
שפה ברורה

The Halachos of Waiting for Mashiach



A Project of the
Midwest Agudas Yisroel
Council of Synagogue Rabbonim



מהדורת ברוך ה' לעולם

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הלכות צפיה לישועה

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WAITING FOR MASHIACH

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Rabbanim



קונטרס זה הוקדש בעילום שם
לעילוי נשמת
אבי מורי
הרב ברוך נתנאל בן ר' אברהם רובינסון זצ"ל



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HASKAMA

Rabbi Yaakov Robinson, one of the highly respected Rabbonim of Chicago, has written a booklet detailing the days of Mashiach according to Chazal which clarifies the different statements of Chazal regarding this era and justifies some apparent contradictions. It would be of great benefit to have this booklet disseminated among the public.

I wish Rabbi Robinson continued success in spreading Torah amongst the Jewish people.

With deep respect,



Rabbi Aharon Feldman

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The Halachos of Waiting for Mashiach

רמב"ם פירוש המשניות מסכת סנהדרין

היסוד שנים עשר

ימות המשיח, והוא להאמין ולאמת שיבא ולא יחשב שיתאחר אם יתמהמה חכה לו ולא ישים לו זמן ולא יעשה לו סברות במקראות להוציא זמן ביאתו וחכמים אומרים (סנהדרין יז:): תפח רוחן של מחשבי קצין ושיאמין שיהיה לו יתרון ומעלה וכבוד על כל המלכים שהיו מעולם כפי מה שנבאו עליו כל הנביאים ממשה רבינו ע"ה עד מלאכי ע"ה ומי שהסתפק בו או נתמעט אצלו מעלתו כפר בתורה שיעד בו בתורה בפירוש בפרשת בלעם ופרשת אתם נצבים ומכלל יסוד זה שאין מלך לישראל אלא מבית דוד ומזרע שלמה בלבד וכל החולק על המשפחה הזאת כפר בשם הש"י ובדברי נביאיו. וכאשר יאמין האדם אלה היסודות כלם ונתברר בה אמונתו בהם הוא נכנס בכלל ישראל ומצוה לאהבו ולרחם עליו ולנהוג עמו בכל מה שצוה הש"י איש לחבירו מן האהבה והאחווה ואפי' עשה מה שיכול מן העבירות מחמת התאוה והתגברות הטבע הגרוע הוא נענש כפי חטאיו אבל יש לו חלק לעוה"ב והוא ממושעי ישראל וכשנתקלקל לאדם יסוד מאלה היסודות הרי יצא מן הכלל וכפר בעיקר ונקרא מין ואפיקורוס וקוצץ בנטיעות ומצוה לשונאו ולאבדו ועליו נאמר (תהלי' קל"ט) הלא משנאך ה' אשנא.

The twelfth principle The belief in the Days of Mashiach, and that is to believe and to confirm that Mashiach will come and not to think that he will be late. 'If he delays, wait for him' and do not give him a set time [to predict his arrival] and do not interpret the *pesukim* to find the time of his coming. As the chachamim say in Sanhedrin 97b, "Those who calculate the end of days, their spirit should be cursed." [Included in this belief is that] that one must believe

that Mashiach has an elevated stature and gifts above all other kings who ever existed, according to all the prophecies that all *Neviim* have prophesied from Moshe Rabbeinu to Malachi. And one who doubts him or for whom his stature is diminished denies the Torah, as the Torah testifies about him in Parshas Balaam and in Parshas Nitzavim. And included in this principle is that there should not be a king in *Klal Yisroel* except from the House of Dovid alone. And anyone who disputes [the status] of this family, denies the name of Hashem and the words of His *Neviim*.

And when a person believes in all of these principles and his faith in them is clarified, he is categorized as part of *Klal Yisroel*; and it is [then] a mitzvah to love him and to have mercy upon him and to act with him according to everything which Hashem commanded about a man towards his fellow man, regarding *ahava* and *achva*. And even if he does *aveiros* because of desire and the overpowering of his base nature, he is punished according to his sins, but he [still] has a share in the Olam Haba, and is only considered to be from the sinners of *Klal Yisroel*. But if one of these principles becomes compromised for a person, he forfeits his status as being part of *Klal Yisroel* and he denies a basic tenet of Judaism and is called an apostate, a heretic and ‘someone who cuts the plantings.’ And it is a mitzvah to hate him and to destroy him, and about him it is stated (Tehillim 139:21), “Do I not hate those that You hate, Hashem.”

י"ג עיקרים

עיקר י"ב

אני מאמין באמונה שלמה, בביאת המשיח, ואף על פי שיתמהמה, עם
כל זה אֶחַדְקָה לוּ בְּכֹל יוֹם שְׂיָבוֹא.

I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the
Mashiach, and even though he may tarry, neverthe-
less I will anticipate his coming daily.

Section I

INTRODUCTION

The *kuntris* in your hands is the summary of a series of *shiurim* that I was *zoche* to give in my shul, Beis Medrash Mikor Hachaim of Chicago and other locations. It is certainly not a comprehensive treatment, but it does shed light and give insight on this important topic. A topic that few know very much about.

Why did I choose to write a *kuntris* on this specific topic? It was actually triggered by a tongue-in-cheek comment that someone made to me several years ago after a *drasha*. I ended the presentation with the traditional, “May we be *zoche* to the coming of Mashiach *bim’heira b’yameinu*.” Afterwards, he approached me and after politely thanking me he said, “It must be that Rabbis don’t really want Mashiach to come, because if they did...they would have no way to end their speeches.”

Admittedly, it was a good line, but it got me thinking. Why, in fact, do so many *drashos* end with a *bracha* for the coming of Mashiach? Why is the topic of Mashiach’s arrival constantly on our lips and on our minds?

The answer is that this is not a new focus, this strong emphasis on the coming of Mashiach is just following the precedent of the *Anshei Knesses Hagedolah* and the *gedolim* of previous generations.

Chazal established that our *tefillos* should be replete

with references to the concept of the “Coming of Mashiach” and our desire for his arrival. The *Sefarim Hakedoshim* for generations have consistently referenced this topic. Additionally, we have so many *halachos* that are *zecher la’mikdash* that are intended to arouse a longing and a yearning for the building of the third and final *Beis Hamikdash*, and this as well is something we daven for on a regular basis. The message is clear, this is a topic that should be on our minds and lips frequently.

The question is — Why? Why is it such a focus? Why do we do all this? The simple answer may be that it’s worth 16.6% of the grade on our first test when we get to *shamayim* after 120 years.

The Gemara¹ relates that there are 6 primary questions that every person will be asked when they get to *shamayim*.

אמר רבא בשעה שמכניסין אדם לדין אומרים לו נשאת ונתת באמונה
קבעת עתים לתורה עסקת בפו”ר צפית לישועה פלפלת בחכמה הבנת
דבר מותר דבר.

Rava said: After departing from this world, when a person is brought to judgment for the life he lived in this world, they say to him (the following questions): Did you conduct business faithfully? Did you designate times for Torah study? Did you engage in procreation? Did you await salvation? Did you engage

1. Shabbos 31a. Rav Moshe Shapiro zt”l, in *Sefer Re’eh Emunah*, points out that of course Hashem will ask if we kept all 613 *mitzvos*, but these 6 are the headline questions that He will ask. This is because these are the 6 most all-encompassing questions that most accurately define what kind of person the *niftar* was.

in wisdom? Did you understand one matter from another?

The 4th question in the list will be, “*Tzipisa L’yeshua?*” — “Did you anxiously wait for and anticipate Mashiach’s arrival?” Pause and contemplate — Will you be able to answer that question in the affirmative? The frequent mention of Mashiach’s arrival and all of the actions that we do *zecher la’mikdash* are all to help us want Mashiach’s arrival and empower us to answer an emphatic “Yes!” to the Question of “*Tzipisa L’yeshua*”².

It’s a bit more demanding though. It’s not only one’s grade that is on the line, it’s their status as Jews. After all, the Rambam lists it as one of the 13 *ikarim* (“Fundamentals of Faith” known as the “*Ani Maamins*”). What does it mean to be one of the 13 *ikarim*? Practically, what is the difference between an *ikar* and the rest of our belief and *mitzvah* system?

A simple answer is that the 13 *ikarim* are a list of beliefs that are so central to Judaism that our religion could not exist without them. For example, one of the *ikarim* is to believe that Hashem exists. That belief, and the other *ikarim*, stand at the core of what Judaism is and are so fundamental

2. The Arizal writes that saying the bracha of “*Es Tzemach*” with *kavana* will save us from shame when we will be asked “*Tzipisa L’yeshua?*” — בתיבות אלו יכוין לצפות לישועה, כדי שיוכל להשיב ליום הדין כששואלין אותו צפית לישועה. לכן יכוין מקירות לבו עד מאד בזה“ל: אני מחכה ומצפה בכל יום לישועת השכינה הקדושה שתצא מהגלות, ותגאל אותנו ג”כ בביאת משיחך, ותצמיח קרן דוד. ובודאי הבוחר לבות וכליות הוא רואה החכוי והקווי של כל אדם, באיזה תשוקה היא בלבו — לכן חכה בתשוקה גדולה ועצומה עד מאד, בכדי שלא יבוש ולא יכלם ליום הדין כשישאלו אותו צפית לישועה

to what Hashem demands of us, that if even one would be missing, the resulting belief system would not be Judaism at all³. By extension, if an individual questions or denies even one of the *ikarim*, he has the status of being an *apikores* (heretic)⁴. As we saw in the first Rambam above-

וכשנתקלקל לאדם יסוד מאלה היסודות הרי יצא מן הכלל וכפר בעיקר
ונקרא מין ואפיקורוס וקוצץ בנטיעות ומצוה לשונאו ולאבדו.

“We see that it is critical to understand and believe in the concept of Mashiach. If one denies it, they forfeit their status as an observant Jew.”

We have hopefully successfully begun to understand that it is important to believe in Mashiach’s arrival and to answer ‘Yes’ to the question of “*Tzipisa L’yeshua*”. Now, we can focus on the following questions related to the topic-

1. What is the reason why it is so important to wait for Mashiach? Each of the other *ikarim* make natural sense, but what is so fundamental about believing

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3. To be clear, once the Torah was given, we must believe in and keep every single *mitzvah* in the Torah. Someone who intentionally denies even one *mitzvah* is called a “*mumar la’davar echad*” and is considered an *apikores* (heretic). If, however, someone transgressed a *mitzvah* either because he wasn’t aware of that *mitzvah* or he transgressed it by accident or because he was overcome by a desire, he has an *aveira*, but his status as a Jew is unflawed. Someone who does not believe in any of the 13 *ikarim*, even by accident, his status as a Jew is called into question.
 4. Haggadah Mi’Beis Halevi writes in the name of Rav Chaim Soloveitchik that even someone who was not raised with an awareness of these *ikarim*, and therefore he is not at fault, still has the status of *apikores*. In his words, “*Nebach* an (unfortunate) *apikores* is still an *apikores*.”

Mashiach will come? Why would our entire religion be lacking without this belief⁵?

2. What is the source, if any, for this mitzvah? The Rambam⁶ quotes several *pesukim* that prove that there will be a Mashiach, but is there a source that supports the obligation that we need to wait and anticipate his arrival?
3. What are the *halachos* of waiting for Mashiach? What are the basic beliefs that fall under this heading? In short — What do I have to believe and what don't I have to believe?
4. How does one practically show that he is waiting for Mashiach?

על ראשון ראשון ועל אחרון אחרון

We will address these questions

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5. See Shu"t Chasam Sofer (Yoreh Deah Siman 356) that asks this question as follows — It isn't logical to say that our religion is built upon the foundation of believing in the *geulah*, because even if, in theory, there would be no eventual *geulah* (c"v) we would still be obligated to keep the entire Torah. An "*ikar*" is only a belief that is so essential to the extent that if it would be taken away, the structure of Torah observance would crumble.
 6. Hilchos Melachim 10:1. He brings *pesukim* in Devarim 30:3-5, Bamidbar 24:17, Shmuel II 8:2, etc.

