

BS"D

United Noahide Academies®

Class #2: Foundations of Torah, Principals of Faith, and Moshiach (the Messiah)

Lesson #4 of 8

NOTES:

- These lessons contain some emendations to the source text, so our UNA students should study this text for the purpose of the course. Any text appearing in curly brackets {...}, and some of the text in square brackets [...], has been added by the Director.

Part 4a:

Source material: on-line book "Moshiach: The Principle of Mashiach and the Messianic Era in Jewish Law and Tradition (Expanded Edition),"

by Rabbi J. Immanuel Schochet, published and copyright by Sichos In English.
<http://www.sichosinenglish.org/books/mashiach/>

"I believe with complete faith in the coming of Mashiach. Though he tarry, nonetheless I await him every day, that he will come." [Rambam's] Principles of Faith, No. 12

***Ikvat Meshicha* [the "heels of Moshiach"]:** The Time Immediately Before Mashiach

The time appointed by G-d for the Messianic redemption is [His] closely guarded secret. Nonetheless, we are offered many hints to recognize its proximity: when certain conditions come about, await the imminent coming of Mashiach.

Most of these conditions are quite disturbing, clearly displaying a situation of the very "bottom of the pit." One major source describes the world-condition in those days as follows: increase in insolence and impudence; oppressing inflation; unbridled irresponsibility on the part of authorities; centers of learning will turn into bawdy houses; wars; many destitutes begging, with none to pity them; wisdom shall be putrid; the pious shall be despised; truth will be abandoned; the young will insult the old; family-breakup with mutual recriminations; impudent leadership.[31]

Other sources add: lack of scholars; succession of troubles and evil decrees; famines; mutual denunciations; epidemics of terrible diseases; poverty and scarcity; cursing and blaspheming; international confrontations - nations provoking and fighting each other.[32] In short, it will be a time of suffering that will make it look as if G-d were asleep. These are the birthpangs of Mashiach, bearable only in anticipation of the bliss that follows them.

"When you see a generation ever dwindling, hope for him .. when you see a generation overwhelmed by many troubles as by a river, await him."[33] "When you see nations fighting each other, look toward the feet of Mashiach." [34]

Little wonder that some sages expressed apprehensions about those days in terms of, "Let [Mashiach] come, but let me not see him." [35] The prevailing attitude, however, is to await his coming in spite of all ... [36]

The troubles and agony of *chevlei Mashiach* (birthpangs of Mashiach), however, are not unavoidable:

"What is man to do to be spared the pangs of Mashiach? Let him engage in Torah and acts of loving-kindness!" [37]

[AskNoah notes: This instruction in the Talmud was directed to Jews over the ages. In our own generation, the Lubavitcher Rebbe was asked by a CNN reporter in '91, what was his message to **the world**? He replied, "Moshiach is ready to come now. **Our job is to add in deeds of goodness and kindness.**"]

Moreover, there are also good and happy signs indicating the imminent coming of Mashiach: a good measure of prosperity; [38] a renewal of Torah-study; [39] and opening of the "gates of wisdom above [spiritual wisdom] and the wellsprings of wisdom below [technical and scientific wisdom]," [40] evidenced also by scientific and technological discoveries and advances [and] a manifestation and propagation of the mystical teachings of the Torah; [41] and also - "In the time that Mashiach will awaken, many signs and miracles will occur in the world." [42]

Notes:

31. Tractate Sotah 49b
32. Tractate Sanhedrin 97a.
33. Tractate Sanhedrin 98a
34. Midrash Genesis Rabba 42:4.
35. Tractate Sanhedrin 98b
36. Ibid.
37. Tractate Sanhedrin 98b
38. Tractate Sanhedrin 97a.
39. Ibid.
40. Zohar I:117a
41. Zohar I:118a.
42. Zohar II:8a

Part 4b:

Material from "Highlights of Moshiach," by Rabbi Abraham Stone, Published and copyright (c) by Sichos In English

Moshiach - Peak Of Scholarship, Peak Of Humility

<http://www.sichosinenglish.org/books/highlights-of-moshiach/07.htm>

Moshiach will combine two extreme features: He will manifest the peak of Torah wisdom and scholarship, and, at the same time, he will show the peak of humility. In essence, Moshiach will teach Torah to all Jews, even to the Patriarchs and to Moses, as explained in *Likkutei Torah* [34] [by Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi].

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

[Note: for a short biographical sketch of the Ari Zal, see <http://asknoah.org/essay/rabbi-yitzchak-luria>]

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

Thus the Midrash states[37]: "The Torah which one studies now is considered as vanity in contrast to the Torah of Moshiach."

