

דבר מלכות

שתי תקופות בימות המשיח (ב)
WHAT WILL THE ERA OF MOSHIACH BE LIKE (2)

DVAR MALCHUS

RAMBAM'S CONCEPTION OF MASHIACH
AS ILLUMINATED BY THE REBBE'S TEACHINGS

DVAR MALCHUS | דבר מלכות סימן ג

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Introduction

It is a well-known story:¹ During his imprisonment that culminated in his release on *Yud-Tes Kislev*, the Alter Rebbe was held in the Petropavlovsk Fortress – in a dungeon from which he could not see the sky. Therefore, he could not recite the blessing sanctifying the moon.

While being ferried by boat to an interrogation, he saw the moon and asked the official in command to stop so that he could stand up and sanctify the moon with composure. When the official refused his request, the Alter Rebbe stopped the boat in a miraculous manner. However, he did not recite the blessing at that time, but instead allowed the boat to proceed, and then again asked the official to stop it. Only when the official willingly agreed to stop the boat, did he sanctify the moon.

The Rebbe Rayatz² explained that the Alter Rebbe did not recite the blessing when he stopped the boat miraculously, because he desired that even the preparations for the observance of the *mitzvah* to be carried out in a natural manner.

This underscores the theme the Rebbe brings out in this *sichah* – that the Torah and its *mitzvos* must be fulfilled within the context of this material world, where the natural order prevails. This is the purpose of *Mashiach's* coming and the goal to which he will lead the Jewish people – the attainment of consummate knowledge of G-d and perfection in the observance of His Torah within the context of the world as we know it.

Mashiach's coming will make this possible. At last, the Jewish people will “be free {to involve themselves} in the Torah and its wisdom without anyone to oppress or disturb them.”³ Their efforts will bring the entire world to a state of perfection and, in that perfect environment, G-d will reveal a second phase in the Era of *Mashiach* – a miraculous pattern of existence that transcends nature.

1. *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 4, p. 752b. 2. *Ibid.*, p. 753a.

3. *Rambam, Hilchos Melachim* 12:4.

What will the Era of *Mashiach* Be Like

Statements that Appear Contradictory

8. *Rambam's* approach can be clarified by first analyzing his source and the manner in which he relates to it in other rulings.

Rambam's conception that there will not be a deviation from the natural order that prevails at present in the Era of Ultimate Redemption – to quote,¹ “There will be no difference between the current age and the Era of *Mashiach* except [our emancipation from] the subjugation by the [non-Jewish] kingdoms” – follows the teachings of Shmuel in the Talmud.²

Rambam's acceptance of Shmuel's approach has attracted notice from a *halachic* perspective. As is well known, *Lechem Mishneh*³ questions *Rambam's* thesis, pointing out several places within the *Mishneh Torah* itself where *Rambam* renders decisions that run contrary to this principle. For example:

(a) *Rambam's* words are sourced in the following Talmudic passage:²

Rabbi Chiya bar Abba states in the name of Rabbi Yochanan, “The Prophets all prophesied only regarding the Era of the *Mashiach*. The World to Come, by contrast, [is described by the verse]:⁴ ‘G-d, no eye but Yours has seen it.’”

This conflicts with [the opinion of] Shmuel, who maintains, “There will be no difference between the current age and the Era of *Mashiach* except [our emancipation from] subjugation by the [non-Jewish] kingdoms.”

Rabbi Chiya bar Abba is stating that the Prophets’

ח. ויובן כל זה בהקדים תוספת באור בדעת הרמב"ם: דהנה מה שכתב הרמב"ם שבימות המשיח עולם כמנהגו נוהג, לכאורה הוא משום שסובר כהדעה שמביא² ש"אין בין העולם הזה לימות המשיח אלא שעבוד מלכיות בלבד" וכדברי שמואל בגמרא¹, וכבר הקשה הלחם משנה³ שזה סותר לכאורה דברי הרמב"ם עצמו:

(א) איתא בגמרא¹: "ואמר רבי חייא בר אבא אמר רבי יוחנן כל הנביאים קלן לא נתנבאו אלא לימות המשיח אבל לעולם הבא עין לא ראתה אלקים וולתד², ופליגא דשמואל דאמר שמואל אין בין העולם הזה לימות המשיח אלא שעבוד מלכיות בלבד כו".

1. *Hilchos Melachim* 12:2; *Hilchos Teshuvah* 9:2.

2. *Berachos* 34b.

3. *Lechem Mishneh* on *Hilchos*

Teshuvah 8:7.

4. *Yeshayahu* 64:3.

visions all refer to the Era of *Mashiach*, and it is in this era that the miracles about which they prophesied will take place. The World to Come,⁵ in contrast, represents a higher level of existence which even the eye of prophetic vision could not conceive. Shmuel differs from this view. It appears that he maintains that the miracles foretold by the Prophets will not take place in the Era of *Mashiach*, for at that time the natural order of the world will continue to prevail as it does at present.

*Lechem Mishneh*³ notes that here, in *Hilchos Melachim*, *Rambam* identifies with Shmuel's view, while in *Hilchos Teshuvah*,⁶ he identifies with the view of Rabbi Chiya bar Abba regarding the inability of the prophets to conceive of the revelations of the World to Come.

(b) The *Mishnah* teaches:⁷

A person should not go out [into the public domain on *Shabbos* carrying] a sword or a crossbow.... If he does so [unintentionally], he is obligated to bring a sin offering.

Rabbi Eliezer says, “[These articles] are ornaments [and hence, like jewelry, are considered as garments which may be worn on *Shabbos*].”

Our Sages say, “On the contrary, they are shameful, for it is written,⁸ ‘And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and they shall not learn war any more’”; [i.e., were these articles to be ornaments, they would not be nullified in the Era of the Ultimate Redemption].⁹

In the Talmud's discussion of the issue, our Sages associate this difference of opinion with the difference of opinion between Rabbi Chiya bar Abba and Shmuel mentioned above. There is a difference of opinion among the Sages as to whether Rabbi Eliezer accepts Rabbi Chiya bar Abba's view. One opinion maintains that even Rabbi Eliezer agrees

והרמב"ם פוסק"ם כרבי חייא בר אבא (דפליג אשמואל): "אמר חכמים כל הנביאים כלן לא נבאו אלא לימות המשיח אבל העולם הבא עין לא ראתה אלקים וולתך".

(ב) במשנה"ה: לא יצא האיש לא בסוף ולא בקשת כו' ואם יצא חיב חטאת, רבי אליעזר אומר תכשיטין הן לו, וחכמים אומרים אינן אלא לגנאי, שנאמר"ה וכתתו חרבותם לאתים וחניתותיהם למזמרות, לא ישא גוי אל גוי חרב ולא ילמדו עוד מלחמה (ואי תכשיטין נינהו לא יהו בטלין לעתיד, רש"י). ובגמרא שם נחלקו: לדעה אחת סבירא ליה גם לרבי אליעזר שקלי זין

5. According to all opinions, the term “the World to Come,” refers to the reward G-d will grant man for his service in this realm. There is a difference of opinion among the Rabbis whether the intent is the Afterlife [a non-corporeal spiritual realm where the souls “luxuriate in the radiance of the Divine Presence” (*Berachos* 17a)] or whether it refers

to the Era of the Resurrection where the righteous will receive such revelations while clothed in a physical body in this world. See sec. 9, below.

6. *Hilchos Teshuvah* 8:7. The difficulty with *Rambam's* stance is compounded by the fact that in *Hilchos Teshuvah* itself (ch. 9, *halachah* 2), *Rambam* also cites Shmuel's opinion. Similarly, in his *Commentary*

on the *Mishnah*, introduction to *Sanhedrin*, ch. 10, s.v. *ve'atah achal*, *Rambam* quotes both the teaching of Rabbi Chiya bar Abba and the teaching that “There will be no difference between the current age....”

