

BS"D

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

Lesson #3 of 8

NOTE:

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

### 1. Forward

We live in cataclysmic times, an age of drastic changes and fast-moving developments in all aspects of the human condition. They reflect with uncanny preciseness the symptoms of the advent of the Messianic era, acutely defined in the Talmud, Midrash, and other sacred writings.[1] This has made people ever more aware of the principle of the Messianic redemption - the concept of Mashiach and the effects of his imminent revelation.

The belief in the coming of Mashiach is fundamental to the Torah and the Jewish Faith.[2] Very few, however, delve into its meaning and implications. The doctrine is affirmed, but more as an abstract theorem than a practical issue of immediate relevance. Indeed, great apprehension surrounds this subject. This apprehension is fed partly by an innate fear of the unknown, the confounding mystery of a hidden future. Moreover, there is the memory of the sad consequences of Messianic misadventures of the past, such as the unfortunate history of pseudo-Messiahs and unrealized predictions which left a trail of painful disillusion and dismay.[3]

On the other hand, precisely in times of great trials and tribulations - over-abundant in Jewish history, to this very day - it is belief in Mashiach and the ge'ulah (redemption) that kindles the sparks of hope. It has helped overcome the worst persecutions and sufferings in anticipation of the Divine Day of Judgment when good will triumph over evil, and the world will enter the utopian era when truth, peace and universal brotherhood will reign supreme as "the whole earth shall be full of knowledge of G-d" (Isaiah 11:9) and "all shall call upon the Name of G-d to serve Him with one accord." (Zephaniah 3:9)[4]

The symptoms of the [birthpangs of the coming] Messianic age encompass us now as never before. This has renewed interest for more knowledge about it. Questions are asked, but there are few sources that bring together the information scattered over the many writings of the sacred Scriptures, Talmud and Midrashim...

[This] effort that went into committing these teachings to writing was not for mere academic reasons. Knowledge is itself a means toward a higher end: "the purpose of wisdom is teshuvah (return to G-d) and ma'asim tovim (good deeds)." (Tractate Berachot 17a) Thus it is hoped that a study of these pages will not only inform, but also make the reader realize the relevant actuality of their contents: to awaken or strengthen the anticipation of the Messianic redemption[5]...

Abarbanel [wrote] "My whole purpose is to strengthen feeble hands and fortify stumbling feet.."[7] Like Ramban before him,[8] he regards his venture of calculating the ketz (the Messianic end), and otherwise revealing and explicating the meaning and intent of Messianic passages, not only permissible but obligatory, because of the proximity of the redemption.[9] Thus he posits that in view of the imminent ge'ulah, all those who act in this vein "make the many meritorious, because they strengthen G-d's people in their faith, add hope and immense anticipation of the Divine Grace.. (as they realize that) 'My salvation is near to come and My righteousness to be revealed' (Isaiah 56:1)."[10]

In the past century this happened again through the sainted R. Israel Meir Hakohen, the most widely acclaimed authority of his day, better known by the title of his famous work Chafetz Chaim. He spoke, wrote, urged and admonished the people of Israel incessantly to ready itself for the imminent redemption. Like perhaps none before him, he issued letters and proclamations, and published special works to awaken Israel to that message. He innovated a renewal of the study of laws relating to the Temple-service, especially by kohanim [the Jewish priestly lineage descended from Aaron the first High Priest], as this would soon be of practical relevance.[11] For whatever reasons, these potentials were not yet actualized.[12]...

The great leaders of our own generation are once again urging that we are living in most auspicious, momentous times. Thus it is incumbent to renew our belief in, and anticipation of, the Messianic redemption: to be aware of what it means, to study the relevant laws and teachings, to ask for and await its immediate realization - thereby bringing it about in actuality.[13] Furtherance of this goal is the ultimate objective of this book.

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Toronto Ont., 28 Sivan 5751

Notes:

1. See ch. III.
2. See ch. I; and ch. VII, sect. A.
3. Cf. Sanhedrin 97b "Blasted be those that calculate the end; for (people) would say, since (that time for) the end has been reached and (Mashiach) has not come - he will never come. Rather, wait for him..."
4. See ch. II, sect. D and E.
5. See ch. VII.
8. See ch. V, note 75.
11. See especially his Tzipita Liyeshu'ah, and the quotation from Chizuk Emunah, cited ch. VII-A.

