

רמב"ם | הלכות מלך המשיח | פרק י"א הלכה א

From the Rambam's **Laws of Moshiach: WEEK 1**

BELIEVE IN MOSHIACH

- ▶ **What is Moshiach?**
- ▶ **Is he a person or an idea?**
- ▶ **Why must we believe in him?**



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BACKGROUND



NEW AGE SAGE



CROWN JEWELS



STORY TIME



DVAR MALCHUS



ESSAY



WHAT WILL MOSHIACH DO?

MOSHIACH



The word *Moshiach* means “to anoint (with oil).” All Jewish kings are anointed, as King Shaul and King Dovid were when they were chosen to become king.

רמב"ם הלכות מלכים ומלחמות פרק י"א הלכה א

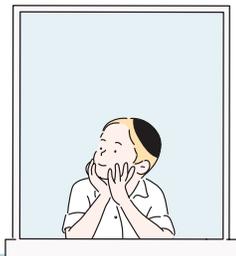
The king Moshiach will rise up and once again establish the kingship of Dovid as it used to be. He will rebuild the Beis Hamikdash and gather all Jews who are far away from *Yiddishkeit*.

הַמֶּלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ עֵתִיד לַעֲמֹד וּלְהַחְזִיר
מַלְכוּת דָּוִד לְיִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִשְׁפַּחַת הַרְאִשׁוֹנָה,
וּבִנְיַן הַמִּקְדָּשׁ וּמִקְבְּץ נִדְחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

NEW AGE SAGE

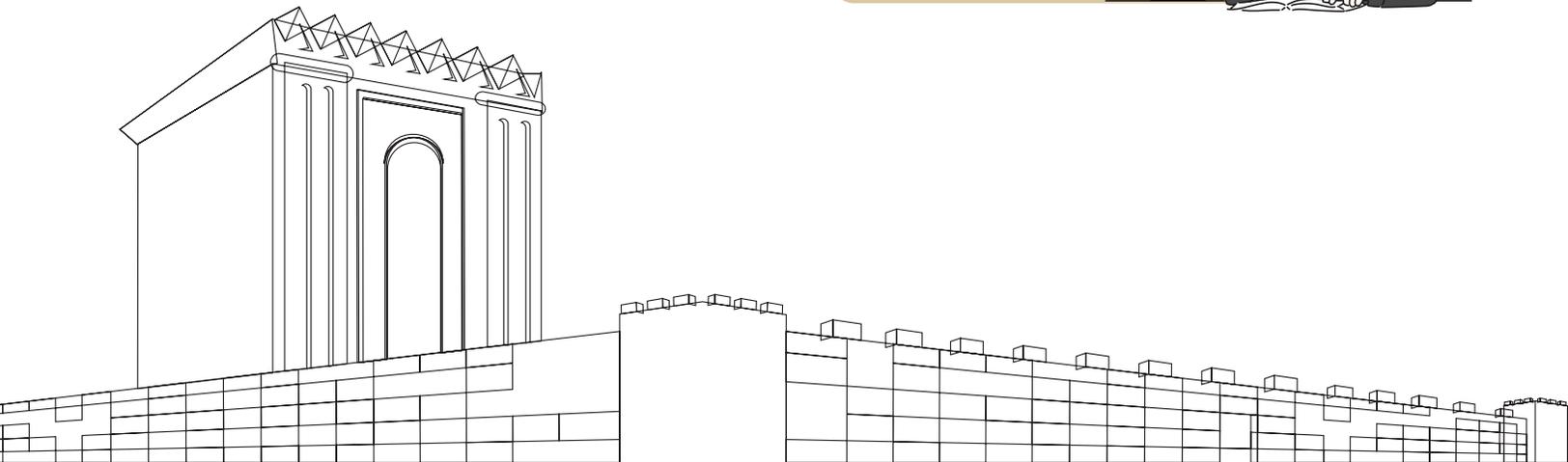
What is the Rambam telling us with the words מַלְכוּת דָּוִד לְיִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִשְׁפַּחַת הַרְאִשׁוֹנָה—as it used to be?