7. *Shabbos* 63a.

8. *Yeshayahu* 2:4.

9. *Rashi, Shabbos, loc. cit.*

that there will be no weapons in the Era of *Mashiach*; he differs with Shmuel and supports Rabbi Chiya bar Abba's view. Another opinion maintains that Rabbi Eliezer holds that weaponry will still exist in the era of *Mashiach*, "i.e., [he follows] Shmuel's view and differs with Rabbi Chiya bar Abba." However, according to all opinions in the Talmud, the Sages mentioned in the *mishnah* who differ with Rabbi Eliezer maintain that there will be no weapons in the Era of *Mashiach* and, therefore, even in the present age, a person who goes out into the public domain carrying a weapon is liable for a sin offering.

Although *Rambam* subscribes to Shmuel's opinion in *Hilchos Melachim*, nevertheless, regarding the *Shabbos* laws, he accepts the ruling of the Sages¹⁰ who, according to all views, differ with Shmuel.

Is the Resurrection of the Dead Not a Miracle?!

9. The above difficulties can be resolved within the context of the resolution of another question of broader scope. One of *Rambam's* Thirteen Principles of Faith is the belief in the Resurrection of the Dead¹¹ which will take place after the coming of *Mashiach*.¹² If so, how can *Rambam* say that the natural order of the world will not be altered then? What innovation in the natural order could be broader in scope than the Resurrection of the Dead?

There is no difficulty reconciling the above with Shmuel's view according to the opinions¹³ that the

בטלין לימות המשיח "ופליגא דשמואל . . מסיע ליה לרבי חייא בר אבא", ולדעה אחרת סובר רבי אליעזר שאינן בטלין לימות המשיח, "הינו דשמואל ופליגא דרבי חייא בר אבא", אכל לחכמים כלי זין בטלין לימות המשיח לכולי עלמא, ולפיכך אם יצא בסיף כו' חיב חטאת. והרמב"ם פוסק^ט כדעת חכמים שלדברי הכל אינם סוברים כשמואל וכנ"ל.

ט. ויש לומר הבאור בנה, דהנה לְכַאוּרָה תְּמוּהָ אֵיךְ כָּתַב הַרְמַב"ם שְׁלִימוֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ לֹא יִבְטַל דְּבַר מִמְּנֵהוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם וְלֹא יִהְיֶה כָּל חֲדוּשׁ בְּמַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית, וְהֵלֵא אֶחָד מִי"ג הָעֵקָרִים^ט הוּא שְׁיִהְיֶה "תְּחִית הַמֵּתִים"^ט (שְׁהִיא בְּטוֹל מִנְהֵגוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם וְחֲדוּשׁ בְּמַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית)?

בְּשִׁלְמָא לְהַשְׁיִטוֹת^כ שְׁעוֹלָם

10. *Hilchos Shabbos* 19:1. (In the year 5745 [1985], the year this *sichah* was originally published, it was published in the week this chapter was studied according to the yearly cycle of the study of *Rambam's Mishneh Torah*.)

11. See his Commentary to the *Mishnah*, in the Introduction to ch. 10 of Tractate *Sanhedrin*, principle 13 of his Thirteen Principles of Faith.

12. In his *Mishneh Torah (Hilchos Teshuvah* 3:6, based on *Sanhedrin*

90a), *Rambam* also emphasizes the importance of the belief in the Resurrection of the Dead, stating that a person who denies this belief will not be granted a portion in the World to Come. In his *Commentary on the Mishnah*, *loc. cit.*, s.v. *ve'atah achail*, he states, "One who does not believe in [the Resurrection of the Dead] has no belief in – or attachment to – the Jewish faith."

13. See *Raavad, Hilchos Teshuvah* 8:2; *Kessef Mishneh, loc. cit.*; *Ram-*

ban, Shaar HaG'mul. This approach is also accepted by the teachings of the *Chassidus*; see *Likkutei Torah, Vayikra*, p. 15c, *Devarim*, p. 65d; *Derech Mitzvosecha*, p. 14b, which states, "This is the true [approach] according to *Kabbalah*." See also *Teshuvos U'Burim* treatise 11,* p. 57, footnote 23, and the sources mentioned there.

* Later published in the Rebbe's *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 2, Letter no. 200, p. 76.

term “the World to Come” applies to the era *after* the Resurrection of the Dead, for the ultimate reward to be granted by G-d to man is not in the afterlife, the spiritual world of the souls, but after the resurrection, when the Jewish people will still exist, with their souls encloded within their bodies. This conception allows for the understanding that, in the Era of *Mashiach*, the natural order will continue to prevail, as Shmuel contended. The Era of the World to Come, i.e., the Era of the Resurrection of the Dead, will be at a different time and not be part of the Era of *Mashiach*. In that era, even Shmuel would agree that there will be a change within the natural order.

However, *Rambam*¹⁴ defines “the World to Come” as the non-corporeal world of the souls, i.e., the afterlife, a spiritual realm in which the souls will be granted the revelation of G-dliness. According to *Rambam*, this will be our ultimate reward. By contrast, the Era of the Resurrection of the Dead will not represent the ultimate reward G-d will grant us. He maintains that it will be a stage within the Era of *Mashiach* before the souls are granted their ultimate spiritual reward in the World to Come. Thus, according to *Rambam*, the Resurrection of the Dead – the greatest innovation conceivable – will occur in the Era of *Mashiach*. If so, how can it be said that there will be no changes within the natural order in the Era of *Mashiach*?

Therefore, we are forced to say that *Rambam* maintains that there will be two distinct stages within the Era of the Redemption: (a) one period associated with the coming of *Mashiach*, when the natural order will continue to prevail, and (b) another period that will follow the beginning of the Era of *Mashiach*, in which G-d will introduce a new pattern. This additional period will include miracles that depart from the natural order¹⁵

14. *Hilchos Teshuvah*, loc. cit.; *Rambam's Commentary on the Mishnah*, loc. cit.; his “Treatise on the Resurrection of the Dead,” sec. 6. See *Avodas HaKodesh*, Vol. 2, ch. 41, where these concepts are explained at length.

15. This clarifies the precision of the wording *Rambam* chooses in ch. 11 (cited below sec. 10): “One should not entertain the notion that the King *Mashiach* must work miracles and wonders, bring about new phenomena into the world,

התחיה הוא עולם הבא (ותכלית שלמות השקר הוא לנשמות בגופים), הרי תחית המתים הוא ענין בפני עצמו ולא “חלק” מימות המשיח;

אבל לשיתת הרמב”ם¹⁴ שעולם הבא הוא עולם הנשמות (בלי גופים) ועולם התחיה אינו תכלית שלמות השקר, אלא שתחית המתים תהיה בזמן ותקופת ימות המשיח לפני שהנשמה תגיע לעולם הבא, הרי לשיתתו תהיה חדוש במעשה בראשית (תחית המתים) ויאיד אפשר לומר שבימות המשיח לא יבטל דבר ממנהגו של עולם?

ונראה שסבירא ליה להרמב”ם שיש ב’ ענינים בשני זמנים שונים: יש ענין וזמן בימות המשיח שקשור עם ביאת המשיח, ויש עוד ענין וזמן נוסף, שיתוסף לאחר תקופת התחלת ימות המשיח, שבה יתוספו הנהגות, דברים שיעשה הקב”ה באותו זמן, לרבות עניני שנוי מנהגו של עולם¹⁵, וזה יהיה כאמור

resurrect the dead...” In that phrase, he mentions phenomena – including the Resurrection of the Dead – that will indeed take place in the Era of *Mashiach*. However, these are additional factors that will occur in a later period in the Era of *Mashiach*.

and will take place at a later time¹⁶ within the Era of *Mashiach* itself.¹⁷

בְּתִקְוַת מְאַחֶרֶת יוֹתֵר¹⁶ בְּיָמֵי
הַמְּשִׁיחַ גּוֹפֵא¹⁷.

