

Moshiach...Coming Soon!



I. The Fundamental Belief

1. The Twelfth Principle

The twelfth principle involves the Messianic Age.

We believe and are certain that the Messiah will come. We do not consider him late, and “although he tarry, we await him” (*Habbakuk 2:3*)....

We believe that the Messiah will be greater than any other king or ruler who has ever lived. This has been predicted by every prophet from Moses to Malachi.

One who doubts or minimizes this, denies the Torah itself. For the Messiah is mentioned both in the accounts of Balaam (*Numbers 24:7*) and at the end of *Deuteronomy* (30:3). Included in this principle is the belief that a Jewish king can only come from the family of David, through his son Solomon.

(Rambam, Commentary to Mishnah, Sanhedrin 10:1)

II. What Is Moshiach Supposed to Do?

2. His job description

1) In the future, the Messianic king will arise and renew the Davidic dynasty, restoring it to its initial sovereignty. He will build the Temple and gather the dispersed of Israel.

Then, in his days, the observance of all the statutes will return to their previous state. We will offer sacrifices, observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years according to all their particulars as described by the Torah.

Anyone who does not believe in him or does not await his coming, denies not only the statements of the other prophets, but those of the Torah and Moses, our teacher. The Torah testified to his coming, as *Deuteronomy 30:3-5* states: *God will bring back your captivity and have mercy upon you. He will again gather you from among the nations... Even if your Diaspora is at the ends of the heavens, God will gather you up from there... and bring you to the land...*

These explicit words of the Torah include all the statements made by all the prophets.

...

3) One should not presume that the Messianic king must work miracles and wonders, bring about new phenomena in the world, resurrect the dead, or perform other similar deeds. This is definitely not true. ... The main thrust of the matter is: This Torah, its statutes and its laws, will not ever change. We may not add to them or detract from them. One who adds, detracts, or distorts the Torah and reinterprets the simple meaning of the mitzvos [from what we have known them to be] is a *rasha* and a heretic!

4) If a king will arise from the House of David who diligently contemplates the Torah and observes its mitzvot as prescribed by the Written Law and the Oral Law as David, his ancestor, will compel all of Israel to walk in (the way of the Torah) and rectify the breaches in its observance, and fight the wars of God, we may assume him to be Mashiach.

If he succeeds in the above, builds the Temple in its place, and gathers the dispersed of Israel, he is definitely the Mashiach. If he did not succeed to this degree or was killed, he surely is not the redeemer promised by the Torah. ...

(Rambam, *Hil. Melachim* Ch. 11)

3. Jesus and Mohamed...?

Jesus of Nazareth who aspired to be the Mashiach and was executed by the court was also alluded to in Daniel's prophecies, as *ibid.* 11:14 states: 'The vulgar among your people shall exalt themselves in an attempt to fulfill the vision, but they shall stumble.'

Can there be a greater stumbling block than Christianity? All the prophets spoke of Mashiach as the redeemer of Israel and their savior who would gather their dispersed and strengthen their observance of the mitzvot. In contrast, Christianity caused the Jews to be slain by the sword, their remnants to be scattered and humbled, the Torah to be altered, and the majority of the world to err and serve a god other than the Lord.

Nevertheless, the intent of the Creator of the world is not within the power of man to comprehend, for His ways are not our ways, nor are His thoughts, our thoughts. Ultimately, all the deeds of Jesus of Nazareth and that Ishmaelite who arose after him will only serve to prepare the way for Mashiach's coming and the improvement of the entire world, motivating the nations to serve God together ...

How will this come about? The entire world has already become filled with the mention of Mashiach, Torah, and mitzvot. These matters have been spread to the furthestmost islands to many stubborn-hearted nations. They discuss these matters and the mitzvot of the Torah, saying: 'These mitzvot were true, but were already negated in the present age and are not applicable for all time.' Others say: 'Implied in the mitzvot are hidden concepts that can not be understood simply. The Mashiach has already come and revealed those hidden truths.'

When the true Messianic king will arise and prove successful, his position becoming exalted and uplifted, they will all return and realize that their ancestors endowed them with a false heritage and their prophets and ancestors caused them to err.

(*ibid.*)

4. The World after Moshiach's Arrival

1) Do not presume that in the Messianic age any facet of the world's nature will change or there will be innovations in the work of creation. Rather, the world will continue according to its pattern....

4) The Sages and the prophets did not yearn for the Messianic era in order to have dominion over the entire world, to rule over the gentiles, to be exalted by the nations, or to eat, drink, and celebrate. Rather, they desired to be free to involve themselves in Torah and wisdom without any pressures or disturbances, so that they would merit the world to come

5) In that era, there will be neither famine or war, envy or competition for good will flow in abundance and all the delights will be freely available as dust. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know God.