Hint: *There was something different about the state of Yidden during the rule of Dovid and Shlomo Hamelech than any other Jewish king in history.*



CROWN JEWELS

Who will build the Bais Hamikdash? Some say it will come down from Heaven. Others say that Moshiach will build it, like the Rambam seems to be explaining here. The Rebbe explains that they are both right! One of the ways to explain it is that the physical Bais Hamikdash will be built by Moshiach and then a Bais Hamikdash of fire will descend upon it from *Shomayim*, similar to the ongoing fire of the *mizbeiach* in the Bais Hamikdash.



THE WHOLE TORAH

There are 613 mitzvos in the Torah: 248 *mitzvos asei* that you must do and 365 *mitzvos lo sa'asei*, those that you are not allowed to do. Torah is *emes*, and therefore will never change, so we are obligated to do all of them. But some mitzvos have certain conditions to perform them. Any mitzvah connected to the Bais Hamikdash cannot be observed without it. Moshiach will rebuild the Bais Hamikdash and allow us to do all these mitzvos again. Similarly, we are only able to do some mitzvos when all *Yidden* live in Eretz Yisroel, such as *Shmitah*, the seventh year when farmland in Eretz Yisroel rests, and *Yovel*, when the original owner of a *nachalah* has his land returned and Jewish slaves are freed. (In *Golus*, *Shmitah* is observed *mi'd'rabbanan*.) Moshiach, who will bring all the *Yidden* back to Eretz Yisroel will give us the ability to keep *Yoval* and *Shmitah min hatorah*.



In his day, all the laws will return to how they were before when the Bais Hamikdash stood and all *Yidden* lived together in Eretz Yisroel, including the mitzvos of bringing *karbanos*, and making *Shmitah* and *Yovel*, exactly as the Torah commands us.

וְחֹזְרֵי כָּל הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים בְּיָמָיו
כְּשֶׁהָיוּ מִקֶּדֶם. מִקְרִיבֵין קֶרְבָּנוֹת,
וְעוֹשֵׂי שְׂמִטָּה וְיֹבֵלוֹת כְּכֹל
מִצְוֹתֶיהָ הָאֲמוּרָה בַּתּוֹרָה.

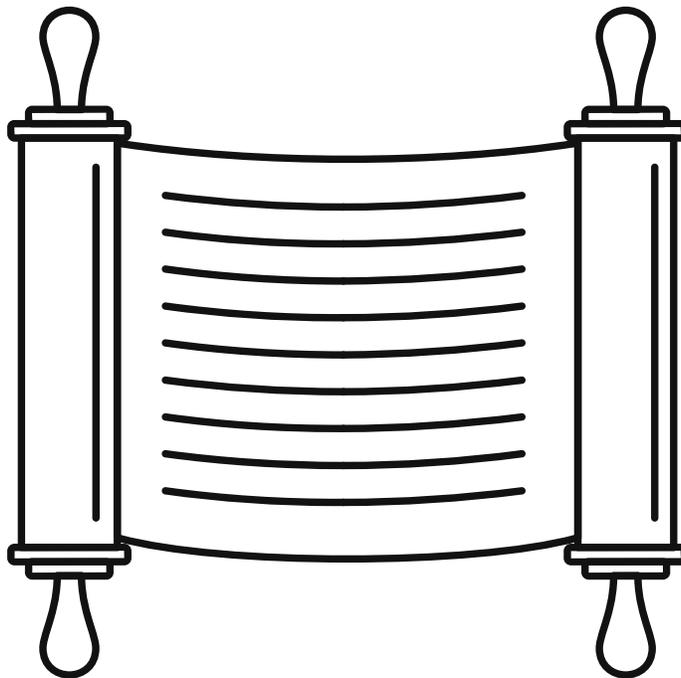
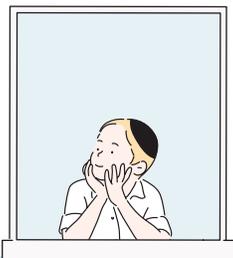
When Moshiach comes, four major things will happen:

- (1) The kingship of Dovid will once again reign
- (2) The Bais Hamikdash will be rebuilt and Hashem will have the dwelling place on earth as He desires
- (3) We will be able to perform all the mitzvos in the Torah
- (4) All *Yidden* will live together b'achdus—with unity and love in Eretz Yisroel.

NEW AGE SAGE

Why can't we bring *karbanos* now by entering the *makom hamikdash*, even without the Bais Hamikdash standing?

Hint: The answer is not "because we are tamei" or "we don't know the right place". In the third halachah of Perek Yud-Bais, the Rambam explains why.



HOW IMPORTANT IS OUR BELIEF?

PRINCIPLES 6 & 7

The Rambam compiled thirteen *ikrim*—basic principles of *Yiddishkeit*. One of them is that Hashem is able to communicate and tell human beings His will. This is called *nevua* (prophecy). It is a mitzvah to listen to a true *navi* who is telling us what Hashem wants of us. If we do not do or believe as he says, then we are going against Hashem. Moshe was the greatest *navi* because Hashem spoke to him directly. Hashem spoke to other *nevi'im* in an indirect way.



Anyone who does not believe in him (Moshiach), or someone that does not await for him to come every moment, not only does he deny the truth of the other prophets (who came after Moshe and were on a lower level than him in *nevua* and) who speak a lot about Moshiach but he denies the truth of the entire Torah and the prophecy of Moshe Rabbeinu, who is the greatest Navi of all time because the Torah gives proof about Moshiach.

וְכָל מִי שֶׁאִינוּ מְאֲמִין בּוֹ,
אוּ מִי שֶׁאִינוּ מְחַפְּה
לְבִיאָתוֹ—לֹא בְּשָׂרָר נְבִיאִים
בְּלִבָּד הוּא כּוֹפֵר, אֶלָּא בְּתוֹרָה
וּבְמֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ, שֶׁהָרִי הַתּוֹרָה
הָעִידָה עָלָיו.

CROWN JEWELS

There's an opinion in the Gemara that Moshiach does not mean a physical person, but rather a time in the future when all the *nevuos* and promises of the Torah will come true. However, according to the Rambam, the obligation to believe in Moshiach includes the belief that **Moshiach is a person** who will usher in the times of Moshiach. There is no halachic authority that disagrees with the Rambam and *paskens* like that opinion in the Gemara, telling us that every *Yid* must follow the *psak* of the Rambam on this matter.



THE CLOCK THAT COULDN'T WAIT

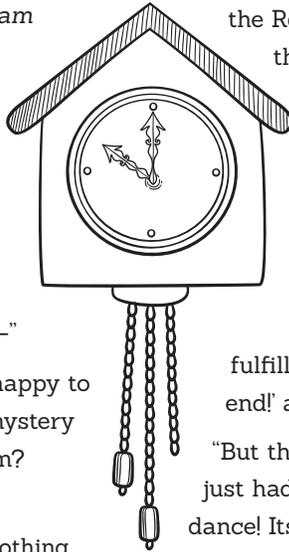
At 2 a.m., Reb Moshke had had enough. It was the third time the guest had started a racket in his room, and as illustrious a *talmid chacham* this guest was—a Rebbe no less!— he didn't want to scare away his other customers.

"Rebbe," Reb Moshke whispered after his gentle knocking had brought Reb Yissocher Ber to the door. "It's the middle of the night! And you keep getting up to dance! Could you maybe—"

"Ah," Reb Yissocher Ber replied, "Am I happy to see you! Perhaps you can explain the mystery of this happy clock hanging in my room? Where is it from?"