Why *Mashiach* Need not Work Miracles

10. On the basis of the above, it is understood why *Rambam* does not cite any support or proof for the statement that he makes in the beginning of ch. 12, “One should not entertain the notion that in the Era of *Mashiach* any element of the natural order will be nullified.” However, in ch. 11,¹⁸ when stating that *Mashiach* need not perform a wonder or miracle to confirm his identity, *Rambam* felt the need to bring support and therefore states:

One should not entertain the notion that the King *Mashiach* must work miracles and wonders, bring about new phenomena in the world, resurrect the

י"ד. וְעַל פִּי זֶה מוֹבֵן מֵהַ
שְׁהַרְמָז"ם לֹא הֵבִיא כָּל רְאִיָּה
לְדַבְּרוֹ שֶׁתֵּתֵב בְּרֵאשִׁית פְּרָק י"ב "אֵל
יַעֲלֶה עַל הַלֵּב שְׁבִימוֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ
יִבְטֵל דְּבַר מִמְּנִהְגוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם,"
כִּשֶׁם שֶׁעָשָׂה בְּפֶרֶק שְׁלֹפְנֵי זֶה¹⁸
בְּעֵינֵי שְׁמֻשִׁיחַ אֵינוֹ צָרִיךְ לְהִרְאוֹת
אוֹת וּמוֹפֵת, וְזֶה לְשׁוֹנוֹ: וְאֵל
יַעֲלֶה עַל דַּעְתְּךָ שֶׁהַמֶּלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ
צָרִיךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹתוֹת וּמוֹפְתִים
וּמַחֲדֵשׁ דְּבָרִים בְּעוֹלָם אוֹ מְחִיָּה

They are not matters that characterize *Mashiach's* purpose or the first period of the era that he will initiate, as stated in the main text.

Note *Rambam's Pirkei Hatzlachah*, which emphasizes the connection of the Resurrection of the Dead with *Mashiach*, stating “This is complete proof that the Resurrection of the Dead is dependent on *Mashiach*.”

16. In his “Treatise on the Resurrection of the Dead,” *loc. cit.*, *Rambam* states, “[G-d] will resurrect the dead according to His desire and will, when He desires, and whom He desires, either in the Era of *Mashiach*, before that, or after...”

That statement does not contradict the statements of our Sages found in several sources that there will be a specific Era of the Resurrection of the Dead.* Instead, his intent is that it is within G-d's potential to resurrect the dead whenever He desires, in whichever era He desires, as related in the works of the Prophets and the Talmud where we find narratives of people who were brought back to life.

* See also *Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 139a, which speaks of a specific stage in

the Era of the Ultimate Redemption when the dead will be resurrected. See also *ibid.*, p. 134a.

17. *Shelah*, p. 23b also states that, according to Shmuel, there will be two periods within the Era of *Mashiach*. However, *Shelah* writes, “It is possible that Shmuel's intent was [that the natural order will continue to prevail] until the end of the sixth millennium, but afterwards” – i.e., in the seventh millennium* – “Shmuel would agree that everything we said** [will occur],” i.e., Shmuel would agree that a miraculous order of existence would begin.

Shelah then continues:

It is possible that Shmuel also agrees that everything we said [will occur] even in the sixth millennium.... However, death will not have any dominion over those born in holiness [in that era].... Similarly, those who had died who were resurrected in the Era of *Mashiach* will remain alive [forever].

These statements are not in accord with *Rambam's* approach. Nevertheless, based on the explanation in

the main text, we are forced to say that, even according to *Rambam*, there will be a second period in the Era of *Mashiach* which will take place during the sixth millennium, i.e., within the context of material existence, in the present framework of time.

* *Shelah* is referring to our Sages' words (*Rosh Hashanah* 31a, *Sanhedrin* 97a), “The world will exist for six millennia. [Then, there will be] one millennium, [where it will be] devastated; [i.e., it will exist on a higher plane of being].”

** *Shelah* notes that the Talmud (*Berachos* 34b) states that the opinion that miracles will occur in the Era of *Mashiach* (the opinion of Rabbi Chiya bar Abba) differs with that of Shmuel. However, *Shelah* concludes, “It is possible to say that when [our Sages said that Rabbi Chiya bar Abba and Shmuel] differ, their intent was that they were each describing a different dimension [of the Era of *Mashiach*].”

18. *Rambam*, *Hilchos Melachim* 11:3.

dead, or perform other similar deeds. This is [definitely] not true.¹⁹

[A proof can be brought from the fact that] Rabbi Akiva, one of the greatest Sages of the *Mishnah*, [was an active participant²⁰ in the war of] King ben Koziva [(Bar Kochbah)]. He described him as the King *Mashiach*,²¹ and he and all the Sages of his generation conceived of him as the King *Mashiach* until he was killed as a result of sins.²²

19. On the basis of this *halachah*, *Rambam* negates our Sages' statement (*Sanhedrin* 93b) that the Sages tested ben Koziva on the basis of the prophecy of Yeshayahu (*Yeshayahu* 11:3) that *Mashiach* will judge litigants with his sense of smell. When they saw that ben Koziva was not capable of this, they killed him. By contrast, as stated below, *Rambam* maintains that ben Koziva "was killed as a result of sins." See footnote 21 below.

20. The literal meaning of *Rambam's* words is, "He was the arms-bearer of ben Koziva." A source for the license for a great Sage of Rabbi Akiva's stature – the primary teacher of the entire generation and the source of spiritual nurture for the entire generation (*Sifri*, the conclusion of *Parshas Vezos HaBerachah*) – to serve in such a function may be derived from the conduct of King David, whom *I Shmuel* 16:21 describes as King Shaul's arms-bearer.

Note that the war against the Romans led by ben Koziva was for the sake of saving the entire Jewish people and the Holy Land. It is very likely that the actual war involved a threat to Jewish lives, i.e., to negate the decrees against the Jewish faith and the slaughter of many Jews.*

* Therefore, Rabbi Akiva was an active participant in ben Koziva's revolt. His involvement did not stem from his conception of ben Koziva as *Mashiach*. According to this explanation, the later clause stating that Rabbi Akiva would say that ben Koziva was the

Mashiach is a secondary point.

21. Rabbi Akiva's acceptance went beyond merely "assuming him to be *Mashiach*" (considering him *bechezkas Mashiach*) in halachic terminology. See the end of sec. 4, above.

22. See also *Rambam*, *Hilchos Taanios* 5:3, "They were ruled by a great king whom the entire Jewish people and the leading Sages considered to be the King *Mashiach*. He fell into the hands of the Romans* and they were all killed."

In his gloss to *Hilchos Melachim* 1:3, *Raavad* takes issue with *Rambam* on this matter. Basing himself on *Sanhedrin* 93b, he states, "Behold, Ben Koziva would say, 'I am King *Mashiach*.' The Sages sent [agents] to test him [by seeing] whether or not he could judge [litigants] with his sense of smell. When [they saw that] he could not do so, they killed him."

The other commentaries to the *Mishneh Torah* – *Migdal Oz*, *Kesef Mishneh*, the second resolution offered by *Radbaz*, and *Lechem Mishneh* – explain that the two opinions are based on conflicting Midrashic accounts. Unlike the passage in *Sanhedrin* referred to previously, *Eichah Rabbah* commenting on verse 2:2 and *Talmud Yerushalmi*, *Taanis* 4:5, state that ben Koziva was killed by non-Jews and not by the Sages. It is this understanding that *Rambam* follows.