[Notes: for a recommended translation of the book "Tzipita Liyeshu'ah" ("Anticipating the Redemption"), see the book "The Chofetz Chaim on Awaiting Mashiach: a translation of writings by R. Yisroel Mayer (the 'Chofetz Chaim')," pub. Feldheim Publishers.

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The item is presently listed on that link as unavailable.]

12. See below, ch. V, note 75.
13. See below, ch. VIII, note 131.

## The Belief in the Coming of Mashiach

The belief in the coming of Mashiach and the Messianic redemption is one of the fundamental principles of the Jewish faith.[1] Every Jew must believe that Mashiach will arise and restore the Kingdom of David to its original state and sovereignty, rebuild the Bet Hamikdash (Holy Temple of Jerusalem), gather the dispersed of Israel, and in his days all the laws of the Torah shall be reinstated as they had been aforesaid.[2]

Whoever does not believe in him, or whoever does not look forward to (and anticipate) his coming, denies not only [the words of] the other prophets but also [those of] the Torah [the Five Books of Moses] and of Moses our Teacher! For the Torah testifies about him, as it is said: "G-d, your G-d, will return your captivity and have compassion on you. He will return and gather you.. If your dispersed be in the utmost end of the heavens.. G-d will bring you.." (Deuteronomy 30:3-5) These words, explicitly stated in the Torah, compound all the things spoken by all the prophets.[3]

Some authorities view this principle as an integral part of the first of the Ten Commandments ("I am G-d, your G-d, who has taken you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;" Exodus 20:2), which charges us with the belief in G-d, i.e.,

"to know that He who created heaven and earth is the sole ruler above and below and in all four directions.. This includes.. [the principle] that [a Jew] is asked in his judgment after death, 'Did you long for salvation?' The Scriptural source for this obligation is compounded in the above: just as we must believe that G-d took us out of Egypt, as it is written, 'I am G-d, your G-d, who has taken you out from the land of Egypt' .. so I want that you believe that I am G-d, your G-d, who will yet gather you and save you.."[4]

## The Messianic Era

### A. Restoration of the Bet Hamikdash [Holy Temple]

Mashiach shall restore the Bet Hamikdash in Jerusalem.[5] This refers to the third Bet Hamikdash that will stand forever, in fulfillment of the Divine prophecy of Ezekiel 37:26-28: "I shall give My Sanctuary in their midst forever. My dwelling-place shall be over them .. The nations shall know that I am G-d who sanctifies Israel, when My Sanctuary shall be in the midst of them forever."[6]

### B. Ingathering of the Exiles of Israel

Through Mashiach shall be effected the ingathering of all the exiles of Israel:[7]

Deuteronomy 30:3-4: "G-d, your G-d, shall bring back your captivity .. and He will return and gather you from all the nations whither G-d, your G-d, has scattered you. If your banished shall be at the utmost end of the heavens, G-d, your G-d, shall gather you from there, and He shall take you from there."

Isaiah 11:11-12,16: "It shall be on that day that G-d shall again set His hand for a second time to acquire the remnant of His people that shall remain from Assyria and from Egypt, from Pathros and from Cush and from Elam, from Shinar and from Chamat and from the islands of the sea.. There shall be a highway for the remnant of His people that shall remain from Assyria, as there was for Israel on the day they went up from the land of Egypt."

Isaiah 43:5-6: "Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your seed from the east and gather you from the west. I shall say to the north, 'Give up,' and to the south, 'Do not hold back, bring My sons from far and My daughters from the end of the earth.'"

Amos 9:14-15: "I shall return the captivity of My people Israel and they shall build the waste cities and settle .. I shall plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked out of their land that I have given them, says G-d, your G-d."

Jeremiah 23:7-8: "Therefore behold, days shall come, says G-d, that they shall no longer say, 'As G-d lives who has taken up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt;' but 'As G-d lives who has taken up and brought the seed of the House of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where He had banished them,' and they shall dwell in their land."