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

[AskNoah notes: this refers to those who are "poor" in merits, since there will be abundant physical wealth for all people in the Messianic Era.]

Likkutei Dibburim[39] (by the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe zt"l) clarifies the judgment process of Moshiach:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Notes:

- 34. *Vayikra* [Leviticus] 17a
- 35. Isaiah 52:13
- 36. Ch. 19
- 38. Isaiah 11:4
- 39. Vol. II, p. 633
- 40. Isaiah 11:3
- 41. Ethics of the Fathers (Tractate *Avot*) 2:4

Moshiach Will Gather The Ingathering Of Exiles

<http://www.sichosinenglish.org/books/highlights-of-moshiach/08.htm>

In the Rambam's Code [the "Mishneh Torah"] we find a clear ruling pertaining to the order of events through Moshiach:[42] "He will rebuild the *Beis Hamikdash* [Holy Temple] in its place and then will gather the ingathering of exiles."

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

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

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

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

[Note: For a short biographical sketch of Rambam (Maimonides), see <http://asknoah.org/essay/rambam>]

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

Notes:

42. *Hilchos Melachim* [Rambam, Laws of Kings] 11:4

43. *Hilchos Melachim* 11:1

Moshiach And Moses - A Contrast

<http://www.sichosinenglish.org/books/highlights-of-moshiach/10.htm>

No one in the annals of our Prophets and Kings could emulate the noble status of Moses, upon whom it is written,[52] "And there arose not a Prophet since then in Israel like Moses." The Talmud elucidates on this:[53]

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

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

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

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

Yet, with reference to the status of a king - the Talmud describes Moshiach[55] as a person who will judge with his sense of smell, as is written,[56] "and he shall be animated - *v'haricho* (power of smell) with the fear of G-d." Said Rava: This means he will be able to detect the truth of a person's statement and will truthfully judge who is guilty, as is written - "not after the sight of his eyes shall he judge"...

Even according to the Talmudic opinion that there may arise a great non-Messianic king like Moses, such as Solomon, yet, [such a king is] only able to judge on the basis of witnesses. Moshiach will judge with an extra-sensory perception, in the capacity of a king - not as a prophet - since a prophet cannot judge with his power of prophecy.

This status of Moshiach vis-a-vis Moses is also seen in Midrash, which comments on the verse:[58]

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

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

Eitz-Yosef clarifies Moshiach's esteem:

In his battle against the kings, Abraham saw a miracle, when he and his servants attacked them at night.[60] The Midrash relates that Abraham spread out a little dirt which miraculously turned into swords, and the straw turned into arrows, as is written,[61] "he places dirt as his sword, as stubble his bow." With these miraculous weapons he overpowered all the kings. Moshiach, however, will be higher than Abraham. For, Abraham needed dirt and straw to begin with, whereas regarding Moshiach it states,[62] "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked."

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

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

Notes:

52. *Devarim* [Deuteronomy] 34:10

54. *Hilchos Teshuvah* [Rambam, Laws of Repentance] 9:2

56. Isaiah 11:3

58. Isaiah 52:13

59. Zechariah 4:7

60. *Bereishit* [Genesis] 14:15

61. Isaiah 41:2

62. *Ibid.* 11:4

Moshiach Is Looking In At The Windows

<http://www.sichosinenglish.org/books/highlights-of-moshiach/11.htm>

The last generation of Jews in exile is called "the heels of Moshiach." During this era, Jews can hear and feel Moshiach, "...standing behind our wall, looking in at the windows, seeing through the cracks." [65]

The Midrash comments: "Our wall" alludes to the Western Wall of the *Beit Hamikdash* [the Holy Temple]. Why? Because G-d took an oath that this wall will never be destroyed.

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

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

Notes:

65. Song of Songs 2:9

*****Quiz for Lesson 4*****

BS"D

United Noahide Academies, Class #2:
Foundations of Torah, Principals of Faith, and Moshiach (the Messiah)

Quiz for Lesson #4
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1. Do you see any negative signs in the world that would indicate that we are close to the beginning of the Messianic Era? If so, list a few:
2. Do you see any positive signs in the world that would indicate that we are close to the beginning of the Messianic Era? If so, list a few:
3. What are the two extreme characteristics that will be combined in Moshiach?
4. What aspect of Torah will Moshiach teach to everyone?
5. According to Rambam, what is the order of accomplishments by which Moshiach will bring in the Messianic Era?
6. Why did all the Jewish Prophets and Torah Sages desire the Messianic Era?
7. What is the expression we use to refer to this last generation of the Jewish exile, which is the first generation of the Messianic Redemption?