"That's a nice clock, alright! But there's nothing special about it! Please, can we all go to sleep now?"

But Reb Yissocher Ber insisted that the innkeeper



find out more about the clock. *And, boy, was it a surprise!* Puffed with pride, Reb Moshke approached the Rebbe the following day. "I found out that this clock used to belong to Reb Yaakov Yitzchak Horowitz, the famous Chozeh of Lublin!"

"Of course!" Reb Yissachar Ber exclaimed. "I should have known it once belonged to my Rebbe. You see, when I hear an ordinary clock keep time, it says: 'Time is passing you by! Your chance to fulfill Torah and mitzvos is soon coming to an end!' and that is kind of depressing!"

"But the joyful tick-tock of the Chozeh's clock just had me itching to get up and dance! Its every chime sang to me—another hour of *Golus* has passed! Moshiach is getting closer!"



3 PROOFS

ONE DAY...

In *Parshas Nitzavim*, Moshe Rabbeinu tells the *Yidden* about the future: Do not copy the ways and beliefs of *ovdei avodah zarah* in Eretz Cana'an. Moshe warns the *Yidden* that if they do, Hashem will punish them by sending them into *golus*, other lands outside Eretz Yisroel where they will suffer, *rachmana litzlan*. However, Moshe also promises that when they will do *teshuvah*, Hashem will have *rachmanus* on them and gather them back to Eretz Yisroel.



As it says in *Parshas Nitzavim*

And Hashem your G-d will return all those who were in exile in a loving way; He will return and gather us

Even if you are pushed away to the end of the world

Hashem will bring you back to the land that your forefathers inherited

שְׁנֵאֲמֹר

1 וְשָׁב ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת שְׁבוּתְךָ
וְרַחֲמֶיךָ וְשָׁב וְקִבְּצֶךָ

2 אִם יְהִיֶה נִדְחֶיךָ בְּקֵצֵה הַשָּׁמַיִם

3 וְהִבִּיאֶךָ ה'.

ALL IN THE TORAH



There are many parts of Navi that give details about the *Geulah* and how Moshiach will come, but the general ideas are included in the *pessukim* of the Torah and Moshe's *nevua*, as the Rambam brings right here.

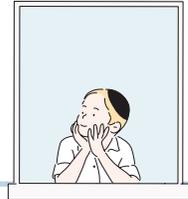
And these concepts regarding *Golus*, *Geulah* and Moshiach that are explained clearly in the Torah include in it all the ideas that were said by the *Nevi'im* in the generations after Moshe.

וְאֵלֹהֵי הַדְּבָרִים הַמְּפֹרָשִׁים בַּתּוֹרָה,
הֵם כּוֹלְלִים כָּל הַדְּבָרִים שֶׁנֶּאֱמָרוּ
עַל יְדֵי כָּל הַנְּבִיאִים.

NEW AGE SAGE

How do we know that this *nevua*, that Hashem will take us back from *Golus*, did not happen already in the time of the second Beis Hamikdash when we returned from Bavel?

Hint: The meforshim explain that the second possuk proves something about *kibbutz golios* that never happened before.



DVAR MALCHUS

Why does the Rambam call *Dovid Hamelech* "the first Moshiach"? What about Moshe Rabbeinu, who took the *Yidden* out of *Mitzrayim*? The Rambam is telling us that Moshiach's job is to return things to the way they were before we went into *golus*. Who, in the past, helped *Yidden* settle *Eretz Yisroel*, thus enabling them to build the Beis Hamikdash and fulfill all Torah and mitzvos? *Dovid Hamelech!*



דבר מלכות סימן א

(Before the *Geulah*) everything that's been missing in performing Torah and mitzvos

שְׁכָּל הָעֲנִינִים שֶׁחָסְרוּ בְּקִיּוּם תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת

(is) because the *Yidden* and the Beis Hamikdash were also not complete.

מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהָיָה חָסֵר בְּשִׁלְמוֹת כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבֵית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ

This is what *golus* is all about (the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash and the exile of *Yidden* from *Eretz Yisroel*)

- שָׁזָהוּ כְּלָלוֹת עֲנִין הַגְּלוּת -

and these will be made whole through Moshiach.

נִשְׁלָמִים עַל יְדֵי הַמְּשִׁיחַ

This is why (the Rambam specifies that) Moshiach will return "malchus Dovid to the way it was and return all the laws..."

וְזֶהוּ מָה שֶׁמְּשִׁיחַ מַחְזִיר "מְלְכוּת דָּוִד לְיוֹשְׁנָה כּוּ' וְחוֹזְרִין כָּל הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים"

He will return (us to state) of fulfilling the halachos and mitzvos of the Torah in their entirety.

- הוּא מַחְזִיר שְׁלֵמוֹת הַלְּכוּת וּמִצְוֹת הַתּוֹרָה.

IS MOSHIACH AN IDEA OR A PERSON?

NON-JEWISH NAVI



Bilam the sorcerer was hired to curse the *Yidden* by the king of Moav, but was instead forced by Hashem to bless them. In addition to his brachos, the Torah tells of his *nevuah* regarding Moshiach and the downfall of the nations who made *Yidden* suffer in *Golus*.

Also in the story of Bilam, Moshiach is mentioned. There the Torah tells us of a prophecy regarding two Moshiachs who are people, not just events—about the first Moshiach who was Dovid Hamelech who saved the *Yidden* from the hands of their oppressors in Eretz Yisroel. And the last Moshiach who will stand up from his sons who will save the *Yidden* from the hands of the Esav in the end of the days of *Golus*.

אף בְּפָרְשֵׁת בְּלָעַם נֶאֱמַר וְשָׁם
נִבְּא בְּשֵׁנֵי הַמְּשִׁיחִים, בְּמִשְׁיַח
הָרֵאשׁוֹן שֶׁהוּא דָּוִד שְׁהוֹשִׁיעַ אֶת
יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּד צָרֵיהֶם, וּבְמִשְׁיַח
הָאַחֲרוֹן שֶׁעוֹמֵד מִבְּנָיו שְׁמוֹשִׁיעַ
אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּד בְּנֵי עֶשָׂו.

FOUR PROPHECIES

Bilam says four statements, each with two parts, telling the future. The first part of each statement is about Dovid Hamelech and the second about Melech HaMoshiach. When the *Yidden* conquered Eretz Yisroel, they did not have a king for hundreds of years. During that time, the Pelishtim and other tribes in the surrounding areas attacked the *Yidden* many times. Only once they appointed Dovid Hamelech from Shevat Yehudah, did the *Yidden* begin to find peace and security in their land, and eventually build the Beis

Hamikdash.



The Rambam quotes the pessukim from Bilam and relates each part to Dovid or Moshiach. Here they are:

And there in *Parshas Balak* it states as follows.

“I see him, but not now,” is about Dovid who would conquer Moav at a later time.

“I recognize him, but it is not near.” This is King Moshiach who is to come many years after Dovid.

“A star shall go forth from Yaakov” is Dovid who will cause the *mazel* of the *Yidden* to shine.

“and a staff shall arise in Yisroel” is King Moshiach for a king carries a scepter.

וְשָׁם הוּא אֹמֵר:

1 “אֶרְאֶנּוּ וְלֹא עֵתָה” – זֶה דָּוִד.

“אֲשׁוּרְנּוּ וְלֹא קָרוֹב” – זֶה
מֶלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ.

2 “דָּוָר כּוֹכַב מֵיַעֲקֹב” – זֶה דָּוִד.

“וְקָם שֵׁבֶט מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל” – זֶה
מֶלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ.