Section II

SOURCE

What is the source for the obligation to wait for Mashiach and the ultimate *geulah*? Several answers are offered-

1. Many *sefarim* write that it is an *asmachta*. Meaning, that there is no explicit source, but there are hints to it in the Torah. It seems like the Rambam follows this opinion, because when he quotes all the *pesukim* that prove Mashiach exists, he immediately follows with the following statement, “Therefore, if someone is not ‘*michakeh*’ he is ignoring Toras Moshe.” Why would the Rambam write this, these *pesukim* only prove that Mashiach exists, they don’t prove that one must anxiously anticipate his arrival? Why is he denying “Toras Moshe” for not waiting for Mashiach? It must be that he sees in these *pesukim* not only the source of Mashiach’s existence, but also of the obligation to anxiously anticipate his arrival.
2. The Sma”k¹ writes that, “אנוכי ה' אלוהיך/I am Hashem your G-d”, the first of the *Aseres Hadibros*, contains within it the mitzvah to wait for Mashiach. It is our belief that the same G-d that took us out of Mitzrayim

1. Sefer Mitzvos Ketanos Mitzvah 1

will be the One to redeem us once again. He writes, “Where is this mitzvah written? We see that just like one must believe that Hashem took us out of *Mitzrayim*, as it is written, ‘*Anochi Hashem Elokecha* etc.,’ so too there is a *mitzvah* to believe that Hashem will in the future take us out, redeem us, and gather us from among the nations of the world.”

This link of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and the coming of Mashiach is also highlighted in our Tisha B’Av *Kinnos*² when we say — “בצאתי ממצרים...בשובי לירושלים”. The same glory and grandeur that was witnessed at *Yetzias Mitzrayim* will be seen once again when Mashiach comes and we return to *Yerushalayim*.

3. Rav Elchonon Wasserman *zt”l hy”d* writes³ that belief in Mashiach’s arrival is an extension of the mitzvah of Emunah in Hashem. He explains, as follows. If we believe Hashem exists, we have to believe that Torah is *min hashamayim*. After all, if we were created to fulfill Hashem’s will, how can we fulfill it if it was never told to us? Then, by extension of this logic, one must believe in Mashiach’s arrival. This is because, “Since we know that all creations were created to do the will of Hashem, and we clearly see that the entire world conducts itself the opposite of this standard due to being entrenched and drowning in their desires. Plus there are no wise men seeking Hashem. The matter is obvious that Hashem didn’t create heaven and earth for people of this lowly caliber. Therefore, we are

2. Kinnah 31

3. Kovetz Ma’amarim, “Maamar al Emunah” *seif* 9

forced to say that the *pasuk* of “Hashem’s honor will be revealed (in the World to Come)” must come to fruition.

In summary, it is clear that Hashem didn’t create the world and its cosmos for the way it is today. There must be better days coming in the future.

4. Finally, some commentaries write that there is no source, but it is still a *chiyuv d’oraysa* (Torah obligation) due to the logical obviousness of its need to exist. This is a fulfillment of the concept, “למה לי קרא, סברא הוא”, a *pasuk* isn’t needed when something is logical and self-evident.

These approaches may have answered our original question, but they have also opened the door to two new questions:

- ♦ Why is it logical that we should be waiting for Mashiach?
- ♦ Also, why and how does the Sma”k learn this from the *pasuk* of ‘*Anochi Hashem Elokecha*’?

The following analysis will hopefully shed light on all of our questions.

Section III

IMPORTANCE

There are several approaches quoted in the *sefarim hakedoshim* that explain why it is so fundamental to yearn for Mashiach’s arrival. All the approaches work hand-in-hand with each other, because they share the following common denominator — Something is significantly lacking with life as it is, and Mashiach’s arrival will usher in a time that will fill in all of these voids.

There are three main areas that will be “incomplete” until Mashiach comes, they are —

1. We, as individuals and as a nation, are each incomplete.
2. The “*Achdus/Oneness*” of Hashem seems to be incomplete.
3. Our relationship with Hashem is incomplete.

We will explain one at a time.

⇒ **We are Incomplete**

It is our purpose in this world to actualize the potential gifted within each and every one of us. Each one of us can certainly maximize our current potential in this world, but we need to realize that we simply cannot reach our fullest potential until the Days of Mashiach come.

Rav Moshe Shapiro compares us to patients in an

asylum. For them, it's their reality, only an outsider realizes how much better their life could be. So too, our accomplishments and the world as we know it are our "normal", but they would be so deficient if viewed in contrast to who we could be and how much better the world will be when Mashiach arrives.

The Rambam¹ writes that this is the *lishma* reason why great people yearn for Mashiach's arrival-

לא נתאוו החכמים והנביאים ימות המשיח. לא כדי שישלטו על כל העולם. ולא כדי שירדו בעכו"ם. ולא כדי שינשאו אותם העמים. ולא כדי לאכול ולשתות ולשמוח. אלא כדי שיהיו פנויין בתורה וחכמתה. ולא יהיה להם נוגש ומבטל. כדי שיזכו לחיי העולם הבא.

"The prophets and sages do not desire the Days of Mashiach in order to rule over the entire world, nor to gain power over the pagans, nor to be elevated and exalted above other nations, nor to be able to eat, drink and celebrate. Rather, they desire his arrival in order to be free to learn Torah and engage in *chachmah*, and to avoid having any oppressors or deterrents. This will enable them to earn life in *Olam Haba*.

In addition, the world itself is not complete, and it will only reach its state of completion and rectification when Mashiach arrives. The Rambam² and others beautifully describe the world during *Yemos Hamashiach*-

ובאותו הזמן לא יהיה שם לא רעב ולא מלחמה. ולא קנאה ותחרות. שהטובה תהיה מושפעת הרבה. וכל המעדנים מצויין כעפר. ולא יהיה

1. Hilchos Melachim 12:4

2. Hilchos Melachim 12:5

עסק כל העולם אלא לדעת את ה' בלבד. ולפיכך יהיו ישראל חכמים גדולים ויודעים דברים הסתומים ושיגו דעת בוראם כפי כח האדם. שנאמר כי מלאה הארץ דעה את ה' כמים לים מכסים:

At that time there will be no famines and no wars, no envy and no competition. For the good will be very pervasive. All the delicacies will be as readily available as is dust. The world will only be engaged in knowing Hashem. Then, there will be very wise people who will understand the deep, secret matters. They will then achieve knowledge of the Creator to as high a degree as humanly possible, as it says, "For the Earth shall be filled of knowledge of Hashem, as the waters cover the sea" (Yeshaya 11:9).

The Ramchal³ describes it as follows-

6,000 years is the amount of time that Hashem, in His ultimate wisdom, has given mankind to serve him and reach their fulfillment. After that time, the world will be renewed in a completely different form more suitable for how the world will function at that time. Meaning, there will be eternal pleasure for those that merit it. Before these 6,000 years conclude the Chosen Nation will need to achieve a state of completion...The messenger to help bring to this goal will be a descendant of King David's dynasty, Melech Hamashiach. He will be appointed by Hashem for this role and Hashem will assist him and enable him to succeed.

During his time and because of his efforts, Klal Yisroel

3. Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato in Maamar Ha'Ikarim *perek* 8

will achieve a great *tikkun* and subsequently the rest of the world will have an increase of good on all sides and bad and evil will be eradicated completely. This good will be in every area, whether it is matters of the spirit or matters of our physical bodies. This means that our hearts of stone will become soft like flesh and people will feel overcome with a natural tendency towards good and won't be drawn at all after their physicality. Rather, they will be drawn only to Torah and *avodas* Hashem.

In response to this increase of good, there will be an increase of tranquility and expansiveness, there will be no damage or loss...We will be able to achieve greatness with no exertion of effort...Everyone will rejoice in exaltation from all the good bestowed upon them.

Sefer Malchus Beis David⁴ asks a valuable question though. We are taught about how great the physical (and spiritual) bounty will be when Mashiach arrives. Why is this considered a good thing, aren't we instructed to limit our enjoyment of the physical world? After all, the *mishna* in Pirkei Avos⁵ instructs us to live a life that we are satisfied to "eat bread with salt and water in measure"? How do we resolve this apparent contradiction? He answers that food is not inherently a negative impediment to spiritual growth, it is only negative when one chases after delicacies. The physical enhancements that will occur when Mashiach arrives

4. Siman 40

5. Avos 6:4

will only be positive, and a means through which we can better serve Hashem. At that time, all food will be readily available, and it will give people the *menuchas hanefesh* (peace of mind) to fully engage in their service of Hashem.

☞ Hashem's Achdus Doesn't Seem Complete

The Ramchal in Derech Hashem and Daas Tevunos discusses at length how we need to recognize the “Oneness” of Hashem. Meaning, that everything in this world is a creation of our One Hashem and that everything that occurs, both good and seemingly bad, emanates from Him. On the surface, the world as it is, seems to be haphazard and people have a difficulty seeing how everything is from the Hand of Hashem and connected to Him. They have difficulty understanding and applying the concepts of “גם זו לטובה” (“This too is for the best”) and “כל מה דעביד רחמנא” (“All that Hashem does is for the best”). When Mashiach arrives, everything will become more clear, and we will be able to look back at our personal lives and all of world history and see how they fit perfectly into Hashem’s master plan. As *Chazal* interpret the *pasuk*⁶, “ביום ההוא יהיה ה' אחד ואחד ושמנו אחד”, that today we have separate brachos for good tidings and bad tidings, הטוב והמטיב and ברוך דיין האמת respectively. When Mashiach comes we will be able to make the same הטוב והמטיב under all circumstances.

In this world there are no answers, in the Next World there will be no questions.

Messilas Yesharim⁷ writes that being concerned about

6. Pesachim 50a

7. End of the 19th perek

our own *shleimus* (self actualization) is important but it is the lower *kavana* (intent) for why we should want Mashiach to come. The higher *kavana* is when we don't care about ourselves, we only care about Hashem's honor-

ודבר זה ביארוהו בתנא ד"א ז"ל אמרו: כל חכם מישראל שיש בו דברי תורה לאמתו, ומתאנח על כבודו של הקב"ה כו', כל ימיו, ומתאוה ומיצר לכבוד ירושלים ולכבוד בית המקדש ולישועה שתצמח בקרוב ולכינוס גליות, זוכה לרוח הקודש בדבריו וכו'.

נמצאת למד שזאת היא הכוונה המעולה שהיא רחוקה לגמרי מכל הנאת עצמו, ואינה אלא לכבודו של מקום ולקידוש שמו יתברך המתקדש בבריותיו בשעה שעושים רצונו.

ועל זה אמרו (זהר כי תצא): איזהו חסיד המתחסד עם קונו. והנה החסיד כזה מלבד העבודה שהוא עובד במעשה מצותיו על הכונה הזאת, הנה ודאי צריך שיצטער תמיד צער ממש על הגלות ועל החורבן, מצד מה שזה גורם מיעוט כביכול לכבודו ית', ויתאוה לגאולה לפי שבה יהיה עילוי לכבוד השם יתברך, והוא מה שכתב התדב"א שהבאנו למעלה, ומתאוה ומיצר לכבוד ירושלים וכו', ויתפלל תמיד על גאולת בני ישראל והשבת כבוד שמים לעילוי

“This matter is explained in Tana D’bei Eliyahu: ‘Any chacham from *Klal Yisroel* who has within him any true Torah, and he deeply cares about the honor of Hashem and the honor of *Klal Yisroel*, and he feels pain and desires the honor of *Yerushalayim*, and the honor of the *Beis Hamikdash*, and the redemption that will sprout speedily in our days along with the ingathering of the exiles, this person will merit achieving ruach hakodesh etc.’ We learn from here that this is the loftier *kavana* that is completely distant from any focus on one’s own benefit.”

The Psikta D’Rav Kahana writes that Hashem laments, “You

appreciate My Torah but you don't yearn for My *Malchus*." Upon which the Chofetz Chaim writes⁸, "*Ikar kol ha'ikarim*, the most fundamental concept of Judaism is the belief in the coming of Mashiach, because only then will 'יהיה ה' למלך' be fulfilled and the whole world will recognize His Kingship." THIS is why we are obligated to anxiously wait and daven 'מתי תמלוך בצי"ן'. He adds that we should be waiting with the same sense of anticipation as parents who are waiting for the train to arrive with their son that they haven't seen in many many years.

This approach would be one way to explain why "*Anochi Hashem Elokecha*" is the source for the *mitzvah* to wait for Mashiach. After all, "*Anochi*" is the source of the oneness of Hashem, and we want Mashiach to come and restore that oneness.

☞ **Our Relationship Is Incomplete**

Rav Yaakov Weinberg explains⁹ that *Bnei Yisroel* as a unit have a unique relationship with Hashem. As is, there is no clear expression of this closeness. We need the *Beis Hamikdash* with the *korbanos* etc. to be an expression of this bond.