There is a general principle (*Eliya Rabbah* 531:10; (*Sidei Chemed*, *K'Ilalei HaPoskim*, sec. 16:52; *et al.*) that an effort should be made to reconcile conflicting opinions and thus reduce

מתים וכיצא בדברים אלה, אין
הדבר כן^{טו} שהרי רבי עקיבא חכם
גדול מחכמי המשנה היה והוא
היה נושא פליוס^{טז} של בן כוזיבא
המלך והוא היה אומר עליו
שהוא המלך המשיח^{טז}, ודמה
הוא וכל חכמי דורו שהוא המלך
המשיח, עד שנהרג בעונות^{טז}*

differences of opinion among Sages. In particular, this applies in matters of actual fact (*Sidei Chemed*, *maareches mem*, *K'Ilal* 164), as in the issue under discussion, who killed ben Koziva. Accordingly, it can be said that there is no difference regarding the actual fact. All (i.e., even the Sages mentioned in the Talmud, *loc. cit.*, and *Raavad*) agree that in actual fact, ben Koziva was killed by non-Jews. Similarly, all (including *Rambam*)* agree that there were Sages in that generation who did not think that ben Koziva was *Mashiach*. For example, Rabbi Yochanan ben Torta told Rabbi Akiva, "Akiva, [even when] grass will grow from your jawbone, *Mashiach* will still not have come" (*Talmud Yerushalmi*, *loc. cit.*, *Eichah Rabbah*, *loc. cit.*).

These Sages sent agents to test him by seeing whether or not he could judge litigants with his sense of smell. When they saw that he could not do so, they – as opposed to Rabbi Akiva (according to whose opinion *Rambam* rules) – saw this as a sign that ben Koziva was not *Mashiach*. Their opposition was aroused, because he proclaimed himself as *Mashiach* despite the fact that he could not judge litigants with a sense of smell (for he followed Rabbi Akiva's understanding) and, on that basis, waged war against the nations. As a result, many Jews fell in battle. Therefore, the Sages concluded that he should be placed in the category of a *rodeif*, someone who endangers the life of a fellow Jew – (see *Sanhedrin* 73a and the sources mentioned there) – who should be

When he was killed, they knew that he was not [*Mashiach*. The Sages] did not ask him for any sign or wonder.

Rambam brought an elaborate proof in ch. 11, but did not do so in ch. 12. Now, it is true that *Rambam* speaks about two different subjects in these chapters: Ch. 11 focuses on the identity of *Mashiach*, what he will accomplish, and the manner in which he will emerge, while ch. 12 concerns itself with the nature of the world in the Era of *Mashiach*.

killed. However, in actual fact, it was the non-Jews – not the Sages – who killed him. As *Radbaz*, *loc. cit.*, phrased the matter, “It is possible to interpret our Sages’ words in *Sanhedrin*, *loc. cit.*, ‘Since they saw that he could not judge by smell, they killed him,’ as meaning ‘they withdrew their support from him and the non-Jews came and killed him.’”***

The difference of opinion between *Rambam* and *Raavad* regarding this matter can be explained as follows:**** According to *Rambam*, who follows the opinion of Rabbi Akiva that *Mashiach* need not perform miracles and wonders, it is clear that ben Koziva was not killed because he could not judge by smell, since *Mashiach* need not show this sign in the initial stage of his coming. Therefore, *Rambam* writes that ben Koziva was killed “as a result of sin.”

Raavad rules according to the Talmud, *Sanhedrin*, *loc. cit.*, and the opinion of Rabbi Yochanan ben Torta, which maintains that *Mashiach* must perform signs and wonders immediately upon his emergence. Therefore, they both maintain that ben Koziva was killed because he could not judge by smell. Although in actual fact he was killed by non-Jews, since the Jewish court had rendered such a decision, the non-Jews “killed a person who was dead even when living” (cf. *Rashi*, *Bava Kama* 41a, s.v. *havi*, *et al.*), as explained by *Radbaz*, *loc. cit.*

Perhaps an even further conclusion

can be reached: When a Jewish court cannot implement a punishment that they decide should be given, they should have the punishment implemented by others (*Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch*, *Choshen Mishpat*, sec. 2, and commentaries there). By contrast, according to the explanation of *Radbaz*, there is a difficulty based on *Rambam’s* ruling (*Hilchos Geirushin* 2:20) that, “if, on their own initiative, non-Jews compel a man to write [a bill of divorce], since [Jewish] law obligates him to compose [such a document], it is a disqualified bill of divorce,” although it is not nullified entirely. Based on that concept, it follows that since the non-Jews killed ben Koziva on their own initiative, without having been instructed to do so by the Sages, it cannot be said that the Sages killed him.

* The Rome edition of the *Mishneh Torah* (published 5240 1480) substitutes “nations” for “Romans.”

** The statement in the footnote above that *Rambam* acknowledged that there were Sages who did not accept ben Koziva as *Mashiach* leads to the following interpretation of *Rambam’s* statement in *Hilchos Melachim* 11:3 that “[Rabbi Akiva] and all the Sages of his generation considered him as the King *Mashiach*”: *Rambam’s* intent is that only initially, “all the Sages of [Rabbi Akiva’s] generation considered [ben Koziva] as King *Mashiach*.” However, afterwards, some of them came

כִּי־נִשְׁחַרְגוּ נֹדַע לָהֶם שְׂאִינוֹ,
וְלֹא שְׂאֵלוֹ מִמֶּנּוּ חֻכְמִים לֹא אוֹת
וְלֹא מוֹפֵת. עַד כֵּאֵן לְשׁוֹנוֹ -

כִּי אִף עַל פִּי שְׂשׂוּי
פְּרָקִים אֵלוֹ בְּרַמְבַּ"ם דְּנִים
בְּשׂוּי עֲנִינִים שׁוֹנִים, בְּפָרָק
י"א מְדַבֵּר עַל מֶלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ
עֲצָמוֹ, פְּעֻלָּתוֹ וְאִפֵּן בֵּיתוֹ,

to the conclusion that he was not *Mashiach* as clearly understood from our Sages’ words cited above. However, *Rambam* did not rule according to their understanding, but instead followed the view of Rabbi Akiva.

Also, it could be said that *Rambam* maintains that the majority of the Sages of Israel or at least “the leading Sages” (*Rambam*, *Hilchos Taanios*, *loc. cit.*) followed Rabbi Akiva’s understanding. Therefore, he wrote “all.”

Note that one of the manuscript copies of *Mishneh Torah* states in *Hilchos Melachim*, “He and the Sages of his generation considered...” using wording similar to that used in *Hilchos Taanios*, omitting the word “all.”

*** The *Pe’air HaDor* edition of *Rambam’s* responsa (responsum 225) cites a document from Rav Saadia ibn Danon, which states, “In *Sanhedrin*, ch. 8, our Sages said that the Sages of Israel killed him because he said he was *Mashiach* and yet he was not a descendent of [King] David.” Note, however, the commentary of Rav Ovadiah of Bartenura to *Rus* 4:6, which states that Bar Kochbah did descend from David.

**** See *Kesef Mishneh*, who explains that our Sages said that “the passage in [*Sanhedrin*,] *perek Cheilek*, does not follow the opinion of Shmuel, ... and our teacher [*Rambam*] follows Shmuel’s opinion.”

Nevertheless, since ch. 12 speaks about the nature of the world's existence as it is connected with *Mashiach's* coming,²³ the proof *Rambam* cites in ch. 11 regarding *Mashiach's* identity is also valid regarding the issues raised in ch. 12, where he discusses the nature of the world in the Era of *Mashiach*, following his coming. This leads to the conclusion that in that era, “the world will continue according to its pattern.”

Were the definition of the Era of *Mashiach* to be that the natural order of the world would be nullified and there would be an innovation in existence, that would define what *Mashiach's* purpose and mission would be. His coming would bring about the cessation of the natural order as we know it, and he would initiate a new pattern in existence. Accordingly, it would be necessary to assume that *Mashiach* would have to “work miracles and wonders [and] bring about new phenomena into the world.” Therefore, if that were to constitute the end result he was to bring about, the way to verify his identity would be to see if he could perform wonders.

