a prayer for Moshiach in his Order of *Tefillah*.¹²⁶ “Speedily cause the scion of David to flourish.” And:¹²⁷ The *Shmoneh-Esrai* prayer includes all pleas, for all of one’s

124. Isaiah 32:15

125. Sanhedrin Ch. 10; Principle 12 — Kapach’s edition

126. Sefer Ahavah/ end:15

127. Hilchos Tefillah 1:4

personal needs and for all communal needs, together with a prayer for Moshiach's coming. Yet, why does *Rambam* cite in his Halachic work, *Mishneh Torah*, his own prayer for the coming of Moshiach?

Apparently, if such a prayer is in order, it should have been written where the *Rambam* speaks of Moshiach, such as in the final two Chapters of Hilchos *Melachim*,¹²⁸ re: the Messianic era, or, previously, in Hilchos *Teshuvah*.¹²⁹

Yet, in those sections we do not find that *Rambam* includes a plea and prayer for the coming of Moshiach. It is only here, in the Laws of the Red Heifer — which do not discuss Messianic themes but present the laws of the red heifer — that *Rambam* adds this prayer. Why here?

Obviously, with this brief prayer, *Rambam* alludes to a Halachic rule.

Belief In Moshiach's Coming

With reference to the obligation for each Jew to believe in the coming of Moshiach, the *Rambam rules*:¹³⁰

“Whoever does not believe in him, or whoever does not yearn for his coming..thereby denies the truth of Torah and the teachings of Moses.” This means, it does not suffice to believe in the coming of Moshiach, but each one is obligated to hope and yearn for the speedy advent of Moshiach.

It's thus understood, that just as the belief in the coming of Moshiach is a *constant* feature in the life of a Jew, so, too, is there a *constant* obligation to yearn and hope for his coming. Thus we recite in our daily *Shmoneh-Esrai*: “For unto Your salvation we hope the whole day.”

128. Chs. 11-12

129. 9:2

130. Hilchos Melachim 11:1

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The aspect of “yearning for his coming,” which — in Halachah — is an emotional feeling and not just an intellectual awareness, stems from a Jew’s deep-seated feeling that he cannot attain completion without the coming of Moshiach. As such, he expresses a constant hope for Moshiach’s arrival, realizing that without this he is incomplete. Consequently, when one — who is *yearning* for the coming of Moshiach — mentions a feature pertaining to Moshiach, although it may be incidental, he cannot pass it by. Rather, it immediately arouses within him the emotional yearning for Moshiach, which becomes a personal need.

This is linked with the *Rambam*’s rule:¹³¹

The obligation of this mitzvah (*tefillah/prayer*) is this: One should pray to Hashem each day..(then) he requests his own needs with a plea and supplication.

Hence, in our case, when one’s true feelings are aroused, he must pray that his need be fulfilled — i.e. that he should speedily merit, at once, to see the coming of Moshiach.

This is what *Rambam* is teaching us: a) In general, to include the prayer — “May he speedily be revealed, amen, so may it be the will of Hashem.” b) To add “speedily.” c) To include this not in its appropriate place (within a Messianic Chapter), but in the Laws of the Red Heifer. Here, *Rambam* underscores the Halachah, how intense one’s yearning for Moshiach should be, that even when the aspect of Moshiach comes about incidentally, it should immediately arouse within a Jew the expression of a personal prayer — “May he speedily be revealed, amen, so may it be the will of Hashem.”

Status Of Exile

Yet, the theme of Moshiach is mentioned in *Rambam* incidentally before the Laws of the Red Heifer, such as in

131. Hilchos Tefillah 1:2

Hilchos *Teshuvah*¹³² and Hilchos *Nezirus*¹³³. The fact that *Rambam* alludes to the Halachah pertaining to the obligation of “yearning for Moshiach’s coming” in the Laws of the Red Heifer is because there is a close connection between the theme of the red heifer and the coming of Moshiach.

In general, exile represents a status of defilement by a corpse. Today (since the destruction of the Holy Temple), we are all considered as being in a state of ritual defilement by a corpse, since we do not have the red heifer purification. *Radvaz*¹³⁴ notes that even kohanim today are ritually defiled. *Magen-Avraham*¹³⁵ posits that anyone who enters today on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem is liable for *kares* (Heavenly death), since we are all defiled and, as such, we are prohibited to go onto this holy site. See *Raavad*.¹³⁶

Thus, the ash of the red heifer which purifies from defilement by a corpse — alludes to the redemption from exile. This is seen in the precise wording in the prophecy of redemption¹³⁷, “And I shall sprinkle upon you pure waters and you shall be purified” — i.e. in a manner of sprinkling. The purification will be achieved through *sprinkling* the waters of the red heifer — mixture which removes the defilement of a corpse (Rashi). Through this, all of humanity will be elevated to a higher level of purity and affinity with G-d, which will soon be revealed in the speedy advent of our Righteous Moshiach — amen, so may it be the will of Hashem!