There are many different analogies that are used to describe the unique nature of *Klal Yisroel's* relationship with *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. They are all accurate because each one brings out a different angle or facet of this bond. Amongst others, sometimes the relationship is described as

8. Chofetz Chaim Al Hatorah (Yashan) Parshas Noach

9. Sefer Even Shesiya pg. 97

one of husband and wife¹⁰ and other times as one of a father and child¹¹. These analogies will help us develop a deeper understanding of why it is so basic to believe in the fact that Mashiach will come and usher in the renewal of *Malchus Beis Dovid* and the building of the Third *Beis Hamikdash*.

Rav Shimshon Pincus shares the following *meshal-*

Reuven was having a hard time earning a livelihood to support his family. One day he was offered a position with a company based in China, and at least for the first year he would need to move to the Far East. He weighed the pro's and con's and he decided to take the offer. He reasoned with himself and to wife, "It's just one year... We can still maintain a fairly normal marriage. I'll call, email and Zoom frequently. This way I can maintain a relationship with you and the children while I make enough money to come back home and get us back on more solid financial footing." Reuven's wife agrees to the deal and he bids his wife and family farewell.

While in China, Reuven faithfully keeps his end of the deal, and he calls and writes regularly. As much as this was a b'dieved situation, their marriage and family were still functioning. Ultimately, they still had a "marriage".

At the end of the year, Reuven calls his wife and tells her, "This setup is working out so well, that I think I'll stay here... forever. Don't worry, I'll still call, write..."

10. Shir Hashirim 3:11 — ביום חתנתו וביום שמחת לבו

11. Devarim 14:1 — בנים אתם לה' אלוקיםכם

Aside from the pain the wife and children would feel, is this even called a “marriage” and “family unit” anymore if he’s never coming home?

So too with Mashiach. Our current relationship with Hashem is *b’dieved*. Yes, we have so many opportunities to connect with Hashem, and we cherish every moment of it, but it can be so much better. As *b’dieved* as it may be though, we still have a relationship with Hashem. But that’s only because there will be a time that it will be better. That will happen when “Our spouse comes back home with the coming of Mashiach.” If Mashiach is never coming, then how much of a relationship is it really, even now?

As Rav Pincus writes,¹² that not waiting for Mashiach isn’t a sign that there will be something lacking in us in the future, it’s a sign that we are lacking right now. It defines us as individuals that are not committed to a “*Bris Olam*”, an eternal covenant between us and Hashem. He writes-

“The concept of believing in the coming of Mashiach is not a fundamental belief because of its impact in the future. It is a fundamental belief, an *ikar*, because of how it defines us as Jews right now in the present. The essence of Judaism is a ברית בריית, a covenant of love that Hashem forged with *Klal Yisroel* at *Har Sinai*

12. Sefer Tiferes Torah — Hakdama. He is addressing the Chasam Sofer’s question why it is a fundamental belief to believe in Mashiach coming. He argues that even if there would be no *geulah, chas v’shalom*, we would still be obligated in mitzvos. So clearly, it is not a foundation upon which our lives of Torah and mitzvos is dependant on. See footnote 5 on page 14 that explains his question.

here in this world. The primary location of expression of this commitment and love is in *Eretz Yisroel* with the *Beis Hamikdash*. By definition, a true covenant is only if it is eternal (ברית עולם). If, *chas v'shalom*, Hashem would ever banish *Klal Yisroel* permanently, then performance of mitzvos would be relegated to just a system of reward and punishment. It would no longer be an expression of a relationship.

The following analogy demonstrates this point. A father unfortunately had to ask his child to leave his home. What difference does it make if he did it as a *chinuch* methodology to get him back on the right path or if he did it out of anger because he never wants to see his face ever again? The answer is, it makes all the difference in the world! Not just in the future, but even right now. It proves that they never really had a relationship. So too with us and Hashem. If Mashiach will never come, *chas v'shalom*, it turns out that Hashem has kicked us out permanently and it reveals that it was never really a relationship or commitment in the first place. This is why believing that he will come is so fundamental, it is proof right now that we have a *bris olam* with Hashem.”

Another analogy to further clarify this point-

Imagine a son whose father was taken captive and the son makes no effort to extricate him from his perilous situation. In fact, the son doesn't even seem to care if he is freed. Is a son with this attitude really even considered a son?

So too, if one would be satisfied with the current *b'dieved* situation of the world and he doesn't show a deep desire for things to be better and the relationship restored, it puts into question his relationship with Hakadosh Baruch Hu in the first place.

Based on all the above, we can better understand why it's a *sevara* (logical) to believe and anticipate the coming of Mashiach. We have learned that one's entire identity as a Jew and his relationship with Hashem is fatally flawed if it is not something that he believes or cares about. How can one really be considered a Jew, if he doesn't care to have a closer and better relationship with his Father in Heaven?

THIS is all why it is one of the first 6 questions that each person is asked in *shamayim*.

THIS is why it is one of the 13 fundamental beliefs of our religion.

Section IV

WHEN WILL MASHIACH COME?

A. INTRODUCTION

There is a lot of discussion surrounding the timing of Mashiach's expected arrival, and what will happen when he comes. While we won't delve too deeply into this topic, a basic understanding of some of these points will help better understand the halachic section of this *kuntris*.

B. 6,000 YEARS

We have a *mesorah* that Mashiach will come by the end of the 6,000th year from creation. This amount of time is underscored by two Gemaras in Maseches Sanhedrin-

1. *Daf* 97a — אמר רב קטינא שית אלפי שני הוו עלמא וחד חרוב
“Rav Katina says, the world will exist for 6,000 years and then it will be in a state of destruction for one millenia.”

This first Gemara teaches that the world will go through a cycle of seven millenia similar to the six days of the week leading up to Shabbos. There will be six millennia of existence by the end of which Mashiach will come, and then there will be one millenia that the world will go through a metamorphosis to bring it to a higher spiritual plane.

A full explanation of this millenia of *churban* and the process of *techiyas hameisim* (revivification of the dead)

that precedes it, is not the focus of this *kuntris*. For our purposes, though, we learn from here the number 6,000 is the deadline for Mashiach's arrival.

2. *Daf* 97a-b — תנא דבי אליהו ששת אלפים שנה הוי עלמא שני אלפים תוהו שני אלפים תורה שני אלפים ימות המשיח ובעונותינו ובעונותינו “It was taught in the Beis Medrash of Eliyahu, the world will exist for 6,000 years: 2,000 years of ‘Tohu,’ 2,000 years of Torah, and 2,000 years of ‘The Days of Mashiach.’ Unfortunately, due to our abundant sins many of these years have already passed.”

This second Gemara not only teaches us the end-date by which Mashiach will certainly arrive, it also gives us the entire window of time he may arrive in.

The world was in a state of ‘*Tohu*’ (nothingness) for the first 2,000 years. Then, when Avraham Avinu turned 52 years old and started spreading faith in Hashem, the 2,000 years of Torah commenced. Then, in the year 4,000 from creation, 172 years after the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash, the *Yemos Hamashiach* began. It is during these two millenia of “Days of Mashiach” that we are taught that Mashiach will arrive by the end of. Before this window of time, it wasn't possible.

C. B'ITA ACHISHENA בעתה אחישנה

Although we have a *mesorah* that Mashiach will come by the end of 6,000 years, the Gemara Sanhedrin 98a says that it is possible to bring Mashiach earlier. It all depends if we earn it.

אמר רבי אלכסנדרי רבי יהושע בן לוי רמי כתיב (ישעיהו ס, כב) בעתה

וּכְתִיב אַחִישָׁנָה זָכוּ אַחִישָׁנָה לֹא זָכוּ בְעֵתָהּ. אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְכַסְנַדְרִי רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי רָמִי כְתִיב (דְּנִיאל ז', יג) וְאָרוּ עִם עֲנַנֵי שָׁמַיָא כְּבַר אֵינִשׁ אַתָּה וְכְתִיב (זְכַרְיָה ט, ט) עֲנִי וְרוֹכֵב עַל חֲמוֹר זָכוּ עִם עֲנַנֵי שָׁמַיָא לֹא זָכוּ עֲנִי רוֹכֵב עַל חֲמוֹר.

Rabbi Alexandri says: Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi raises a contradiction in the *pasuk* describing the *geulah*. On one hand the *pasuk* (Yeshaya 60:22) says that Mashiach will come “בעתה — at his designated time”, while on the other hand it says that he will come, “אחישנה — hastily (before his designated time)”. Rabbi Alexandri explains: If they merit Mashiach he will come early. If they do not, then he will come in his pre-designated time.”

Rabbi Alexandri (also) says: Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi raises a contradiction between two depictions of the coming of the Mashiach. One *pasuk* says (Daniel 7:13–14) that he will come, “In the clouds of heaven etc.”, but another (Zecharia 9:9) says that he will come “Like a poor person riding on a donkey.” Rabbi Alexandri explains: If the Jewish people merit, Mashiach will come miraculously with the clouds of heaven, but if they don’t merit he will come like a poor person riding on a donkey.”

We learn from these Gemaras that through our actions we can merit an early and miraculous arrival of Mashiach¹. If, however, we do not have enough merits, Mashiach will

1. See page 72 for a selection of things we can do to earn Mashiach’s early arrival.

still come, but only at the predetermined time and in a less miraculous way.

We will see later on that there will be several differences that will take place if Mashiach comes early versus coming on time. Just one example, according to some opinions the order of events that will happen when Mashiach comes will be different if we bring Mashiach early.

There is an interesting story related to this topic —

The Brisker Rav once spoke at a Sheva Brachos and asked the following question. The *pasuk* in Tehillim² says, “ימים על ימי מלך תוסיף שנותיו כמו דר ודר” (“Add days to the days of the king; may his years extend through generations.”). On this *pasuk*, the Radak³ gives two definitions of the word “*melech*”. One definition is a reference to himself as an actual King, the second is that it is referring to *Melech Hamashiach*.

The Brisker Rav continues to explain — If the word *melech* is a reference to Dovid Hamelech himself, it makes sense to daven for a longer life. But if the word *melech* is referring to *Melech Hamashiach*, how does one lengthen the life of Mashiach, after he comes he will live forever? He answered that we can lengthen his life by bringing him early, אחישנה. By bringing him early, we are adding on days at the beginning of his life!

2. Tehillim 61:7

3. On Tehillim 61:7 — אם על דוד אמר, אמר זה על עצמו. כי נמשח היה למלך — ויתפלל על עצמו שיאריך יהיו ויוסיף לו ימים על הקצובים לו. ואם על הגלות, ה“מלך” הוא מלך המשיח

This concept of bringing Mashiach early in the merit of our actions is hinted to by looking at the two places in Tanach that use the phrase “גם תמול גם היום”. One is in Sefer Shmuel I⁴ when Shaul asks Yonason, “Why has Ben Yishai not come yesterday or today (גם תמול גם היום)?”. This *pasuk* can be understood to mean, “Why hasn’t Mashiach (a descendant of Yishai) come yet?” The other *pasuk* is in Sefer Shemos⁵ when *Paroah’s* officers asked the Jewish slaves, “Why have you not finished your responsibilities (to make bricks) not yesterday nor today (גם תמול גם היום)?” By combining these two *pesukim* we see that not fulfilling our responsibilities leads to the delay of Mashiach’s arrival⁶.

D. Predicting The Time Of His Arrival (מחשבי קיצין)

Chazal sharply denigrate those who attempt to calculate the exact time of Mashiach’s arrival. As the Gemara states⁷, “May those who calculate the end of days be cursed.” In addition, it’s written in Maseches Derech Eretz⁸, “Rebbi Yossi writes that those who calculate the end of days will have no portion in the world to come”.

This restriction is brought as practical *halacha* in the Rambam —

4. Shmuel I 20:27

5. Shemos 5:14

6. Sefer Ohr La’yesharim *drush* 3 brought in Sefer Margolios Hayam on Sanhedrin 97b number 10

7. Sanhedrin 97b — תיפח עצמן של מחשבי קיצין

8. *Perek* 9 — רבי יוסי אומר הנותן את הקץ אין לו חלק לעולם הבא

וכן לא יחשב הקצין. אמרו חכמים תפח רוחם של מחשבי הקצים. אלא יחכה ויאמין בכלל הדבר כמו שבארנו.

Similarly, one should not calculate the “End of Days”. Our *Chachamim* have said that the spirit of those who calculate the End of Days will be cursed. Rather, one is to (simply) wait and believe in the principle of this matter, as we have explained.