In the next two statements of Bilam, the Rambam also quotes other pessukim from Navi that show the connection between Bilam's nevuah and Dovid or Moshiach. They are:

“He will crush some of Moav’s princes,” is Dovid

As it says in Navi Shmuel **“And he (Dovid) beat Moav and measured them with a rope.”**

“And he will rule all of the descendants of Sheis,” is King Moshiach

About whom it is said in Zecharia, **“He will rule from sea to sea”**— the entire world— commanding everyone to follow Hashem.

“And Edom will be inherited” by Dovid

As it says in Navi Shmuel **“And Edom became the servants of Dovid.”**

“And Seir, their enemy, will be inherited,” by King Moshiach

As it says in Ovadia **“Saviors will go up on Har Tzion to judge the mountains of Esau (who lives in Seir).**

3 וַיִּמְחֵץ פְּאֵתַי מוֹאָב – זֶה דָּוִד.

וְכֵן הוּא אֹמֵר “וַיִּךְ אֶת מוֹאָב וַיִּמְדֹּדֵם בַּחֶבֶל.”

“וְקִרְקַר כָּל בְּנֵי שֵׁת” – זֶה הַמֶּלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בּוֹ “וּמְשָׁלוֹ מֵיָם עַד יָם.”

4 “וְהָיָה אֶדוֹם יְרֻשָׁה” – זֶה דָּוִד,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר “וַתְּהִי אֶדוֹם לְדָוִד לַעֲבָדִים וְגו’.”

“וְהָיָה יְרֻשָׁה שְׂעִיר אֲיָבִיו” – זֶה הַמֶּלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר “וְעָלוּ מוֹשְׁעִים בְּהָר צִיּוֹן וְגו’.”

In summary: The Rambam paskens that we are required by halachah to believe in and wait for Moshiach. He brings proof that this is a basic principle of the Torah with pessukim that talk directly about the Geulah as a future event. He also brings more sources that show that Moshiach is a human being.

CROWN JEWELS

If believing in Moshiach is so important, why is it not a mitzvah in the Torah?

One of the Rambam's rules for counting mitzvos is to categorize it as a **specific** mitzvah. If it is a **general** mitzvah that is part of the other mitzvos, it is not counted as one of the 613. The mitzvah of believing in Moshiach is a general mitzvah, part of every single mitzvah, and is therefore not counted separately. As we said at the end of this halachah, and will later see in more halachos, the idea of Moshiach is to bring the entire world to true knowledge of Hashem so the Torah is practiced perfectly by all people.



BACK TO THE FUTURE

Based on the many nevuos and mefarshim who speak about the Geulah, we know about these most basic developments: The reign of King Moshiach; the final war on Amalek, the building of the third Beis Hamikdash and the ingathering of Yidden to Eretz Yisroel.

Show, in the Rambam's own words, how he paskens on the order of these events.



ANSWERS TO NEW AGE SAGE

(1) Later kings of Yehuda ruled only parts of Eretz Yisrael and certain shvatim. With Moshiach, we will return to the state of shleimus ha'am and shleimus ha'aretz—all Yidden and all of Eretz Yisroel united, as it was during the reign of Dovid and Shlomo Hamelech.

(2) The Rambam later explains that Moshiach will tell each Yid their yichus, including which shevet they belong to. This is the only way we will be able to know who are true Kohanim and Levi'im and capable of doing the avodah. Today, even if we would know the exact place of the mizbeiach and we are tohar, we do not have a Kohen or Levi meyuchas to perform avodas hakarbanos.

(4) When Ezra from the Anshei Knesses Hagdola returned to Eretz Yisroel to rebuild the second Beis Hamikdash, many Yidden did not join him; they remained in Bavel. The possuk here is describing how Hashem will bring all Yidden to Eretz Yisroel wherever in the world they may be. No Yid will be left behind. Since Hashem first sent the Yidden into golus, when ten shvatim were taken away during the time of the first Beis Hamikdash, this total gathering of Yidden has not occurred.