Therefore, the Jews will be great sages and know the hidden matters, grasping the knowledge of their Creator according to the full extent of human potential, as Isaiah 11:9 states: 'The world will be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the ocean bed.'

(*ibid.* Ch. 12)

III. Coming Soon...?

5. Birth Pains of The Messiah

In the generation when the son of David [the Messiah] will come, the number of Torah scholars will decrease. And as for the rest of the people, their eyes will become worn out through grief and anxiety. Numerous troubles and harsh decrees will be constantly appearing anew. Before the first [trouble] is over, a second one will hasten to appear.

(Sanhedrin 97a)

6. Characteristics of the Generation

In the generation when the son of David [the Messiah] will come ... The face of the generation will be like the face of a dog (i.e., they will have no shame [Rashi]), and truth will be absent. ... Young people will shame the old, old people will rise before the young, a daughter will stand against her mother and a daughter in law against her mother in law ... and a son will not be ashamed before his father.... Insolence will increase, honor will dwindle... Government will convert to heresy and there will be no rebuke.

(ibid.)

7. Israel Will Bear Fruit Once Again

R' Abba said: There is no clearer indication of the "End" than this, as it is stated (Ezekiel 36:8): *But you, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and bear your fruit for My people Israel [when they are about to come].*

(ibid.)

[Israel will yield fruit in abundance shortly before the redemption. This is the clearest sign of all that the exile is about to end (Rashi).]

8. Return to Israel

One of the most important traditions regarding the Messianic Era concerns the ingathering of the Diaspora and the resettlement of the Land of Israel. There are numerous traditions that the Jewish people will begin to return to the Land of Israel as a prelude to the Messiah. The ingathering will begin with a measure of political independence, and according to some, with the permission of the other nations. As the holiest spot in the Land of Israel, Jerusalem is the most important city that must be rebuilt there. There is a tradition that the ingathering of the exile and the rebuilding of Jerusalem will go hand in hand as the two most important preludes to the coming of the Messiah. According to this tradition, first a small percentage of the exile will return to the Holy Land, and then Jerusalem will come under Jewish control and be rebuilt. Only then will the majority of Jews in the world return to their homeland. It is thus written, "God is rebuilding Jerusalem; [then] He will gather the dispersed of Israel" (Psalms 147:2).

Handbook of Jewish Thought, R' Aryeh Kaplan

9. Technological Revolution

Almost 2000 years ago, the Zohar predicted, "In the 600th year of the 6th millennium, the gates of wisdom on high and the wellsprings of lower wisdom will be opened. This will prepare the world to enter the 7th millennium, just as a person prepares himself toward sunset on Friday for the Sabbath. It is the same here. And the mnemonic for this is (Genesis 7:11), 'In the 600th year... all the foundations of the

great deep were split'."

The Zohar predicts with almost uncanny accuracy the onset of the technological revolution.

Here we see a clear prediction that in the Jewish year 5600 (1840 CE), the wellsprings of lower wisdom would be opened and there would be a sudden expansion of secular knowledge. Although the year 1840 did not yield any major scientific breakthrough, the date corresponds with almost uncanny accuracy to the onset of the present scientific revolution.

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Rabban Gamliel sat and expounded the following: In the Messianic era, the soil of the Land of Israel is destined to bring forth ready-made bread rolls and fine woolen clothes [= an allegory].

(Shabbos 30b)

10. When Will Moshiach Come?

אָנִי ה' בְּעֵתָהּ אֶחְיֶינָהּ

I, Hashem, in its time I will hasten it (Isaiah 60:22)

R' Yehoshua ben Levi noted a contradiction: On the one hand it is written: *in its time*, which implies that the redemption will occur in its preordained time. But on the other hand it is written: *I will hasten it*, which implies that God will bring the redemption before its preordained time! R' Yehoshua ben Levi resolved this contradiction as follows: If [the Jews] are deserving, I will hasten it. If they are not deserving, the redemption will come in its time.

Another contradiction posed by R' Yehoshua ben Levi ... On the one hand it is written: *And behold! With the clouds of Heaven, one like a man came (Daniel 7:13)*, [which implies that the Messiah will come swiftly and/or miraculously]. But on the other hand it is written: *a humble man, riding on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9)*, [which implies that the Messiah will come sluggishly through a more stepwise process].

R' Yehoshua ben Levi resolved this contradiction as follows: If [the Jews] are deserving, the Messiah will arrive with the clouds of Heaven. If they are not deserving, he will come as a humble man, riding on a donkey.

(Sanhedrin 98a)

Today, if you heed His voice! (Psalms 95:7)

- Story of R' Yehoshua ben Levi, Elijah, and the Messiah (*Sanhedrin 98a*)