There are several approaches to explain why it is so bad to attempt to make a calculation of the *keitz* (predetermined time of Mashiach’s arrival). One approach is that it will lead people to stop anxiously awaiting Mashiach’s arrival. After all, if the calculated date is a few years from now, then what’s the point of waiting so anxiously now? Another concern is that people will feel dejected if he doesn’t come on the expected date and may even start questioning the concept of Mashiach altogether.⁹

The challenge is that many *gedolim* and *tzaddikim* throughout history, including the *Rishonim* themselves, suggested dates for when Mashiach will come¹⁰. How is this not a transgression of calculating the *keitz*?

The Rambam in his *Sefer Hageulah*¹¹ has a lengthy dis-

9. Igeres Teiman pg. 155

10. For example: Rav Saadia Gaon (*Emunah V’deos* 8:3, quoted in Rashi on Daniel 7:25), Rambam (*Iggeres Teiman perek* 3), Ramban (*Sefer Hageula Shaar* 4), the Vilna Gaon (In his commentary to *Safra D’tzniusa perek* 5), the Arizal (*Likutei Torah — Mikeitz*), and others. See the *he’ara* of Rav Reuven Margolios on *Shu”t Min Hashamayim siman* 72 that provides a comprehensive list of sources that predict Mashiach’s arrival.

11. *Shaar* 4

cussion about this topic. He suggests that the prohibition to calculate Mashiach's arrival may have only applied in earlier generations when the predicted time was far off in the future and it would have caused despair. In later generations, though, when the time of his arrival is closer, it may be permissible. He writes¹², "Since we are certainly closer to the *keitz*, and possibly we are even very close, perhaps this decree to conceal its date has been nullified." He also suggests that it may only be prohibited to give a definitive date of Mashiach's arrival, but suggesting possible theories would not be an issue.

The Abarbanel¹³ also writes the second answer of the Ramban and he adds that it may only be prohibited to make predictions by using astrology and the like, but it would be permissible to reach conclusions based on interpretations of sources in Tanach. Most *Achronim*, however, disagree with the Abarbanel, plus the Gemara Sanhedrin doesn't seem to make this distinction.

Another simple answer is that they never said that Mashiach will come at a certain time, they only predicted or sensed times that are more *mesugal* (opportune) for Mashiach to come. That is permissible, because it is not definitive, it leaves it up to us to bring it to fruition through our own efforts. If Mashaich didn't arrive on that day, it means that we weren't worthy enough yet for his arrival. There is a Zohar¹⁴ that supports this approach, because it

12. Sefer Hageulah *shaar 4 section 10*

13. Ma'ayanei Hayeshua (Maayan Aleph Tamar Beis)

14. Zohar Chadash Tikunim 95b

says that every generation has a *keitz*, a time that is more opportune to bring Mashiach.

This final approach also addresses a final question, “How could all these *gedolim* have predicted incorrectly?” According to what we are saying, they weren’t giving a time that Mashiach “for sure will come”, they were only saying “Mashiach can come at these times if we merit.”

Based on the Zohar, the Bnei Yissaschar¹⁵ provides another answer why their predictions were not incorrect. He explains that the dates they predicted in fact did bring about a *geulah* on a higher spiritual plane, but the role those days played will only be recognized in our realm at the time of the ultimate *geulah*.

Nevertheless, despite all of these approaches, it is still advisable to avoid engaging in calculating (and certainly communicating) specific times for Mashiach’s arrival.

E. Times Mesugal For His Arrival

Although we have established that one should not engage in trying to figure out when Mashiach will arrive, *Chazal* do tell us times that are more opportune for his arrival. The following is a list of some of these times-

1. The Month of Tishrei or Nissan — Rabbi Eliezer is of the opinion that the ultimate *geulah* will happen in the month of Tishrei and Rabbi Yehoshua is of the opinion that it will happen in the month of Nissan .¹⁶

15. Bnei Yissaschar Chodesh Sivan “Maalos Hatorah” section 19

16. Gemara Rosh Hashana 11b — רבי אליעזר אומר...בניסן נגאלו בתשרי עתידין

2. The Month of Cheshvan — “And the month of Mar-Cheshvan, in the future Hashem will repay it (by building the third Beis Hamikdash in that month).”¹⁷

F. Signs Of Mashiach’s Imminent Arrival

The Gemara in Masseches Sanhedrin on *daf* 97-99 lists many signs of Mashiach’s imminent arrival. An analysis of these signs and their application to modern times is beyond the scope of this work.

G. Chevlei Mashiach

The Gemaras in Sanhedrin and Sotah also describe in great detail the suffering that Klal Yisroel will have to endure during the process leading up to Mashiach’s arrival.

ליגאל...ר' יהושע אומר בניסן נגאלו בניסן עתידין ליגאל. See more about this Gemara on page 62 of this kuntris.

17. Yalkut Shimoni Sefer Melachim *remez* 184 — וכן מרחשון עתיד הקב"ה לשלם לו. As an aside, one can ask — What is so special about the Month of Cheshvan that it is one of the opportune times to bring Mashiach? Perhaps it can be explained with the following story. There is a certain family who always keep their home in pristine order and never allow guests in when things are in disarray. One time a visitor came when the entire home was filthy, disorderly and dusty. Why did they let him in? It’s simple, the home was under construction. So too with our relationship with Hashem. We are working on doing *teshuva* and making ourselves a home that the *Shechina* can rest in. We don’t need to be in perfect shape, we at least need to be under construction. Therefore, the month of Cheshvan, which is on the heels of an entire month of doing *teshuva*, is a perfect time to show Hashem that we are genuinely under construction. This is grounds to merit welcoming Mashiach, and more importantly Hashem, into our homes and into our lives.

This is a period of time known as “*Chevlei* (the Birthpains of) Mashiach”¹⁸. The threat of these travails is so graphic that it prompted several *Amoraim* to say, “Let Mashiach come, but don’t let me (be there to) see it.”¹⁹

A full list of the suffering that will occur is beyond the scope of this work, but there are two noteworthy points to share-

1. One can more easily endure this suffering by engaging in Torah study and acts of *chessed*²⁰.
2. *Klal Yisroel* can avoid this period of *Chevlei Hamashiach* altogether if we merit to bring Mashiach early (אחישנה) and we don’t have to wait for him to come at his predetermined time (בעתה)²¹.

18. Vilna Gaon in Even Shleimah *perek* 11, Maharsha Sanhedrin 97a and many other sources.

19. Ulla, Rabba and Rabbi Yochanan in Sanhedrin 98b

20. Sanhedrin 98b. Rav Elchonon Wasserman (Kovetz Ma’amarim [Hachadash] page 307) writes in the name of the Chofetz Chaim that since the Gemara specifically writes to be יעסיק in Torah and *chessed*, this protection is only effective if we fully commit and sacrifice for these mitzvos like we would for our own jobs.

21. Sefer Chesed L’Avrohom *maayan* 5 *nahar* 37

Section V

HALACHIC PARAMETERS

A. INTRODUCTION

We have established that it is an obligation to believe in the coming of Mashiach. In fact, Rav Yaakov Emden writes¹ that the *Anshei K'nesses Hagedolah* put the words, “כי לישועתך קיינו כל היום” into *davening* just to ensure that we fulfill this mitzvah multiple times a day. Practically though

- ♦ What exactly am I supposed to **do** to fulfill this mitzvah?
- ♦ What do I have to believe and what do I not have to believe?

Unfortunately, there is no Shulchan Aruch on these halachos, but the Rambam and many *Rishonim* and *Achronim* do discuss the topic at length. The following is a collection of halachos and thoughts drawn from these sources.

The Rambam in the 11th and 12th *perakim* of Hilchos Melachim shares a vast amount of information about this mitzvah and what will happen when Mashiach arrives. How much of what the Rambam writes is a mandatory belief (*mi'akeiv*)? Meaning, if one doesn't believe even one of the

1. Siddur Yaavetz

details described by the Rambam, is he an *apikores* (heretic)? Our sources seem to understand that it can't be. If so, we can then ask, which parts do we have to believe in and which ones do we not?

B. MANDATORY BELIEFS

The following is a list of the beliefs that one must have to fulfill this mitzvah-

☞ בו אמונה **Belief There Will be Mashiach**

1. *Emunah Bo*—One must believe that the concept of Mashiach exists and that he will come in the future².

המלך המשיח עתיד לעמוד ולהחזיר מלכות דוד ליושנה לממשלה הראשונה... וכל מי שאינו מאמין בו... לא בשאר נביאים בלבד הוא כופר. אלא בתורה ובמשה רבינו.

Hamelech Hamashiach will arise and re-establish the monarchy of David as it was in former times... Anyone who does not believe in him...not only denies the *Neviim*, but also the Torah and Moshe Rabbeinu.

☞ בו אמונה במעלתו **Belief in His Greatness**

2. *Emunah B'maalaso*—One must believe that Mashiach will be a person of great spiritual stature, a *talmid chacham* and true leader. The Rambam in Hilchos Melachim³ describes his traits and accomplishments as follows —

ואם יעמוד מלך מבית דוד הוגה בתורה ועוסק במצוות כדוד אביו. כפי

2. Rambam Hilchos Melachim 11:1

3. Rambam Hilchos Melachim 11:4

תורה שבכתב ושבעל פה. ויכוף כל ישראל לילך בה ולחזק בדקה. וילחם מלחמות ה'. הרי זה בחזקת שהוא משיח. אם עשה והצליח ובנה מקדש במקומו וקבץ נדחי ישראל הרי זה משיח בודאי. ויתקן את העולם כולו לעבוד את ה' ביחד שנאמר כי אז אהפוך אל עמים שפה ברורה לקרוא כולם בשם ה' ולעבדו שכם אחד:

“Now, if a king should arise from the House of David who is versed in Torah and engages in *mitzvos*, as did Dovid his forefather, in accordance with both the Written and the Oral Torahs, and he enjoins all of Israel to follow in its ways and encourages them to repair its breaches, and he fights the Wars of Hashem, then he may be presumed to be Mashiach. If he succeeds in his efforts and defeats the enemies, and builds the Beis Hamikdash in its proper place and gathers the dispersed of *Klal Yisroel*, he is definitely Mashiach. And he will correct the entire world to serve Hashem in unity...”

In Hilchos Teshuva⁴ he adds—

מפני שאותו המלך שיעמוד מזרע דוד בעל חכמה יהיה יתר משלמה. ונביא גדול הוא קרוב למשה רבינו. ולפיכך ילמד כל העם ויורה אותם דרך ה'.

Because that King will rise from the descendants of Dovid Hamelech who will possess wisdom greater than Shlomo Hamelech, and a great prophet almost on the level of Moshe Rabbeinu.

In total, the Rambam lists 6 primary goals that Mashiach will accomplish-

4. Rambam Hilchos Teshuva 9:2

- He will cause the entire world to return to Hashem and His teachings.
- He will restore the royal dynasty to the descendants of Dovid Hamelech.
- He will oversee the rebuilding of *Yerushalayim* and the third *Beis Hamikdash*, and also restore the order of *korbanos*.
- He will gather the Jewish people to *Eretz Yisroel*. .
- He will reestablish the *Sanhedrin*.
- He will reestablish the system of *Shemittah* and *Yovel*.

☞ אמונה בדברי הנביאים **Belief in the Teachings of the Neviim**

3. *Emunah B'divrei Ha'neviim* — One must have a general belief that whatever the *Neviim* (prophets) say will happen when Mashiach comes, will in fact come true⁵.

☞ אמונה במשפחת בית דוד **Belief that Mashiach Will Descend From Dovid Hamelech**

4. *Emunah B'Mishpachas Beis Dovid* — One must believe that Melech Hamashiach will be a descendant of Dovid Hamelech via Shlomo Hamelech. The Rambam⁶ writes that anyone who debates this, “is a denier of Hashem and the words of His *Neviim*.”

5. Rashi “Tzipisa” on Shabbos 31a

6. Peirush Hamishnayos Sanhedrin on *Yesod* #12. See the Ohr Hachaim

Rav Yonason Shteif⁷ points out that if a King would arise from a different *shevet*, his status of being a King is valid as long as he meets the qualifications of greatness. However, he warns that the dynasty won't last. Only Kings from *shevet Yehuda* can have continuity, as the pasuk says "כסאך יהיה נכון אז לעולם".

This is the basis of a well-known Ramban⁸ that addresses a potentially baffling question. The family of the *Chashmonaim* were the great heroes of the Chanukah story and were each men of great stature, yet we know that in the end *Beis Chashmonai* suffered terrible destruction. Why did they deserve such a bitter fate? The Ramban answers that their *malchus* was destined to come to an end because they were *Kohanim* who took the throne that rightfully only belongs to *shevet Yehuda*. They were spiritually fit for the role, but nonetheless *Kohanim* can't maintain the throne.