Ezekiel 39:25, 27-29: "..Now I shall bring back the captivity of Jacob and I shall have compassion on the whole House of Israel, and I shall be zealous for My holy Name .. When I shall have returned them from the nations and gathered them from the lands of their enemies.. They shall know that I am G-d, their G-d, in that I exiled them to the nations and gathered them unto their land, and I will not leave any one of them there. I will no more hide My face from them, as I will pour out My spirit upon the House of Israel.." [8]

The Ten Tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, exiled by the Assyrians before the destruction of the first Bet Hamikdash (II-Kings, ch. 17) ... will also return.[9] This Divine promise of the return and restoration of Israel is unconditional...

### C. End to Evil and Sin

The Messianic era will mark the end of evil and sin...

Zechariah 13:2: "It shall be in that day .. that I shall cut off the names of the idols from the earth and they shall no longer be remembered; and I shall also remove from the earth the [false] prophets and the spirit of impurity."... [10]

### D. Awareness and Knowledge of G-d

The Messianic era will be a time of universal awareness, perception and knowledge of G-d:

Isaiah 11:9: (cf. Habakuk 2:14): "..the earth shall be full of knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the sea."

Isaiah 40:5: "The glory of G-d shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see together that the mouth of G-d has spoken." 10a

... Joel 3:1-2: "..I shall pour out My spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your elders shall dream dreams, your young shall see visions. In those days I shall pour out My spirit also upon the servants and handmaids." 10b

### E. Universal Worship of G-d

Mashiach shall mend the whole world so that all shall serve G-d in unity:[11]

Zephaniah 3:9: "For then I shall turn to the peoples a pure tongue that all shall call upon the Name of G-d to serve Him with one consent."

Isaiah 2:2-3 and Michah 4:1-2: "..The mountain of G-d's House shall be established at the top of the mountains and it shall be raised above the hills, and all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall go and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of G-d, to the House of the G-d of Jacob, and let him [Mashiach] teach us of His ways and we shall go in His paths;' for from Zion shall go forth Torah, and the word of G-d from Jerusalem." [12]

Zechariah 9:16: "..every one that is left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to bow before the King, G-d.."

Zechariah 14:9: "G-d shall be King over the entire earth. In that day G-d shall be One and His Name One."

#### F. Universal Peace and Harmony

The awareness and knowledge of G-d will remove the narrow-minded dispositions that lead to strife and war. It will be an era of peace and harmony - in the Holy Land [13] and throughout the world:

Isaiah 2:4 and Michah 4:3: "..they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks. Nation shall not lift a sword against nation, nor shall they learn war any more." [Michah 4:4 continues: "Each man shall sit under his vine and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid.."]

Hosea 2:20: "..I shall break from the earth the bow, the sword and warfare, and I shall make them lie down securely."

Zechariah 9:10: "..the bow of war shall be cut off, and [Mashiach] shall speak peace unto the nations.."

This new attitude of mankind will also be reflected in the animal world:

Isaiah 11:6-9: "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie with the kid, and a calf with a lion's cub and a fatling together, and a small child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like cattle. An infant shall play over the hole of an asp, and the weaned child shall put out his hand over the eyeball of an adder. They will not harm or destroy on all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the sea."

Isaiah 65:25: "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like cattle, dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not harm nor destroy in all My holy mountain, says G-d." [14]

#### G. Resurrection of the Dead

..."Many of them that sleep in the land of dust shall awake.." (Daniel 12:2) [15]

#### H. Blissful Utopia: End to Disease and Death

The Messianic era will witness ultimate physical and spiritual bliss. All will be healed. [16] The blind, the deaf and the dumb, the lame, whosoever has any blemish or disability, shall be healed from all their disabilities: "The eyes of the blind shall be clearsighted, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened.. the lame

shall leap as a hart and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.." (Isaiah 35:5-6).[17] Death itself shall cease, as it is said, "Death shall be swallowed up forever and G-d shall wipe the tears from every face.." (Isaiah 25:8)[18]

... We long for that time because there will be an assembly of the righteous, an era dominated by goodness, wisdom, knowledge and truth. It will be a time when the commandments of the Torah shall be observed without inertia, laziness or compulsion... The sole preoccupation of the whole world will be to know G-d ... as it is said, "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah 11:9)[28]