The fact that *Rambam* sees the acceptance of ben Koziva as *Mashiach* by “Rabbi Akiva and all the Sages of his generation” as proof that *Mashiach* need not perform wonders indicates that *Mashiach's* coming will not bring about a cessation of the natural order as we know it.²⁴

23. I.e., ch. 12 speaks about the initial period of the era of *Mashiach* that is associated with his coming and the changes that he will bring about. By contrast, the second era of *Mashiach*, which will involve miracles, will come about as a revelation from Above.

24. Despite having clarified this concept in ch. 11, *Rambam* nevertheless begins ch. 12, “One should not entertain the notion that in the Era of *Mashiach* any element of the natural order will be nullified.” Although seemingly the concepts are redundant, *Rambam* is clarifying a further

point, as reflected in the precise wording he uses. He does not state, *al yaaleh al hadaas*, literally, “one should not let it enter his mind,” as he did in ch. 11, *loc. cit.*, but rather, *al yaaleh al halev*, “one should not let it enter his heart.”*

Rambam is clarifying that, after the statements he made in ch. 11, there really is no need to negate an intellectual supposition that in the Era of *Mashiach* any dimension of the natural order will be nullified. Intellectually – to the extent that a person's mind and understand-

וּבְפֶרֶק י"ב עַל מַצֵּב הָעוֹלָם בְּיָמֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ, מְכַל מְקוֹם הָרִי עוֹסֵק הַרְמַב"ם בְּפֶרֶק י"ב עַל מַצֵּב הָעוֹלָם וְאֵיךְ שֶׁהוּא קָשׁוּר בְּבִיאַת הַמְּשִׁיחַ.

וּמִמֵּילָא כַּחַה שֶׁל הָרְאִיָּה שֶׁבְּפֶרֶק י"א לְגַבֵּי מֶלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ יָפָה גַם לְגַבֵּי הַמְּדַבֵּר בְּפֶרֶק י"ב עַל מַצֵּב הָעוֹלָם בְּיָמֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ שֶׁקָּשׁוּר עִם בִּיאָתוֹ, וּמֵהֵם שֶׁ"עוֹלָם כְּמִנְהַגוֹ נוֹהֵג"; שֶׁכֵּן אֵלוֹ הֵיָה גְדוּר "יָמֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ" בְּטוֹל מִנְהַגוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם וְחִדּוּשׁ בְּמַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית, הֵיָה יוֹצֵא שְׂזָהוּ עֲנִינוֹ שֶׁל מְשִׁיחַ, שֶׁבִּיאָתוֹ שֶׁל מְשִׁיחַ מְבִיאָה לְיָדֵי בְּטוֹל מִנְהַגוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם וְחִדּוּשׁ בְּמַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית, וְהֵיָה צָרִיךְ לְהִיּוֹת שֶׁ"מְשִׁיחַ צָרִיךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹתוֹת וּמוֹפְתִים וּמְחִדָּשׁ דְּבָרִים בְּעוֹלָם", וְדָבָר זֶה הוּא בְּחִינַת וּבְדִיקַת אֲמִתּוֹתָו אִם הוּא מְשִׁיחַ (כִּיּוֹן שֶׁבְּזָנָה מִתְבַּטֵּא חִדּוּשׁוֹ כִּנ"ל);

וְכִיּוֹן שֶׁמִּכְרִיחַ הַרְמַב"ם (מְרַבֵּי עֲקִיבָא וְכָל חַכְמֵי דוֹרוֹ בְּשִׁיכוֹת לְבָן כּוֹזִיבָא) שֶׁמְשִׁיחַ אֵינּוּ צָרִיךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹת וּמוֹפְתִים, מוֹבֵן וּמוֹכַח מִזֶּה שֶׁבִּיאַת הַמְּשִׁיחַ אֵינָה מְבִיאָה בְּעֻקְבוֹתֶיהָ בְּטוֹל מִנְהַגוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם.

ing can comprehend *Mashiach's* qualities and mission, and as a consequence, what will transpire in the world in his time – the fact that Rabbi Akiva accepted ben Koziva as *Mashiach* should prevent him from conceiving of *Mashiach* as having dominion to the extent that the natural order is nullified.

Nevertheless, despite the above, it is possible that because of the great love and the yearning in one's heart for the lofty levels *Mashiach* will possess – as implied by the verse (*Yeshayahu* 52:13), “Behold, My servant

Mashiach's Role and Purpose

11. On the basis of the above, it is understandable that *Rambam's* elaborate description of the nature of existence in the Era of *Mashiach* in ch. 12 refers to the period in that era that is associated with his emergence and assumption of his role.

In other words, in ch. 11, *Rambam* explains²⁵ the definition of *Mashiach's* identity and function:

In the future time, the King *Mashiach* will arise and renew the kingship of [the House of] David, restoring it to its initial sovereignty. He will [re]build the *Beis HaMikdash* and gather in the dispersed remnant of Israel. Then, in his days, all the statutes will be reinstated....

With this statement, *Rambam* defines *Mashiach's* purpose – he will bring about consummate perfection in the knowledge and observance of the *mitzvos* and the laws of the Torah.²⁶

Afterwards, in ch. 12, *Rambam* describes the state of existence that is appropriate so that this may happen, as he concludes,²⁷ the Jewish people will “be free [to involve themselves] in the Torah and its wisdom, without anyone to oppress or disturb them. At that time there will be neither famine nor war... and the occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-d. Therefore, the Jewish people will be great sages....”

This represents *Mashiach's* purpose and mission

יא. ומובן לפי זה, שאריכות דברי הרמב"ם בפרק י"ב בענין מצב העולם בימות המשיח, כל זה הוא בענין וזמן שבימות המשיח שקשור עם מלך המשיח וביאתו.

הינו שבפרק י"א מבאר הרמב"ם²⁵ מהו ענינו של מלך המשיח: "המלך המשיח עתיד לעמד ולהחזיר מלכות דוד לישנה לממשלה הראשונה ובונה המקדש ומקבץ נדחי ישראל וחוזרין כל המשפטים כו", שהוא יביא את השלמות במצוות והלכות התורה²⁶.

לאחר מכן בפרק י"ב מדבר הרמב"ם על מצב העולם שישרור בהתאם לזה, וכמו שמשלים²⁷ שישראל יהיו "פנויין בתורה ותכמתה... ובאותו הזמן לא יהיה שם לא רעב ולא מלחמה כו' ולא יהיה עסק כל העולם אלא לדעת את ה' בלבד ולפיקח יהיו ישראל חכמים גדולים וכו'" - (ועקר)²⁷

[*Mashiach*] will succeed; ** he will be exalted and raised, [reaching] very great heights,*** – it will enter one's heart that aspects of the natural order will be nullified. Therefore, *Rambam* felt the need to negate even such notions. This is not the place for further discussion of the matter.

* Note, however, that the Yemenite manuscripts of the *Mishneh Torah* also use the word, “mind” in the beginning of ch. 12.

** *Yaskil*, translated as “succeed;”

also connotes intellectual conception. As reflected by the sources cited in the next marginal note, the verse is implying that *Mashiach* will succeed in reaching lofty intellectual and spiritual levels.

*** See *Rambam, Hilchos Teshuvah* 9:2 (and the discussion later in the main text regarding the second period in the era of *Mashiach*); the Mittler Rebbe's *Shaar Emunah*, ch. 56ff.; *Biurei HaZohar*, p. 22c, which describe

lofty heights *Mashiach* will attain.

25. *Rambam, Hilchos Melachim* 11:1.

26. See the elaborate explanation of this concept in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 18, p. 277ff., and the sources mentioned there. See the translation of this *sichah* in the first installment of this series.

27. *Rambam, Hilchos Melachim* 12:4-5.

because, fundamentally,²⁸ the *mitzvos* and the laws of the Torah are meant to be observed in a world in which the natural order prevails.