⇒ מוחכה לו **Anxiously Awaiting His Arrival**

5. *Michakeh Lo*—It is not enough to know that *Mashiach* will come and to wait for his arrival. One must ***anxiously*** anticipate his arrival. If one is waiting, but waiting patiently, he is not in fulfillment of one of the 13 *ikarim* of our *Emunah*. As the Rambam writes⁹ —

Hakadosh (Bereishis 49:11) who addresses a Zohar that sounds like *Mashiach* does not need to be from *Dovid Hamelech*.

7. Sefer Mitzvos Hashem pg. 64
8. Ramban Al Hatorah Bereishis 49:10
9. Hilchos Melachim 11:1

וְכָל מִי שֶׁאִינוּ מְאֲמִין בּוֹ. אוּ מִי שֶׁאִינוּ מְחַכְּהָ לְבִיאָתוֹ. לֹא בְּשָׂר נְבִיאִים
בְּלִבָּד הוּא כּוֹפֵר. אֲלָא בְּתוֹרָה וּבְמִשְׁנָה רַבְּנָנּוּ.

Anyone who does not believe in him **or one who does not anticipate his coming** not only denies the *Neviim*, but also the Torah and Moshe Rabbeinu.

The Brisker Rav¹⁰ once asked — Why is this *Ani Maamin* the only one that is written in a “Question & Answer” format — “ואף על פי שיתמהמה, עם כל זה אחכה לו” — “even though he may tarry, nevertheless we still wait”? This is not done by other *ikarim*. For example, we don’t say “even though there are many *pesukim* that seem indicate that Hashem does have a body, nonetheless he really doesn’t.” Every other *Ani Maamin* is just a statement, why not here too? The Brisker Rav answers that this wording is intended to highlight the need to not only wait, but to anxiously anticipate his arrival. By starting with the, “even though he may tarry...” it starts to generate the longing.

Certainly, it makes sense and we have already established why there’s a *mitzvah* to wait for Mashiach, but why is it so essential that the waiting be with “anxious anticipation” that without it one is not fulfilling his obligation to properly wait for Mashiach?

The simple answer is that things of value to us that we are awaiting their arrival, we wait with anxious anticipation. If one lacks something and does not anxiously anticipate getting it, that is a sign that he doesn’t really value it that much in the first place.

There are countless *meshalim* that can be used to clarify

10. Sefer Ma’ayanos Ha’emunah on the 12th *Ikar*

this idea, and they revolve around our earlier explanation why it's a mitzvah to wait for Mashiach in the first place.

- ♦ A wife and children that are waiting for their father to return from a year long business trip, don't only wait, they wait with anxious anticipation. "When is Tatty coming home?!"
- ♦ A family that r"l has a deathly ill child and are waiting for an appointment with the only doctor who knows a cure for the child's disease. They constantly "sit at the edge of their seats" waiting for the phone call to arrive to inform them that they have an appointment.

If he is "waiting" for Mashiach without the word "anxiously" as an adverb, that is a sign that Mashiach's arrival isn't that important to him. It means that he is satisfied with his current situation as (relatively) mediocre as it is. He doesn't feel any urge or need to bring *shleimus* to himself, to Hashem's oneness, or to his relationship with Hashem. That is unfortunately a sign that he is not much a Jew in the first place. Because a true Jew yearns to bring *shleimus* to all these areas.

Rav Bunim of Peshischa famously writes¹¹ that this complacency even happened to *Bnei Yisroel* in *Mitzrayim*, it became their new normal and they lost their vision and hope for a better life. This is why Hashem had to take them out of "סבלות מצרים", he had to remove them from their state of "*savlanus*" (patience) with their situation as slaves

11. Medrash Simcha on Parshas Va'eira

in *Mitzrayim*. We have to avoid falling into the same trap of complacency and acceptance of our current situation.

Let's use a very contemporary example of the recent pandemic, when the entire world was ostensibly under an international "Shelter-in-Place" order. Mankind wasn't just "waiting" for the era to end, they were waiting "anxiously" for it to end. Otherwise, it was proof that they really didn't care about the crisis and all the physical, emotional, spiritual and financial damage that it was leaving in its wake. We can't have "*savlanus*" as we wait for Mashiach to bring better days, we should be at the edge of our seats itching for him to come.

This concept is supported by a Gemara in Yerushalmi¹² — "Rebbi Yirmiya would give orders, put my shoes on my feet, my cane in my hand, and lay me on my side. If Mashiach comes, I want to be ready." Rav Elchonon Wasserman points out¹³ that this preparation only saved him a few seconds, but he still insisted on being as ready as possible to avoid wasting even a second and to show how he is anxiously awaiting Mashiach's arrival.

This attitude has been the mindset of great and simple people for generations. Famously, the Chofetz Chaim would keep a packed suitcase by his door to be able to run out and greet Mashiach without delay. Mrs. Necha Golding, the famous "*Tzadeikes of America*" (as Rav Aharon Kotler described her at her *levaya*), had a special dress dedicated for when Mashiach would arrive. Unfortunately, the suitcase and the dress were not used, but their efforts were

12. Kesuvos 12:3

13. Kovetz Ma'amarim (Hachadash) pg. 64

not in vain. This is because their actions weren't just for their future, they were for their present. It defined each of them as individuals who loved Hashem and wanted nothing more than to be fully reunited with Him.

6. Can Come vs. Will Come

One final question in this section — Do we have to believe that Mashiach “Can” come today or that he “Will” come today? There seems to be sources that prove both ways.

The Mordechai, in discussing a specific case of meat that had a questionable *kashrus* status *paskened* that it is permissible to be lenient and eat it. The Mordechai then preempts the following question — There is a concept in halacha called “*davar she’yeish lo matirin*”, that teaches that we shouldn’t rely on leniencies such as *bittul* (nullification) or *safeik l’kula* (being lenient in a case of doubt) to allow the eating of certain foods if one can simply wait and have the food in a fully permissible fashion at a later time. Based on this concept, perhaps we should *pasken* that in all cases of questionable *kashrus* we should be stringent because Eliyahu Hanavi may come and *pasken* that the food is fully kosher. To this, the Mordechai answers that *davar she’yeish lo matirin* doesn’t apply if the food may spoil by the time the question is resolved. This seems to prove that the Mordechai is of the opinion that one does not have to believe that Mashiach will come today. After all, if you did need to believe he is coming today, what the Mordechai wrote that “it will spoil in the meantime” should be heresy. Rather, it

must be that one needs to believe that Mashiach can come even today, but there is a possibility that he may come on a different day¹⁴.

According to Rav Moshe Feinstein¹⁵, however, there seems to be a Gemara that proves that one needs to believe כְּעֵין וְדַאי (with near certainty) that Mashiach WILL come today. The background of this Gemara is as follows — There is a concept in *halacha* that newly grown grains (*chodosh*) may not be eaten until after the *Korban Ha'omer* is brought on the second day of Pesach. After the *korban* is brought, all grains in existence at that time gain the status of being “*Yoshon*” and permissible to be eaten. This day is also known as “*Yom Ha'neif*”, the day of the waving of the *Omer*. Without the *Beis Hamikdash*, technically the grains become *yoshon* at the beginning of *Yom Haneif*, but the *mishna* related that Rav Yochanan ben Zakkai made a decree that “*Yom Haneif kulo assur*”, one has to wait until the end of the 16th of Nissan to eat the *chodosh* grains. Why was this decree made? The Gemara explains that a scenario may happen that on the night of the 16th of Nissan Mashiach will come in middle of the night and rebuild the 3rd *Beis Hamikdash* thereby making it that the *chodosh* grains may not be eaten until after the *Korban Ha'omer*, but *Klal Yisroel* may not know that the *Beis Hamikdash* was rebuilt and will eat the *chodosh* grains first thing in the morning. To avoid this potential scenario,

14. Heard from Rabbi Yisroel Reisman

15. Igros Moshe Orach Chaim *chelek 5 siman 8*

we simply say *Yom Haneif* is completely off-limits. Rav Moshe writes that it is far-fetched to make all of *Klal Yisroel* for all generations wait an extra day to eat their grains just for an extremely unlikely scenario that Mashiach will specifically come in a small window of time the night of the 16th of Nissan. It must be that one has to constantly live his life with a *hashkafa* that “I am nearly certain that Mashiach is coming right now” and that’s why we can’t eat the *chodosh* grains yet, we should wait for the *korban* to be brought first.

Sefer Ma’ayanos Ha’emunah¹⁶ quotes the Brisker Rav as saying, “One should believe that Mashiach will literally come that day.” This seems to be along the lines of Rav Moshe that we need to believe that he will come. But the Mechaber of that sefer suggests that even the Brisker Rav really meant that “שיכול לבוא”, today he is able to come¹⁷. This is how the Chofetz Chaim says it¹⁸, “One must think every day that in reality Mashiach can come that very day. Minimally, one must believe in this possibility every day”. Additionally, even Rav Moshe Feinstein only wrote כעין ודאי, because it can’t be that one has to believe with

16. On the 12th *Ikar* — “והיינו להאמין שהנה ממש ביום הזה הוא בה”. Also in Likkutei Ha-Griz *chelek* 2 page 81.

17. Rabbi Yisrael Eliyahu Weintraub also writes (in *Kuntris Adecha Teiteh*) that the Brisker Rav’s intention was not properly understood.

18. Sefer Tzipisa L’Yeshua Perek 3 — “לבא היום. וצריך להיות עכ”פ ספק על כל יום

absolute certainty that he will come today, it's enough to believe with near certainty¹⁹.

One thing is certain, one should not say or do anything that shows that he does not truly believe that Mashiach can possibly come that day. The following story illustrates this point²⁰-

A few weeks before Succos in 1982, when the first day of Succos was on Shabbos, a young man was showing Rabbi Shlomo Eisen an *esrog* he was considering. R' Eisen turned the *esrog* slowly and carefully. "It is not spotted or blistered in any way," said R' Eisen, "and the *pitam* (top bulblike growth) and *ukatz* (bottom stem) are beautiful. However," he continued, as he looked at the *esrog* through a magnifying glass, "it seems that at this particular place on the *esrog*, it is *chaseir* (a part is missing)." The questionable area was very tiny.

Knowing the basic laws of the Four Species, the young man protested, "But even so, an *esrog* that is *chaseir* would be kosher this year, because the whole mitzvah of taking the Four Species is only

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19. Additionally, Rabbi Yehuda Shapiro (Daas Yehuda, Emunah *se'if* 77) wrote, "Our expectation of Mashiach is unrelated to any specific time. It is like a mother awaiting the return of her son. She will yearn for his return every day, even if she knows that he will not return that day".
20. "Along the Maggid's Journey" page. 160 by Rabbi Paysach J. Krohn. Reprinted with permission from the author and Artscroll-Mesorah.

Rabbinic!” (*Chaseir* is only an invalidation when the *esrog* obligation is *d’oraisa*.)

“If you were to purchase this *esrog* now,” said R’ Eisen firmly, “it would be a *she’eilah* of *apikors-es* (a question of heresy).” The young man was startled at R’ Eisen’s strong admonition. Heads turned throughout the room as everyone suddenly became quiet to hear the reason for the Rabbi’s comment. “We have a few weeks until *Yom Tov*,” R’ Eisen exclaimed. “Within this time, it is certainly possible that *Mashiach* may come. If indeed he does and we have a *Beis Hamikdash*, you would surely want to use your *esrog* in the *Beis Hamikdash*, wouldn’t you? But this deficient *esrog* would be invalid in the *Beis Hamikdash*. Yet you are still willing to purchase it — which displays your conviction that *Mashiach* will not come. Such an attitude has the scent of *apikors-es*²¹!

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21. The halachic background for this story involves two of the laws of Succos. The first law is that only in the *Beis HaMikdash* was it Biblically ordained to take the Four Species every day of Succos. Nowadays, the Biblical requirement to take the Four Species applies only on the first day; on other days, their use is a Rabbinic law. The second law is that the Rabbis ordained that the Four Species may not be used on the Sabbath, lest one inadvertently carry them [to a teacher to learn how to use them] in a public domain, which would be a desecration of Shabbos. In our times, therefore, if Succos begins on Shabbos, the Four Species would not be taken until Sunday, and their use that year would be required only by Rabbinic law.