#### Notes:

1. Rambam, Principles of the Faith, Article 12.
2. Rambam, Laws of Kings (Hilchot Melachim) 11:1
3. Ibid. See below, ch. VII-A.
4. See below, ch. VII-A.
5. From some sources it appears that Mashiach will build the third Bet Hamikdash. From other sources it follows that the third Bet Hamikdash is built by the Al-mighty Himself .
6. See also Ezekiel ch. 40ff.; and cf. Isaiah 2:2f. cited below ch. II-E.
7. See relevant Midrash on Genesis 49:11.
8. Additional sources for the ingathering of the exiles are: Isaiah 27:12, 49:8-9, and 60:4; Jeremiah 30:2 and 31:7; Ezekiel 34:11-13 and 37:21; Zechariah 8:7-8; etc.
9. Sanhedrin 110b; Bamidbar Rabba 16:25.
10. For further details on the eradication of evil, the evil inclination and [the angel] Satan, see Sukah 52a and relevant Midrash.
- 10a. "In the present world, the Shechinah manifests Itself only to certain individuals [prophets]; in the time to come, however, 'the glory of G-d shall be revealed and all flesh shall see together..';" Vayikra Rabba 1:14. The Messianic era will thus witness an empirical manifestation of Divinity even as occurred with the revelation at Sinai.
- 10b. "The Holy One, blessed is He, said: 'In the present world [only] certain individuals prophesied; in the world to come, however, all Israel will be made prophets, as it is said, 'It shall come to pass afterwards that I shall pour out My spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy..';" Tanchuma, Beha'alotecha: end of par. 16. Cf. Tikunei Zohar 18:36b; and above, note 10a.
- Note Igeret Teyman, end of ch. 3, that there will be a restoration of prophecy even before the actual manifestation of Mashiach.
11. Rambam, Laws of Kings (Hilchot Melachim) 11:4
12. See also Isaiah 60:14; and Zechariah 8:23.
13. See Leviticus 25:18-19 and 26:5; Jeremiah 23:6 and 33:16; Ezekiel 28:26 and 34:25-28; Joel 4:17.
14. See also Hosea 2:20
15. Resurrection of the Dead is another of the 13 fundamental Principles of the Faith (Rambam, Article 13), distinct from that of the Messianic redemption. It will occur after the redemption, the very last event of the Messianic era (see Zohar I:139a), thus in a way distinct from it. Even so, there are various stages in the process of resurrection itself, with some [great righteous] individuals rising before all others. Moses and Aaron, for example, will be present already in the very early period, when the Bet Hamikdash will be re-established, in order to guide the order and procedures of the Temple-service (see Tossafot on Pesachim 114b; and cf. Devarim Rabba 3:17 and similar passages).
16. Bereishit Rabba 20:5
17. Bereishit Rabba 95:1.
18. Pesachim 68a; Shemot Rabba 30:2. See also Midrash Tehilim 145:1.
28. Rambam, Laws of Kings (Hilchot Melachim) 12:5.

\*\*\*\*\*Quiz #3\*\*\*\*\*

United Noahide Academies (T.M.)

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

Quiz for Lesson #3

[Note the alternative spelling "Mashiach" used in this lesson's source text.]

1. When should we expect Mashiach to be revealed?
2. When should we want Moshiach to be revealed?
3. Moshiach will be a king from which royal dynasty?
4. List four things that the person who is Moshiach will accomplish.
5. In the Messianic Era, what knowledge will be universal?
6. In what way will the Ten Lost Tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel have a connection with the Messianic Redemption (after the redemption has been brought in by the king Moshiach)?
7. (a) Name two people will be resurrected in the very early period of the Messianic Era.  
(b) Why do these two people need to be resurrected earlier than others?
8. Who are the "kohanim" (plural of "kohen")?
9. What did the famous Rabbi Israel Meir [Kagan] HaKohen [18'39-19'33, author of "Chafetz Chaim" ("One Who Desires Life")] do to urge the Jewish people to ready themselves for the imminent Messianic redemption?
10. What is incumbent to be done in response to the fact that we have reached this auspicious and momentous time in which the Messianic redemption is imminent?