שְׁקִיּוֹם הַמִּצְוֹת וְהַלְכוֹת הַתּוֹרָה
יְהִיוּ בְּעוֹלָם שֶׁמְנַהֵגוּ נוֹהֵג.

The Difference between Mashiach as an Individual and the Era He will Initiate

12. In this context, we can understand *Rambam's* approach to the prophecies of Scripture and the statements of our Sages that appear to indicate that there will be a change in the natural order in the Ultimate Future. *Rambam* interprets those prophecies which focus on *Mashiach* personally, what he will do, or the effects of his coming on the world at large as allegories that will be fulfilled in a manner that does not constitute a disruption of the natural order of existence. Therefore, he interprets the prophecy, “A wolf will dwell with a lamb” that follows – and is directly connected with – the prophecy regarding *Mashiach's* coming,²⁹ “A shoot will emerge from the stem of Yishai...,” as “an allegory and a metaphor.”

Rambam explicitly interprets the meaning of that specific allegory, indicating that the meaning of the verse is: “Israel will dwell securely together with the wicked idolaters.” Although *Rambam* continues, “Similarly, all other [prophecies] of this nature concerning *Mashiach* are analogies,” he does not explain the analogies implied by the other prophecies. On the contrary, he concludes: “In the Era of the King *Mashiach*, everyone will realize what [was implied by these metaphors and allusions].” He explains the meaning of this particular verse because he wants

יב. על פי כל הנ"ל תובן גם
שיטת הרמב"ם בהבנת פסוקי
התורה ומאמרי חז"ל השונים
בענין היעודים כו' דלעתיד:

אותם יעודים ונבואות הקשורות
במשיח עצמו, מעשיו ושליו, ומה
שיתרחש בעולם כתוצאה מביאתו
- מפרש הרמב"ם שאינם ענין של
בטול מנהגו של עולם. ולכן הוא
מפרש את הפסוק “וְגַר זֶאֵב עִם
כֶּבֶשׂ גו'” שכתוב בהמשך ל’ וְיִצְאָ
חֹטֵר מִגִּזְעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁאֵינּוּ אֶלָּא
”מִשָּׁל וְחִידָה”.

וּמִבְּאֵר בְּפְרוּשׁ אֵת הַמִּשָּׁל
וְחִידָה שֶׁל הַפְּסוּקִים “שִׁיְהִיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל
יוֹשְׁבֵינִי לְבֵטַח עִם רִשְׁעֵי עִבּוֹרִים”,
וְאֵף עַל פִּי שֶׁמִּמְשִׁיךְ “וְכֵן כָּל
כִּיּוֹצֵא בְּאֵלוֹ הַדְּבָרִים בְּעִנְיַן הַמְּשִׁיחַ
הֵם מִשְׁלִים” וְאֵינּוּ מִפְּרֵשׁ אֵת
הַנִּמְשָׁלִים, וְאֵדְרִבָּא מְסִים “בִּימֹת
הַמֶּלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ יוֹדַע לְכָל לְאִי זֶה
דְּבַר הָיָה מִשָּׁל” - כִּי עֵקֶר כּוֹנֵנֵתוֹ

28. Note the two interpretations of the phrase (*Shmos* 35:27), *vihanesi'im heivi'u*. Generally, the phrase is translated as “the princes brought,” indicating that the stones for the breastplate of the *Kohen Gadol* were brought through natural means. However, the phrase is also interpreted as meaning “the clouds brought,” See *Yoma* 75a; *Targum Yonason ben Uziel, Shmos, loc. cit.*;

Rabbeinu Bachya on that verse; *Rashi* on that verse based on *Sifri, Bamidbar* 7:3, et al. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 16, p. 424ff., translated in *Selections from Likkutei Sichos, Shmos*, p. 576, footnote 20, which elaborates regarding these two interpretations.

Similarly, *Menachos* 69b, and *Rashi* and *Tosafos* on that passage, speak

about using “wheat that descended from the clouds” to make flour for the two loaves offered on Shavuot. Here, also the question revolves around performing *mitzvos* with substances brought about by supernatural means. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 15, p. 185ff., et al., which focuses on that subject.

29. *Yeshayahu* 11:1ff.

to highlight how the verse, “A wolf will dwell with a lamb,” – which is included in the passage that begins, “A shoot will emerge from the stem of Yishai” – explains the mission of *Mashiach*, which is to bring about a setting where the Jews will not be disturbed by the nations of the world and as a result will be “be free [to involve themselves] in Torah and its wisdom....”³⁰

In contrast, the verses from the Scripture and statements of our Sages that do not speak about the era associated with the coming of *Mashiach*, but rather about prophecies and promises which will be fulfilled in the Ultimate Future, including G-d’s promise to “remove hostile beasts from the earth” and our Sages’ statement that shade trees will produce fruit need not be interpreted as allegories. *Rambam* maintains that they will be fulfilled in a literal sense. However, this will take place in a later period within the Era of the Redemption.³¹

30. Note the precise wording used by *Rambam*, “Similarly, all other [prophecies] of this nature concerning *Mashiach* are analogies.” He is speaking of prophecies regarding *Mashiach* and not those regarding “the Era of *Mashiach*.”

31. The concept that these prophecies will be fulfilled in a literal manner appears to be reflected by a narrative in Tractate *Shabbos* 30b.

Rabban Gamliel sat and interpreted a verse homiletically, “In the Ultimate Future, *Eretz Yisrael* will produce pastries and fine wool garments, as it is stated (*Tehillim* 72:16), ‘May there be an abundance of grain in the land.’”

A certain student scoffed at him and said, “There is nothing new under the sun” (cf. *Koheles*).

He said to him: “Come and I will show you an example in this world. He went outside and showed him morels and mushrooms, [which emerge from the earth over the course of a single night and are

shaped like a loaf of bread.] With regard to wool garments, he showed him palm bast, [which is a thin, net-like covering.]

The fact that Rabban Gamliel showed the student an example of what he meant appears to indicate that he intended his words to be understood straightforwardly.

Nevertheless, in his Commentary on the *Mishnah*, *Sanhedrin*, introduction to chapter 10, *Rambam* does not interpret the passage in that manner. Instead, he focuses on the fact that the Talmud cites the narrative in the discussion of two verses in *Mishlei* that appear to contradict each other. *Mishlei* 26:4 states, “Do not answer a fool according to his folly,” while the following verse states, “Answer a fool according to his folly.” Our Sages resolve this apparent contradiction, explaining that one should answer a fool when he makes claims regarding matters of the Torah. However, when he is speaking about worldly matters, one should not answer

לְהַסְבִּיר שֶׁבְּפֶסוּקֵי זֶה שֶׁבָּא בְּהַמְשָׁךְ לְ“וַיֵּצֵא הַטָּר גּוֹ” מִבְּאֵר עֲנִינוּ שֶׁל מְשִׁיחַ, שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיוּ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל שׁוֹם בְּלִבּוֹלִים מֵאַמּוֹת הָעוֹלָם וּבְמִילָא “יִהְיוּ פְּנוּיִן בְּתוֹרָה וְחֻכְמָתָהּ” כו“ע].

מה שאין בן פסוקים ומאמריו רז"ל שאינם באים בהמשך למשיח וביאתו, אלא מדברים על נבואות ויעודים שיהיו לעתיד לבא, כולל גם האמור לעיל: “והשבתי חיה רעה מן הארץ” ומאמר רז"ל הנ"ל “אילני סרק עתידים להיות עושים פרות”, באמת הרמב"ם מפרש שאינם משל אלא כפשוטם, וזה יהיה בתקופה מאחרת יותר בזמן ימות המשיח עצמם”.

him. The Talmud gives this narrative as an example of when a fool should be answered according to his folly – i.e., not giving him a true answer – regarding Torah matters.