132. 3:6

133. 4:11

134. Hilchos Bikurim 5:9

135. Orach-Chaim 661:2

136. Hilchos Nezirus 5:15

137. Ezekiel 36:25

WHOLESOMENESS OF TORAH THROUGH MOSHIACH

During the era of exile, the service of each Jew should be permeated with the constant yearning and hope for the final redemption through Moshiach. Thus *Pesikta Rabati*¹³⁸ states:

What special Divine light are the Jewish people *yearning* for? For the light of Moshiach, as it is written¹³⁹, “And G-d saw the light that it is good.” This teaches us that G-d foresaw Moshiach and his activities even before the Creation of the world. The Talmud¹⁴⁰ cites the question to be asked by the Heavenly Tribunal of each Jew: “Have you yearned for the salvation?” This refers to the final salvation through Moshiach. *Rashi* comments: “to yearn for the (fulfillment of the) words of the Prophets.”

This is clearly set forth in the classical text of *Ani maamin*: “I wait for him — Moshiach — every day that he should come.” Therefore, it should be manifest within one’s observance of Torah and mitzvos, that these endeavors will bring and hasten the final redemption. This theme is expressed in *Sefer HaSichos*,¹⁴¹ wherein the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe zt”l comments on the phrase in the *Haggadah* (from *Mishnah*¹⁴²): “To include the Messianic era” — *l’havee l’yemos haMoshiach*: *L’havee* (“to bring”) also means, in a deeper sense, that one’s intention in all endeavors of Torah during the era of exile is that they should *bring* us to the Messianic era and the speedy advent of Moshiach.

This means that all of the positive and wondrous effects in the Messianic era are not a separate entity from the noble activities during the period of exile; rather, these are all the outgrowth which stem from the esteemed service of Jews during exile.

138. Ch. 37

139. Bereishis 1:4

140. Shabbos 31a

141. 5703, p. 73

142. Berachos 12b

This is linked with one of the functions of Moshiach, at which time there will be the wholesomeness of Torah and mitzvos. As the *meforshim*¹⁴³ show the acrostic for the Talmudic term used for unanswered cases — TEYKU , “it remains a question”: *Tishbi Yetaretz Kushyos V'ibayos* — *Tishbi*, referring to Eliyahu, will come and answer all the questions and difficult cases.

Moshiach will also reveal the inner reasons for all Torah aspects, as *Rashi* notes:¹⁴⁴ In the future, G-d will reveal the reasons for all Torah laws. *Osiyos D'Rabbi Akiva*¹⁴⁵ and *Yalkut Shimoni*¹⁴⁶ relate: G-d will teach the *tzaddikim in Gan-Eden* the reasons for Torah which He will present *through Moshiach*. *Rambam* states:¹⁴⁷ “Moshiach will teach Torah to all the people and will guide them in the path of G-d.” In his Commentary on Mishnah,¹⁴⁸ *Rambam* posits: “Wonders will be revealed through him (Moshiach). All nations will serve him due to his great piety and wonders which will be performed through him.

Thus *Rambam* rules:¹⁴⁹

The King Moshiach will arise and return the kingdom of David to its original sovereignty. He will build the Beis-Hamikdash and bring back the ingatherings of Jews from exile. Then, all Torah laws shall be in effect as they had been in previous times. Sacrifices will be offered; and the laws of *Shemittah* (7th Sabbatical year in Israel) and *Yovel* (Jubilee year) will be *fully* observed according to all the laws in Torah.

This Halachah portrays the status of Moshiach and his Divine mission, that he will bring back the wholesomeness of all halachos and mitzvos of the Torah.

143. Tosphos Yom-Tov, *Idyos/end*. Sefer Ha' Aruch Hashalem.

144. Song of Songs 1:2

145. Letter zayin

146. Isaiah 429

147. Hilchos Teshuvah 9:2

148. Sanhedrin Ch. 10 — v'ata achel; Kapach's edition.

149. Hilchos Melachim 11:1

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As such, since Torah and mitzvos will then be complete, human existence will also become complete, as *Rambam* states:¹⁵⁰

..The Jews will be relieved from the pressures of foreign governments who prevented them from observing Torah and mitzvos properly. For this reason, all the Prophets and Jewish Sages desired to see and live in the Messianic era. Also, *Rambam* notes:¹⁵¹ Jews will be free to delve into the study and wisdom of Torah.

In essence, this utopian period will be enhanced by wondrous changes in the world at large, as *Rambam* declares¹⁵²:

“At that time there will be no famine and no war; no jealousy or strife..and the entire world will be pre-occupied only with the endeavor to gain the knowledge of G-d.”

This underscores our belief in the coming of Moshiach and how we eagerly await his coming: By studying Torah and observing mitzvos we are permeated with the belief that these holy endeavors will bring each person — and the whole world — to the wholesome study of Torah and mitzvos, and to the wholesome knowledge of the Creator — it is for this that each Jew and Jewess eagerly waits and prays for the speedy coming of Moshiach.

150. Hilchos Teshuvah 9:2

151. Hilchos Melachim 12:4

152. Ibid. 12:5