C. NON-MANDATORY BELIEFS

The above are the beliefs that one must believe. There are many other concepts related to Mashiach, however, that we do not have a full clarity about and therefore no specific belief is demanded of us. As the Rambam writes²²-

וכל אלו הדברים וכיוצא בהן לא ידע אדם איך יהיו עד שיהיו. שדברים שתומין הן אצל הנביאים. גם החכמים אין להם קבלה בדברים אלו. אלא לפי הכרע הפסוקים. ולפיכך יש להם מחלוקת בדברים אלו. ועל כל פנים אין סדור הויית דברים אלו ולא דקדוקיהן עיקר בדת. ולעולם לא יתעסק אדם בדברי ההגדות. ולא יאריך במדרשות האמורים בענינים אלו וכיוצא בהן. ולא ישימם עיקר. שאין מביאין לא לידי יראה ולא לידי אהבה.

But regarding all these matters and similar, no one knows how it will be until it will be. For these matters were unclear to the *Neviim*. Even the *Chachamim* themselves did not have a *mesorah* regarding these matters and only could attempt to understand the *pesukim*. Thus, there were disagreements in these matters. Nevertheless, neither the order that these events will occur nor their details are fundamental to the religion. Thus, a person must never busy himself with the *Aggados* and not dwell on the *Midrashim* regarding these matters or similar issues. He must not make them fundamentally important. For these do not result in either love or fear of Hashem.

The following are some examples of topics that there is uncertainty about-

22. Hilchos Melachim 12:2

מתי יבנה בית המקדש

When Will the Beis Hamikdash Be Built?

1. What will happen first, the building of the *Beis Hamikdash* or Mashiach's arrival?

The Rambam²³ writes that a qualification of being Mashiach is that he will rebuild the *Beis Hamikdash*. The Yerushalmi²⁴, however, sounds like the *Beis Hamikdash* will be rebuilt before Mashiach comes. Some sources see this as a contradiction²⁵.

Rav Yonason Shteif²⁶ quotes a Rambam that Mashiach will designate and clarify everyone's status as a *Kohen*, *Levi* or *Yisroel*. Seemingly, this will be before the building of the *Beis Hamikdash*, because you need *Kohanim* with proper ancestry to do the *avodah*. But this isn't conclusive proof, because the order may be that the *Beis Hamikdash* will be built first, then Mashiach will clarify the status of each person and only then will they start the service in the *Beis Hamikdash*.

23. Hilchos Melachim 11:1

24. Maaser Sheini 5:2

25. One potential resolution can be as follows. Mashiach is going to be a normal human being in this world that will continue to develop and eventually be elevated to the position of being Mashiach. The Rambam is saying that the person that will in the future be recognized as Mashiach will build the *Beis Hamikdash*, and in fact that will be one of the qualifications to receive this recognition. The Yerushalmi is just saying that he will not formally be known as Mashiach until after the *Beis Hamikdash* is rebuilt.

26. Sefer Mitzvos Hashem pg. 65

Due to the unclarity of this matter, one does not have to have a specific belief on the order of these events.

⇒ מי יבנה בית המקדש

Who Will Build the Beis Hamikdash?

2. Who will build the *Beis Hamikdash*?

The Rambam²⁷ writes that one of the prerequisites of being considered Mashiach is that he will build the *Beis Hamikdash*²⁸. The challenge is that there are many sources in *Chazal*²⁹ and other *sefarim* that the third *Beis Hamikdash* will not need to be built at all, it will come down whole from heaven.

Which one is it? Will it come down whole or will Mashiach need to build it?

One suggested resolution³⁰ is that the Rambam does not mean that Mashiach will physically rebuild the *Beis Hamikdash* with his own hands. Rather, he will cause a revolution of *teshuva* that will precipitate the ability of the *Beis Hamikdash* to come down from *shamayim*.

Another possible resolution suggested by the Maharam Shick³¹ is that it depends if we bring Mashiach

27. Hilchos Melachim 11:4

28. He will not rebuild it single handedly, he will have the assistance of the rest of Klal Yisroel (Talmud Yerushalmi Megillah 1:11 based on the *pasuk* in Shir Hashirim 4:16).

29. Rashi, Tosafos and Ritva on Sukkah 41a

30. Ohalei Shem page 97

31. Maharam Shick Yoreh Deah *siman* 213

early (אחישנה) or if we will have to wait for his pre appointed time (בעתה)³². If we bring Mashiach early through our own actions, then we will merit the heavenly built *Beis Hamikdash*. If, however, Mashiach comes in his predetermined time then it will need to be built manually by *Klal Yisroel* under the leadership of Mashiach.

The Vilna Gaon³³ suggests that all the *brachos* of *Shemoneh Esrei* end in the present tense because Hashem is helping fulfill our wishes in real time, it will not all be saved for the future. Therefore, when we say, “*Bonei Yerushalayim*”, it is an acknowledgement that our *zechusim* are slowly building the *Beis Hamikdash* right-now, one brick at a time. This is the possible background why the *Beis Hamikdash* will come down complete if we merit an early arrival of Mashiach. It’s because through our actions we have already built it in heaven.

Nevertheless, due to the unclarity of this matter, one does not have to have a specific belief of who will rebuild the third *Beis Hamikdash*.

מלחמת גוג ומגוג

The War of Gog U'magog

3. What is the war of *Gog U'magog*?

There are many references to a war that will precede the coming of Mashiach. It is known as *Milchemes Gog U'magog*. This war is mentioned in

32. See section C above on page 30.

33. Siddur Siach Yitzchak on the bracha of “*V'liyerushalayim*”

Sefer Yechezkel³⁴ and Sefer Zechariah³⁵. The Rambam writes³⁶, “at the beginning of the days of Mashiach there will be the war of *Gog U’magog*.”

There are many theories about the length and the nature of this war. Rashi and the Metzudos³⁷ suggest that it will be called *Milchemes Gog U’magog*, because the King’s name will be *Gog* and he will be from the country of *Gog* (מגוג). Other *meforshim* point out that the Hebrew words גוג ומגוג add up to 70 in *gematria*, and this is a hint that the war will be with all 70 nations of the world.

Practically, we do not know much conclusively about this topic. The Malbim³⁸ and others write that the true definition of *Gog* and *Magog* will not be fully known until they descend on the world during the war-

כי שם גוג ושם מגוג כבר ישכח בימים ההם עד שלא ידעו כלל מי היא האומה שנקראת בפי הנביא מגוג ושם מלכה גוג, רק אז כשיבוא על הארץ ויתקיימו דברי הנביא, אז ידעו שזה הוא המלך גוג שניבא עליו.

The name *Gog* and the name *Magog* will already begin to be forgotten in those days until it won’t be known at all who this nation is that the Navi refers to as *Magog* and who their King

34. *Perakim* 38-39

35. *Perek* 14

36. *Hilchos Melachim* 12:2

37. *Yechezkel* 38:2

38. *Yechezkel* 38:17

is known as Gog. Only then when they come upon the land and start fulfilling the words of the Navi, at that point people will instinctively realize that this is the King Gog that the Navi was talking about.

There are sources though that suggest that we can avoid this war altogether if we bring Mashiach early (אחישנה), and it will only happen if Mashiach comes in his predetermined time (בעתה). This is yet another reason why we should increase our *zechusim* and our *tefillos* to bring Mashiach early.

There is a lot in Rabbinic literature written about this topic, but a more comprehensive review is beyond the scope of this *kuntris*.

אליהו הנביא

When Will Eliyahu Hanavi Come?

4. Will Eliyahu Hanavi come before Mashiach or after?

We have a *mesorah* that Eliyahu Hanavi will come before *Milchemes Gog U'magog* to prepare the hearts of Klal Yisroel³⁹

וְשִׁקְדָם מִלְחָמוֹת גּוֹג וּמָגוֹג יַעֲמֹד נְבִיא לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְלִהְיוֹת לָבָם.
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (מְלָאכִי ג, כג) "הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי שֹׁלַח לְכֶם אֶת אֱלִיָּהוּ" וְגו'. וְאֵינּוּ
בָּא לֹא לְטַמֵּא הַטְּהוֹר. וְלֹא לְטַהֵר הַטָּמֵא. וְלֹא לְפַסֵּל אֲנָשִׁים שֶׁהֵם
בְּחִזְקַת כְּשָׁרוֹת. וְלֹא לְהַכְשִׁיר מִי שֶׁחִזְקוּ פְּסוּלִין. אֲלֵא לְשׂוּם
שְׁלוֹם בְּעוֹלָם. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (מְלָאכִי ג, כד) "וְהִשִּׁיב לֵב אֲבוֹת עַל בְּנֵיהֶם."

Before the War of *Gog U'magog*, a prophet will arise to correct Klal Yisroel and prepare their

39. Rambam Hilchos Melachim 12:2

hearts, as it says, “Behold, I will send you Eliyahu Hanavi” (Malachi 3:23). He will not come to make the pure impure, nor purify the impure, nor disqualify people who are presumed to have legitimate lineage, nor qualify those who are disqualified. He will only come to bring peace to the world, as it says, “And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers on the children” (Malachi 3:24).

Some point to the Gemara in Eruvin⁴⁰ as a proof that Eliyahu Hanavi will come first. The Gemara there says, “If someone says, ‘I am a Nazir on the day that Mashiach arrives’ he may drink wine on Shabbos.” The reason it is permissible is because Eliyahu Hanavi must come before Mashiach and we have a *mesorah* that Eliyahu Hanavi won’t come on an Erev Shabbos. Therefore, every Shabbos he can be assured that Mashiach is not arriving that day and that he is not a *Nazir* yet.

It is beyond the scope of this work, but there are several different sources that seem to prove that Eliyahu Hanavi will not necessarily come first. The Rambam who paskens the *halacha* from the Gemara in Eruvin, doesn’t give the same reason that the Gemara gives on why this person may drink wine on Shabbos. The Kessef Mishna asks, “Why does the Rambam give a different source?” Sefer Mitzvos Hashem answers that this is because not everyone agrees that Eliyahu Hanavi has to come first.

40. Eruvin 43a

In Hilchos Melachim⁴¹, the Rambam himself writes that the order of their arrival is not an essential belief

ויש מן החכמים שאומרים שקודם ביאת המשיח יבוא אליהו.

Some of the Chachamim say that Eliyahu will come before the coming of Mashiach.

The Pleisi⁴² and the Chasam Sofer⁴³ both write that the default order will be that Eliyahu Hanavi will come before Mashiach, but that is only if Mashiach comes at his predetermined time (בעתה). If we bring Mashiach earlier (אחישנה), then the same rules don't apply. If we bring about Mashiach's arrival early then the out of love for *Klal Yisroel*, Hashem will be מוקלקל and, so-to-speak, break these rules and come whenever He sees fit.

This approach of the Pleisi and the Chasam Sofer answers the question of the Maharsha on a Gemara that seems to indicate that Mashiach does not need to come first. The Gemara in Sanhedrin⁴⁴ describes a conversation that Rebbi Yehoshua ben Levi had with Mashiach himself. When he asked Mashiach when he will be revealing himself, Mashiach answered, "I will come today if you listen (to the word of Hashem)." The Maharsha asks how Mashiach could come that day if Eliyahu hadn't already come the day before. He

41. Hilchos Melachim 12:2

42. Siman 110 end of Kuntris Beis Hasafeik

43. Shu"t Chasam Sofer *chelek 6 siman 98*

44. Sanhedrin 98a

concludes that the response that he can come “today” was not literal and it just meant that he will come at the earliest possible time. According to Pleisi and Chasam Sofer, however, Eliyahu will not necessarily come first. It depends if he comes early or at the pre-determined time. Mashiach was telling Yehoshua Ben Levi, “Even though Eliyahu Hanavi has not come yet, I will come even today, but that’s only if you merit by listening to Hashem’s word.”

Sefer Margolios Hayam⁴⁵ suggests that this may be the reason why during *bentching* at a bris we say the “*Harachaman*” for Mashiach to come (ישלח לנו משיחו) before the one for Eliyahu Hanavi to come (ישלח לנו כהן צדק). We say them in this order because our preference is to bring Mashiach before Eliyahu Hanavi through our merits.

How would these commentaries that are of the opinion that it is possible for Mashiach to come before Eliyahu Hanavi deal with the *pasuk*, “הנה אנוכי שולח” לכם את אליה הנביא לפני בא יום ה’ הגדול והנורא (יהושע ב’ כה). They would have to be of the opinion that the יום ה’ הגדול והנורא (“The great and awesome day”) isn’t referring to the day of Mashiach’s arrival but rather to the ultimate Judgment Day which will happen after Mashiach arrives.