Rambam elaborates regarding the implications of our Sages’ statements:

[The Sages were speaking idiomatically. In a like way,] it is common for people who find something [entirely] prepared and ready-to-use to say, “So-and-so found baked bread and cooked food.”... For that reason, the Sage who made this statement became upset with his student who did not understand his words and thought that they were meant to be taken literally.

[Therefore, the Sage] answered him according to his level of understanding. However, the answer he gave was not the true answer. Proof of the fact that [the Sage] did not respond with the true answer is the fact that

this narrative was cited as an illustration of [the verses (*Mishlei* 26:4-5)], "Do not answer a fool according to his folly, [lest you become like him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he become wise in his own eyes.]"

Rambam's interpretation is motivated by his general conception of the pattern of existence associated with *Mashiach's* emergence. The verse (*Tehillim* 72:16), "May there be an abundance of grain in the land" – which serves as the proof-text for

the teaching that "in the Ultimate Future, *Eretz Yisrael* will produce pastries..." continues the theme stated at the beginning of the Psalm (*ibid.* 72:1), "Concerning Shlomoh: G-d Grant Your judgments to a king and Your righteousness to a king's son," i.e., it is a prayer referring to *Mashiach*, as an individual. (See the commentaries of *Radak* and *Ibn Ezra* on the verse.) Therefore, he interprets this passage in this manner.

Similar concepts apply to all the other statements in *Shabbos*, loc.

cit., preceding the one discussed above. Although in all cases, *Rabban Gamliel* showed the student an example of what he meant, thus, seemingly indicating that he intended his words to be understood straightforwardly, *Rambam* interprets them allegorically because all these verses refer to the coming of *Mashiach* and the aspects of the redemption that result from his activities. They are not descriptions of the situation that will prevail in the world that are not specifically connected to *Mashiach's* emergence.

לומר שגם לדעת הרמב"ם תהיה תקופה הב' באלף הששי, ימות המשיח שבזמן הזה.
 (* ו"אף שאמר ופליגא דשמואל, יש לומר דפליגא רצונו לומר יש חילוק כי כל אחד מדבר ענין אחר" (של"ה שם).
 (טו) פי"א ה"ג.
 (טז) ולכן שולל הרמב"ם (על פי הלכה זו) - מאמר רז"ל בדקוהו ולא היה מורח ודאין וקטלוהו (סנהדרין צג, ב), כי אם "שנהרג בעונות" כדלקמן. וראה לקמן הערה סט"ז.
 (טח) המקור על זה - וכן מקור ההיתר לחכם גדול (רב מובהק דכל הדור ופונס דכל הדור - ספרי סוף פרשת ברכה) - להיות נושא כלים - הרי יתרה מזו הנהגת דוד המלך (שמואל"א טז, כא). ולהעיר שהרי זה מלחמת הצלה דכל ישראל וארץ הקדש כו', וקרוב לומר שהיה פקוח נפש בגוף המלחמה לבטל (הגזירות ו) הריגות שיהיו כמה בני ישראל בחיים.
 (* ולכן היה נושא כליו, ולא מפני ש"היה אומר עליו שהוא מלך המשיח". ועל פי זה צריך לומר דהמשך לשון הרמב"ם "והוא היה אומר כו'" הרי זה ענין נוסף.
 (טט) לא רק בחזקת משיח". וראה לעיל סוף סעיף ד.
 (כ) וראה גם רמב"ם הלכות תעניות פ"ה ה"ג: ודימו כל ישראל וגדולי החכמים שהוא המלך המשיח ונפל ביד הרומיים ונהרגו כולם.
 בהשגת הראב"ד בהלכות מלכים: "והלא בן כוזבא היה אומר אנא הוא מלכא משיחא ושלחו חכמים לבקו אי מורח ודאין או לא וכיון דלא

י"ד): "אל יעלה על דעתך שהמלך המשיח צריך לעשות אותות ומופתים ומחדש דברים בעולם או מחיה מתים" - כי נקט הכא כל הדברים שאכן יהיו סוף סוף בימות המשיח (כמו שתהיה תחיית המתים), אלא שכל זה הוא ענין נוסף שיהיה בזמן לאחרי זה בימות המשיח גופא. ואין זה ענינו של המלך המשיח וימות המשיח בתקופה הא' כבפנים. ולהעיר מפרקי הצלחה להרמב"ם: וזאת היא ראייה גמורה על שתחיית המתים נתלית במשיח.
 (כד) ומה שכתב הרמב"ם באגרת תחיית המתים שם: אלא יחיה את המתים בחפצו ורצונו כאשר ירצה ולמי שירצה או בימות המשיח או לפניו או כו' - אינו חולק על מאמרי רז"ל בכמה מקומות שתחיית המתים תהיה בזמן מסוים, כי אם כוונתו שביכולת ה' להחיות המתים (כאשר ירצה) בכל זמן שירצה, וכמובא בנ"ך וש"ס וכו'.
 (* ראה גם כן זהר ח"א קלט, א. וראה שם קלד, א.
 (כה) גם בשל"ה (כג, ב) ביאר שלדעת שמואל תהייה ב' תקופות. אבל כתב "כי אפשר שכוונת שמואל הוא עד כלות אלף הששי הזה אבל אחר כך מודה שמואל לכל מה שאמרנו", היינו באלף הו'. וממשיך "ואפשר אף באלף הששי מודה שמואל לכל מה שאמרנו כו' אמנם הנולדים בקדושה לא ישלוט בהם המות עוד . . . וכן המתים אשר יחיו בביאת משיח כו' אז ישארו חיים וקיימים" (והוא דלא כדעת הרמב"ם).
 אבל על פי המבואר בפנים מוכרח

(נג) הלכות מלכים פי"ב ה"ב. הלכות תשובה ספ"ט.
 (נד) ברכות לז, ב.
 (נה) הלכות תשובה פ"ח ה"ז.
 (נו) ישע' סד, ג.
 (נז) הלכות תשובה שם, וכן בפירוש המשנה סנהדרין פ"י (בהקדמתו ד"ה ועתה אחל) הביא מאמר דרבי חייא בר אבא אמר ר' יוחנן וגם הא דאין בין העולם הזה כו'.
 (נח) שבת סג, א.
 (נט) הלכות שבת פי"ט ה"א.
 (ס) פירוש המשנה להרמב"ם סנהדרין שם בסוף הקדמתו.
 (סא) ועד שהכופר בזה אין לו חלק לעולם הבא (משנה סנהדרין שם. רמב"ם הלכות תשובה פ"ג ה"ו. ובפירוש המשנה שם ד"ה ועתה אחל: ואין דת ולא דבקות בדת יהודית למי שלא יאמין זה).
 (סב) ראה ראב"ד הלכות תשובה פ"ה ה"ב ובכסף משנה שם. רמב"ן בשער הגמול. וכן היא ההכרעה בתורת החסידות - ראה לקוטי תורה צו טו, ג. שבת שובה סה, סוף ע"ד. דרך מצותית יד, ב ("וכן הוא האמת על פי הקבלה"). וראה תשובות וביאורים" (קה"ת, ברוקלין, תשל"ד) ס"א ע' 57 הערה 23. ושם נסמן.
 (* אגרות קודש כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א כרך ב' ע' עו. המו"ל.
 (סג) הלכות תשובה שם. פירוש המשנה סנהדרין שם. אגרת תחיית המתים (אות ו'). וראה עבודת הקודש ח"ב פמ"א בארוכה.
 (סד) על פי זה יומתק זה שהרמב"ם מפרט בפ"א שם (הובא לקמן בפנים סעיף

עביד הכי קטלוהו" (סנהדרין צג, ב). ובנושאי כלים שם (מגדל עז, כסף משנה, רדב"ז (בתירוץ שני), לחם משנה) תירצו שאגדות חלוקות הן, כי באיכה רבה (על הפסוק בלע ה' ולא חמל - ב, וכן הוא בירושלמי תענית פ"ד ה"ה) איתא - דלא כבגמרא - שאומות העולם הרגוהו ולא חכמים, והרמב"ם פסק כדעיה זו.