All of the above sheds light on an otherwise troubling story —

The Brisker Rav was once asked why he anticipated Mashiach’s arrival every day even though

45. Sanhedrin 98a *se’if* 21

Chazal indicate that Eliyahu Hanavi will come before Mashiach. If Eliyahu didn't come yesterday, then Mashiach won't be coming today? The Rav answered, "Let him come and then we can ask him how he came." On a different occasion, the Brisker Rav commented, "ההלכה כמו שכתוב, בסידור, אחכה לו בכל יום שיבוא".

How can he be so seemingly flippant about a *maamar Chazal*? The answer must be like the Pleisi and the Chasam Sofer that the default procedure will have Eliyahu Hanavi come before Mashiach, but in reality, if we merit, that rule doesn't have to apply. This may be why the Rambam himself doesn't make the order of Eliyahu Hanavi's arrival something set in stone.

⇒ **Coming On Shabbos Or Yom Tov**

5. Can Mashiach come on Shabbos or Yom Tov?

The Gemara in Eruvin⁴⁶ seems to write explicitly that Mashiach cannot come on a *Shabbos* or *Yom Tov*

—

If someone says, "I will be a *Nazir* on the day that (Mashiach) Ben David comes, he is allowed to drink wine on Shabbos and Yom Tov. Why? Because Klal Yisroel are guaranteed that Eliyahu will not come on Erev Shabbos and Erev Yom Tov.

Since we know that Eliyahu Hanavi will come one

46. Eruvin 43a — תא שמע הריני נזיר ביום שכן דוד בא מותר לשתות יין בשבתות ובימים טובים ... אמאי מותר?.. כבר מובטח להן לישראל שאין אליהו בא לא בערבי שבתות ולא בערבי ימים

day before Mashiach arrives, if Eliyahu can't come on an *Erev Shabbos* or *Yom Tov* this means that Mashiach can't come on a *Shabbos* or *Yom Tov*.

The challenge is that there is a Gemara in Rosh Hashana⁴⁷ that seems to indicate that Mashiach will specifically come either on the *Yom Tov* of Rosh Hashana or Pesach.

How do we resolve this seeming contradiction?

The Turei Even⁴⁸ suggests that the Gemara in Rosh Hashana is just saying that Mashiach will come in the month of Rosh Hashana or the month of Pesach but not on the days of those *Yomim Tovim* themselves.

The Pleisi and Chasam Sofer (quoted in the previous section), however, suggest that the limitation from coming on *Shabbos* is only if Mashiach comes at his predetermined time. If, however, he comes early, it can be on any day of the week including *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*.

Due to the fact that in certain circumstances Mashiach can possibly come on *Shabbos*, one does not need to have a specific belief that he will not come on *Shabbos*. In fact, the Rambam writes in Hilchos Nezirus⁴⁹, "It is a matter of doubt if Mashiach can come on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* or not."

47. 10b

48. Rosh Hashana 11a

49. 4:11 — שהדבר ספק אם יבוא בשבת או ביום טוב או לא יבוא

קבוץ גלויות

6. What will happen first, the ingathering of the exiles or the coming of Mashiach?

In the previous section, we discussed an apparent contradiction between the Gemara in Eruvin that seems to say that Mashiach can't come on *Shabbos* or *Yom Tov* and the Gemara in Rosh Hashana that sounds like he can come on those days.

Rav Baruch Frankel Teomim⁵⁰ suggests another answer that there is a distinction between Mashiach's arrival and the ultimate redemption. Mashiach cannot arrive on *Shabbos*, but the ingathering of the exiles and the ultimate redemption can. The Aruch La'ner⁵¹ gives a similar answer and points out that although the order of Shemoneh Esrei seems to indicate that the *geulah* will happen before Mashiach arrives⁵², there is a Zohar⁵³ that writes that the order may be the opposite.

In his description of the stages of the ultimate redemption, the Rambam writes that Mashiach will come before the ingathering of the exiles. Nevertheless, he himself lists the sequence of Mashiach's arrival and the ingathering of the exiles as one of the

50. He'aros on Sefer Turei Even Rosh Hashana 11a

51. Rosh Hashana 11b "B'Nissan".

52. This is evident by *Anshei Knesses Hagedolah's* decision to place the bracha of "*Teka B'shofar*" (which discusses the ingathering of the exiles) before the bracha of "*Es Tzemach*" (which discusses Mashiach's arrival).

53. Parshas Shemos

aspects that we do not have absolute clarity about, and we therefore do not have to have a specific belief about.

⇒ משיח בן יוסף

7. Who is Mashiach ben Yosef and what do we need to believe about him?

There are references in *Chazal*⁵⁴ and countless *Sifrei Machshava* to a concept that before the arrival of Mashiach ben Dovid, there will be a Mashiach ben Yosef that will die in a war.

Interestingly, the topic of Mashiach ben Yosef is not even mentioned by the Rambam. This clearly indicates that a clear understanding of who he will be and the role he will play is not an essential belief.

There is a lot in Rabbinic literature written about this topic, but a more comprehensive review is beyond the scope of this *kuntris*.

D. Bracha Upon Mashiach's Arrival

Are there *brachos* that should be said when Mashiach comes? Rav Shlomo Hominer zt"l⁵⁵ assumes that there will be 4 *brachos* to recite when Mashiach arrives-

54. Sukkah Daf 41a and Medrash Tanchuma Bereishis

55. Rav Hominer is the questioner in Shu"t Minchas Shlomo Siman 27. Rav Hominer sent these suggestions to Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach and he asked Rav Shlomo Zalman if the second and third *brachos* should be combined into one bracha. Is it like a *bracha ris-hona* that they shouldn't be combined or is it like '*Beracha Me'in Shalosh*' that they can? Rav Shlomo Zalman answers that they should

1. “ברוך חכם הרזים” — The *bracha* recited when 600,000 Jews gather together, which *Klal Yisroel* will do to greet *Melech Hamashiach*.
2. “שחלק מחכמתו ליראיו” — The *bracha* recited upon seeing a great talmid chacham.
3. “שחלק מכבודו לבשר ודם” — The *bracha* recited upon seeing a King.
4. “שהחינו” — The *bracha* recited upon good tidings.

Rav Chaim Falagi⁵⁶ suggests that we should also say the *bracha* of “אשר גאלנו” that we say on Pesach at the end of the *Maggid* section of the *Haggadah*.

not be combined. His addressing the question without objection, seems to indicate that he agrees that all these *brachos* should be said.

56. Lev Chaim *siman* 42

Section VI

SELF DOUBT: HOW CAN I HELP BRING MASHIACH?

Many doubt our ability to bring Mashiach. Their self-doubt is expressed in a variety of ways-

1. It has been such a long and bitter *galus*. If he hasn't come yet, what should make us think that he will come now?
2. If the *gedolim* of previous generations couldn't bring Mashiach, how can we have hope that we on our lowly level will be able to bring Mashiach?
3. Practically, we don't have the *zechusim* that we need to bring Mashiach now, how can he come?

We will address each question-

≡ QUESTION 1

It has been such a long and bitter *galus*. If he hasn't come yet, what should make us think that he will come now? If Mashiach didn't come after *Tach V'tat*, the Inquisition, or the Holocaust, isn't it unlikely that he will come in our generation?!

ANSWER — Rav Moshe Rosenstein, the Lomza Mashgiach, writes that not only is this not a good reason to think that he can't come soon, it's specifically a reason to believe that he can. He explains with an accurate *mashal* —

A man owns a large warehouse full of file cabinets stuffed with mostly useless papers. This man hires an employee and tells him, “I would like to hire you to clean out this warehouse and file through the papers. Somewhere in that mess is a document that is worth one million dollars, if you find it, it is yours.” After clearing out 10%...20%...70%...90% he didn’t find the document yet. Does he give up hope of finding it, or does he say to himself, “I’ve already been through 90% of the files, I am certain that I will find it soon. I must regain my strength and push forward.”

So too with waiting for Mashiach. Hashem has a certain amount of days in mind for the *Keitz Hageulah*, for the day that Mashiach will arrive, “הוא כמוס עמדי בתום באוצרותי”. The more days and years that have passed is a sign that Mashiach’s arrival is even sooner, not later, we must therefore regain our strength and push forward.

⇒ QUESTION 2

If the Gedolim of previous generations couldn’t bring Mashiach, how can we have hope that we on our lowly level will be able to bring Mashiach? If the Rambam and Rashba, the Vilna Gaon and Rebbi Akiva Eiger, Rav Chaim Ozer and Rav Baruch Ber, or even Rav Aharon Kotler and Rav Moshe Feinstein didn’t, why should I think that I can?

There are several answers to this question that work in tandem-

ANSWER 1 — Hashem has a predetermined quota of how much Torah and *mitzvos* we need to do to bring Mashiach. Perhaps their mitzvos were “boulders” and our mitzvos are “only pebbles”, but they still add up and one

day soon we will reach that quota and bring Mashiach. The Kosel today is a perfect imagery of this idea. The lower layers are larger stones and the upper layers are smaller ones, but the sum total is that the wall is built to the top. Perhaps *b'hashgacha* the Kosel was built that way to help us understand and inspire us to know how to rebuild the *Beis Hamikdash*, one *mitzvah*/brick at a time, as big or as small as they may be.

ANSWER 2 — The Mishna in Avos teaches us “לפום צערא” אגרא, “according to the effort is the reward.” Granted, the previous generations were objectively on a higher level, but that doesn’t factor in how much more challenging it is for us to live a life of Torah and *mitzvos* compared to them. The challenges of our generation are so uniquely difficult, that someone who overcomes them has more reward for his efforts. In a way, it turns out that our generations *mitzvos* are boulders because of how hard they are to do. It’s been said that if Rebbi Akiva Eiger would come to our generation and look at one successful *yeshiva bachur*, he would proclaim, “I am amazed! I don’t know how you do it.” Rav Mordechai Gifter zt”l used to tell his *talmidim*¹, “I am so impressed by American *yeshiva bachurim*. In Telz Europe there were no distractions to pull us away from the *Beis Medrash*, so of course we learned all day. But American *bachurim* have so many distractions that can pull them away, when they commit to learning despite all these distractions it’s something truly impressive.”

1. Heard from his son-in-law Harav Ephraim Eisenberg zt”l

ANSWER 3 — This question was already asked and addressed by the Messilas Yesharim²-

ואם יאמר אדם מי אני ומה אני ספון שאתפלל על הגלות ועל ירושלים וכו', המפני תפלתי יכנסו הגליות ותצמח הישועה? תשובתו בצדו, כאותה ששנינו (סנהדרין ל"ח): לפיכך נברא אדם יחידי כדי שכל אחד יאמר בשבילי נברא העולם, וכבר נחת רוח הוא לפניו יתברך שיהיו בניו מבקשים ומתפללים על זאת, ואף שלא תעשה בקשתם מפני שלא הגיע הזמן או מאיזה טעם שיהיה, הנה הם עשו את שלהם והקב"ה שמח בזה. ועל העדר זה הדבר התרעם הנביא... (ירמיהו ל':י"ז): ציון היא דורש אין לה, ופי' ז"ל (סוכה מ"א): מכלל דבעיא דרישה. הרי כאן שחייבים אנחנו בזה, ואין לנו ליפטר מפני מיעוט כחננו, כי על כיוצא בזה שנינו (אבות פ"ג): לא עליך המלאכה לגמור ואי אתה בן חורין ליבטל הימנה.

If one will say: "who am I, and what importance am I that I should daven about the *galus* and *Yerushalayim*? Will the exiles be ingathered and the salvation sprout because of my *tefillos*?"

The answer to him is clear, as we learned: "Thus man was created alone, so that each person should say: 'for my sake the world was created' " (Sanhedrin 37a). Already it brings gratification to Hashem, that His children desire and daven for this. And even though their request may not be fulfilled, because the proper time has not yet come or for some other reason, nevertheless, they have done their part and *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* rejoices in this.

On the absence of this, the *Neviim* complained saying...(Yeshaya 63:5). And it is stated: "it is Zion; no one inquires after her" (Yirmiyahu 30:17), which our

2. End of 19th perek

sages expounded: “this implies it needs inquiring after” (Sukkah 41a).

Thus we learn from here that we are obligated in this matter, and cannot exempt ourselves due to our lack of strength. For on all such matters, we learned: “It is not incumbent upon you to complete the task, but neither are you free to abstain from it” (Avos 2:16).

Simply put, don’t underestimate your individual ability to bring about the *geulah*. There is no room for self-doubt, because it is not your responsibility to finish the job, you are only expected to start and take the first step...who knows where it may end up bringing you (or who it may end up bringing to you).

≡ QUESTION 3

Practically, we don’t have the *zechusim* that we need to bring Mashiach now, how can he come? Aren’t there prerequisites that need to be met for Mashiach to come and if they haven’t been met, he can’t come today?

ANSWER — The answer is that Hashem is the *Baal Harachamim*, and when the time He decides for the *geulah* to happen comes, he will shift to His *Middas Harachamim* (Trait of Mercy) and allow the *geulah* to happen with less expectations. Sefer Shaarei Orach³ describes that this is what happened at the time of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. *Klal Yisroel*

3. *Shaar 10* — מזה עשה הקב"ה? ראה שהגיע הקץ וראה שלא היו ישראל ראויים לגאולה, אז נתגלו פני הכתר הוא עולם הרחמים הגמורים ואז נתמלאו כל הספירות וכל הצינורות חסד ורחמים ועברו פני הזעם... ובסיבה זו אתם נגאלים. כי לא הייתם ראויים להיגאל מצד מעשיכם הרעים, אלא שהגיע הקץ ונתגלו פני הרחמים ובשם הרחמים... והמבין מה שביארנו בשער זה יוסיף בטחון ושמחה וידע כמה הם רחמים של השם יתברך על בריותיו,

did not have the *zechusim* to deserve to be redeemed but Hashem shifted to His *Middas Harachamim* and brought about the *geulah*. בימים ההם בזמן הזה, it happened then and it can happen again today, and that is why we must always believe with confidence that Mashiach may come at any moment. According to Rav Avigdor Miller, this is why we add the word “*b’rachamim*” (“with mercy”) to the bracha in Shemoneh Esrei that requests the rebuilding of *Yerushalayim*. It is a recognition, that we may not deserve it from our own merits, but we are pleading to redeem us anyways out of abundant mercy.

We see that there are certain times that we don’t need as many *zechusim* to bring about the *geulah*. This fits nicely with an insight of Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein.⁴ In addressing this question he says that we know that the time period before Mashiach comes is called *Chevlei Mashiach*, the birth pains of Mashiach, if so we see that the coming of Mashiach is analogous to childbirth. He explains, therefore, that just like with childbirth it takes a lot more effort to induce earlier in pregnancy but when the woman is already in labor it takes much less to expedite the process. So too with the coming of Mashiach, earlier generations needed to put in much more effort, but that was because they were earlier in the pregnancy of Jewish History and the coming of Mashiach. Our generation is already experiencing the birth pains of Mashiach’s arrival and it will take much less to induce and expedite his arrival and give birth to the new era of *Yemos Hamashiach*.

יותר על ישראל שהוא מטיב להם וחונן ומרחם עליהם בהתגלות עולם הרחמים, אף על פי שאינם ראויים לאותם הרחמים, וזהו עניין יציאת מצרים

4. Vavei Ha’amudim Pesach 5780

Section VII

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HASTEN HIS ARRIVAL?

We have already learned that it's possible for Mashiach to come "early" before his designated time, and that each and every one of us has the power and capabilities to be the ones to hasten his arrival. One last question, is there anything specific that we can do that is a targeted *zechus* to bring Mashiach?

The following is a small selection of some *mitzvos* that can hasten Mashiach's arrival-

1. Torah Learning —

- Gemara Sanhedrin¹ — "Rav Alexandri says, all those who learn Torah *lishma*...can even hasten the *geulah*."
- Eliyahu Zuta² — "The Jewish people will only be redeemed...because of 10 men sitting and learning Torah with each other...We saw this as well that our

1. Sanhedrin 99b — אמר רבי אלכסנדר, כל העוסק בתורה לשמה...ולוי אמר אף מקרב — את הגאולה

2. Eliyahu Zuta *perek* 14 — אין ישראל נגאלין ולא מתוך הצער ולא מתוך השעבוד ולא מתוך הטלטול ולא מתוך הטירוף ולא מתוך הדוחק ולא מתוך שאין להם מזונות אלא מתוך עשרה בני אדם שהן יושבין זה אצל זה ויהיה כל אחד מהם קורא ושונה עם חברו וקולם נשמע שנאמר (עובדיה א':י"ז) ובהר ציון תהיה פליטה והיה קדש. וכן מצינו באבותינו הראשונים שלא נגאלו ממצרים אלא מתוך דברי תורה.

forefathers were only redeemed from *Mitzrayim* because of learning Torah.”

- Vilna Gaon³ — “We will be redeemed only in the merit of Torah.”

2. Teshuva

- Gemara Sanhedrin⁴ — “Rebbi Eliezer says, if *Klal Yisroel* does *teshuva* they will be redeemed, but if they don’t, they won’t be redeemed.”
- Gemara Sanhedrin⁵ — “Mashiach will come today as long as you listen (to Hashem).”
- Shir Hashirim Rabba⁶ — “Rebbi Levi says that if only *Klal Yisroel* would do *teshuva* for one day, they would be redeemed immediately, and immediately Mashiach would come.”

3. Tzedakah —

- Gemara Sanhedrin⁷ — “Ulla says that Yerushalayim will only be redeemed with *tzedakah*.”

3. Even Shleimah 11:3 — הגאולה הזאת לא תהיה רק על ידי לימוד התורה

4. Sanhedrin 97b — ר' אליעזר אומר אם ישראל עושין תשובה נגאלין שנאמר שובו בני שובבים ארפא משובותיכם

5. Sanhedrin 98a — הכי אמר לך היום אם בקולו תשמעו

6. Shir Hashirim Rabba 5:2 — רבי לוי אמר אלו היו ישראל עושין תשובה אפילו יום-אחד, מיד הן נגאלין ומיד בן דוד בא

7. Sanhedrin 98a — אמר עולא אין ירושלים נפדית אלא בצדקה שנאמר (ישעיהו א, כז) ציון במשפט תפדה ושביה בצדקה

4. Keeping Shabbos-

- ♦ Gemara Yerushalmi Taanis⁸ — “If Klal Yisroel would keep just one Shabbos properly, Mashiach will come immediately.”

5. Having Children-

- ♦ Gemara Yevamos⁹ — “(Mashiach) Ben Dovid won’t come until all the *neshamos* in Hashem’s storehouse are born.
- ♦ Rav Yonason Shteif¹⁰ adds that it is specifically children who will be committed to Hashem. He points out that the many children that *Klal Yisroel* had in *Mitzrayim* was also the merit that expedited their *geulah*.

6. Achdus-

- ♦ Many sources mention that *achdus* (Jewish unity) will be a great merit for bringing Mashiach. They make a basic calculation that the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed because of *sinas chinam* (baseless hatred)¹¹, so it will take *ahavas Yisroel* to earn it back.

7. Sincerely Wanting Mashiach to Come-

One of the greatest *zechusim* to merit bringing

8. 1:1

9. Yevamos 62a — אין בן דוד בא עד שיכלו כל נשמות שבגוף

10. Sefer Mitzvos Hashem page 70

11. Gemara Yoma (9b)

Mashiach, is simply to sincerely want Mashiach's arrival. Rav Moshe Shapiro zt"l¹² infers this from the bracha of את צמח in *Shemoneh Esrei*. He points out that several times in *Shemoneh Esrei* the word כי is used, in each of those places the word כי is to explain why Hashem should fulfill the request in that particular *bracha*. For example,

- ♦ “סלח לנו...כי מוחל וסולח אתה”, “Hashem please forgive us... because You are the one who has the power to pardon and forgive.”
- ♦ Or, “רפאינו ה' ונרפא...כי ק-ל רופא נאמן ורחמן אתה”, “Hashem please heal...because You have the power to heal.”

Following this pattern, in את צמח דוד the bracha is “עבדך מהרה תצמיח...כי לישועתך קוינו כל היום את צמח דוד”. This bracha is clearly saying, “Hashem please bring about the geulah...**because** we really want it.” Just wanting it to happen, is a *zechus* to make it happen¹³.

This idea is supported by several sources in *Chazal* and other classic works, for example-

- ♦ Yalkut Shimoni¹⁴ — “The generation that anxiously awaits His kingship will immediately be redeemed.”

12. Sefer Re'eh Emunah pg. 310

13. The Chid"א (in Midbar K'demos “קיווי”) basically says the same yesod — דאומרו כי לישועתך אינו מובן. מה נתינת טעם היא, דאם מן הדין נזכה בלא קיווי, והן לא מה יועיל הקיווי. אבל ע"פ האמור אתי שפיר והכי פירושה — “את צמח דוד וכו'”, וכי תימא שאין לנו זכות מ"מ “תצמיח כי לישועתך קוינו”. ויש לנו הקיווי ובשכר הקיווי כדאי שתגאלנו.

14. Yalkut Eichah *remez* 997 — דור שהוא מצפה למלכותו מיד הם נגאלים —

- Yalkut Shimoni¹⁵ — “Even if all that Klal Yisroel has in its hands is hope, they are worthy enough to earn the *geulah* just in the merit of that hope.”
- Chid”a¹⁶ — “In the merit of our hope we are worthy enough to be redeemed.”

This all is the deeper meaning of the following story¹⁷-

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, known as the Beis Halevi, had a period of time that he had no official position and he was enjoying his schedule of learning in peace and teaching a small circle of *talmidim*. The city of Brisk, however, wanted to hire him as their Rav.

When the delegation from Brisk offered him the position, he attempted at first to refuse. After leaving Slutsk, he explained to the visitors, he had decided never to return to the rabbinate. He had even turned down his friend, Rav Eliyohu Chayim Meisel of Lodz, who came to personally convince him to accept the post. Suddenly a member of the delegation, an unlearned individual, called out emotionally, “Rebbi, how can you possibly refuse at a time when twenty five thousand Jews are anxiously awaiting your arrival in Brisk?”

These simple, sincere words moved the Beis Halevi. He called to his wife, “Please, quickly bring me my overcoat and hat. Twenty-five thousand Jews are

15. Yalkut Tehillim *remez* 736 — אפילו אין ביד ישראל אלא הקיווי כדאי הם לגאולה בשכר הקיווי

16. Midbar K'demos “קיווי”

17. “Giants of Jewry” page 137 by Rabbi Aharon Surasky

waiting for me. There is no time. It is wrong to keep them waiting.”

When the Chofetz Chaim related this incident he sighed, “If the Beis Halevi rushed so because a large community of Jews was waiting for him, certainly Mashiach — if he knew that the Jews anxiously awaited him — would grab his knapsack and walking-stick and rush to come. The problem is that we must not be anxiously awaiting him.”

Section VIII

IKVESA D'MISHICHA AND CONCLUSION

The period immediately before Mashiach's arrival is called עקבתא דמשיחא, "The Footsteps of Mashiach."¹⁸

It is called by this name, either because-

1. Just like the heels are the bottom of the body, so too that period is the end of our *galus*¹⁹.
2. It is our responsibility to elevate the world and bring it to rectification from its "head" down to its "feet". Right before the *geulah* the only thing left to fix will be the heel²⁰.
3. Mashiach's arrival is so close that we can hear his footsteps²¹.

Regardless of the exact translation, according to the Chofetz Chaim and many others we have already entered this era. As his disciple Rav Elchonon Wasserman writes, "it is 'clear as day' that we are already in this period of *Ikvesa D'meshicha*." He wrote that 75 years ago, certainly today we are even closer.

18. Mishna Sotah 9:15 and many other sources.

19. Rashi on Tehillim 89:52

20. Quoted in the name of the Arizal

21. Alshich on Tehillim 89:52

Similarly, it is well known that towards the end of his life, Rav Chaim Kanievsky zt"l would frequently inform his visitors that Mashiach will be arriving any minute. He would say, "Mashiach is standing in the doorway; it is our job to give him the nudge."²²

It is my *tefilla* that the information provided by this *kuntris* inspires its readers to feel a stronger desire for the coming of Mashiach and that it motivates them to engage in the *teshuva* necessary to usher in his early arrival.

The time has come to give the nudge. Let's open the door and let him in.

May we be *zoche* to the coming of Mashiach
speedily in our days.

שיבנה בית המקדש במהרה בימינו ותן חלקינו בתורתך.
ושם נעבדך ביראה כימי עולם וכשנים קדמוניות.

22. Heard from his son Rav Shlomo Kanievsky. He explained that Rav Chaim was of the opinion that many of the signs of Mashiach's imminent arrival have already taken place.