ואף דאפושי מחלוקת לא מפשינן, ובפרט מחלוקת במציאות - מי הרג את בן כוויבא?

יש לומר דאין מחלוקת במציאות, לכולי עלמא (גם לדעת הגמרא והראב"ד) נהרג לפועל על ידי אומות העולם; ולכולי עלמא (גם להרמב"ם) היו מחכמי הדור שסברו שאינו משיח, וכמו ר' יוחנן בן תורתא שאמר לר' עקיבא: "עקיבא יעלו עשבים בלחייך ועדיין בן דוד לא בא" (ירושלמי ואיכה רבה שם) והם שלחו לבדוקו אם הוא מורה ודאין, וכשראו שאינו מורה ודאין, ולפי דעתם (מה שאין כן לדעת ר' עקיבא וכן פסק הרמב"ם) הרי זה סימן שאינו מלך המשיח, ומכיון שעשה מלחמות עם העמים לפי שחשב שהוא המלך המשיח אף שלא מורה ודאין (כי סבר כר' עקיבא) ונפלו רבים מבני ישראל וכו' - יש לו דין רודף (ראה סנהדרין עג, א. ושם נסמן) שצריך להרגו. אבל בפועל אומות העולם הרגוהו. ובסגנון לשון הרדב"ז שם: "ויש לפרש הא דאמרין בפרק חלק, כיון דחזויהו דלא מורה ודאין קטלוהו כלומר רפו ידיהם ממנו ובאו הגויים והרגוהו"***.

ומחלוקת הרמב"ם והראב"ד בזה היא****: לשיטת הרמב"ם (על פי דעת ר' עקיבא) שמשיה אינו צריך לעשות אותות ומופתים - הרי פשוט שנהרג לא מחמת שלא היה מורה ודאין, שהרי גם מופת זה אינו צריך להראות (בתחילת ביאתו). ולכן כתב "שנהרג בעונות". והראב"ד שפוסק (על פי הגמרא סנהדרין ודעת ר' יוחנן בן תורתא) שמשיה צריך לעשות אותות ומופתים מיד בתחילת התגלותו - סבירא ליה שנהרג מחמת שלא היה מורה ודאין, ואף על פי שבפועל הרגוהו אומות העולם, גברא קטילא (על ידי פסק דין בית דין) קטלו (כרדב"ז לעיל) ואולי יתירה מזה - כשאין בית דין יכולים לקיים

עונש שפסקו מקיימין אותו על ידי אחר (טור ושולחן ערוך חו"מ סימן ב ובנושאי כלים שם) - מה שאין כן להרדב"ז דקשה מגט, ש"אם הגוים מעצמן אנסוהו עד שכתב הואיל והדין נותן שיכתוב הרי זה גט פסול" אף שלא בטל (רמב"ם הלכות גירושין ספ"ב).

(* בדפוס רומי ר"מ "הגוים". וראה לעיל הערה ה).

(** ומה שכתב הרמב"ם (בהלכות מלכים) "ודימה הוא וכל חכמי דורו שהוא המלך המשיח" - על כרחך צריך לומר שכוונת הרמב"ם היא רק שבתחילה "דימו" כל חכמי דורו שהוא משיח, אבל אחר כך כמה מהם הסיקו שאינו משיח (כמפורש בחז"ל, כפנינים ההערה), אלא שהרמב"ם לא פסק כמותם.

גם יש לומר שהרמב"ם סבירא ליה שרוב חכמי ישראל, או על כל פנים "גדולי החכמים" (כלשונו בהלכות תעניות שם) סברו כר' עקיבא, ולכן כתב "כל". ולהעיר שבא' מכתבייד הרמב"ם, הלשון "ודימו הוא וחכמי דורו", בלי תיבת "כל" (על דרך לשונו בהלכות תעניות שם).

(*** ובתשובות והידושים מרב סעדי' אבן דנאן (נדפס בתשובות הרמב"ם פאר הדור ס' רכה, ועוד): ורו"ל אמרו בסנהדרין פ"ח שחכמי ישראל הרגוהו על שאמר שהוא משיח והוא לא היה מזרע דוד. אבל ראה ברטנורה לרות ד, ו.

(**** ראה כסף משנה, דהא דאמרו בפרק חלק אתיא דלא כשמואל כו' ורבינו סובר כשמואל כו'.

ומה שאף על פי כן מתחיל בריש פ"ב "אל יעלה על הלב שבימות המשיח כו'" הרי מדייק וכתב (לא "אל יעלה על הדעת", על דרך הלשון בפ"א שם, כי אם) "על הלב" - שאינו בא לשלול קסלקא־דעתך בדעת שבימות המשיח יבטל דבר ממנהגו של עולם, כי אם אף שבדעתו, עד כמה ששכלו ודעתו משיגים מעלת וענין המשיח (ובמילא - דימות המשיח) - אינו שולט ומושל עד לביטול מנהגו של עולם,

בכל זה אפשר אשר מצד אהבה רבה ותשוקת הלב להמעלות ד"שכיל . . . ירום ונשא וגבה מאד" (ישעי' נב, יג. וראה רמב"ם הלכות תשובה פ"ט ה"ב

ולקמן כאן. שער האמונה לאדמו"ר האמצעי פנ"ו ואילך. ביאורי הזהר כב, ג) יעלה על לבו שיבטל דבר ממנהגו של עולם. וגם זה בא לשלול. ואין כאן מקומו.

(* ולהעיר שבכתבייד תימן גם כאן הלשון "על הדעת".

עא) ה"א.

עב) ראה בארוכה לקו"ש ח"ח ע' 277 ואילך. ושם נסמן.

עג) פ"ב ה"דיה.

עד) להעיר משני הפירושים בענין; והנשיאים הביאו (יומא עה, סוף ע"א. תרגום יונתן בן עוויאל ויקהל לה, כז (רבינו בחי שם). פירוש רש"י שם מספרי נשא ז, ג. ועוד); חטים שירדו בעבים (מנחות סט, ב. רש"י ותוספות שם). ועוד.

עה) ישעי' יא, א ואילך.

עו) ולהעיר מדויק לשון הרמב"ם "וכן כל כיוצא באלו הדברים בענין המשיח (ולא בימות המשיח) הם משלים".

עז) ומה שהרמב"ם כתב בפירוש המשניות (סנהדרין בהקדמה לפרק חלק) דמאמר חז"ל שבת (ל, סוף ע"ב) עתידה ארץ ישראל שתוציא גלוסקאות וכלי מילת, הפירוש "לפי שבני אדם אומרים כשימצא אדם דבר מוכן ומוזמן פלוני מצא פת אפוי ותבשיל מבושל . . . ולכן קצף החכם הזה שאמר המאמר הזה על תלמידו כשלא הבין דבריו וחשב שהוא על פשוטו והשיבו כפי השגתו ולא היתה אותה התשובה תשובה האמיתית והראיה על שלא השיב לו על אמתתו - מה שהביא ראיה אל תען כסיל כאולתו". - שמפרש דלא כפשוטו, אף שבפשוט מזה שאחוי ליה רבן גמליאל משמע שכוונתו כפשוטו - כי הכתוב "הי פיסת בר בארץ" (תהלים עב, טז) שממנו למדו ש"עתידיה כו" - בא בהמשך להכתוב (שם, א) לשלמה אלקים משפטך למלך תן וצדקתך לבן מלך דקאי על מלך המשיח. ועל דרך זה הוא בנוגע לשאר המימרות בשבת שם לפני זה - אף שבכולם אחוי ליה (שמשמע שהכל כפשוטו), כי בכל הפסוקים מדובר בהמשך לביאת מלך המשיח והגאולה שעל ידו, ולא סתם תיאור מצב שיהיה בעולם בפני עצמו.



SICHOS IN ENGLISH