

דבר מלכות

שתי תקופות בימות המשיח (ג)
WHAT WILL THE ERA OF MASHIACH BE LIKE (3)

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

Toward the end of his discussion of *Mashiach* in *Hilchos Melachim*, *Rambam* writes,¹ “In that era there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition, for good things will flow in abundance and all the delights will be as freely available as dust.”

Rambam had stated at the beginning of that very chapter,² “One should not entertain the notion that any element of the natural order will be nullified in the Era of *Mashiach*, or that there will be any innovation in the work of creation. Rather, the world will continue according to its pattern.”

It is natural for any reader to see these two statements as contradictory. After looking at the course of human history, the conception of a time when there is neither famine nor war does not only appear novel; it seems almost impossible. And just a glance at the news today makes the likelihood of such a time seem even more implausible.

The Future in the Present

However, the difficulty is not with *Rambam*, it is with ourselves. If someone who lived 100 years ago would be transported into the present age, he would think *Mashiach* had already come. Every one of us alive today – the average person, not only the wealthy – are living better than our ancestors ever did. Think about things we take for granted: running water, indoor plumbing, electricity, central heating, and air-conditioning. A century ago, in most places in the world, none of these things existed, or if some did, they were the province of aristocrats alone.

And beyond our living conditions, other fruits of the industrial revolution – including automobiles, air-travel, modern communication and entertainment – have transformed the quality of our lives indescribably. Those changes have been eclipsed by the innovations the information revolution has brought about; cell-phones, the internet, and zoom-conferencing are just a few examples.

There has been an explosion of information and knowledge; the resources of human thought developed throughout the centuries are now available via a few clicks on one’s smartphone. These changes will multiply tenfold in the coming years as the microchip and interactive networks continue to transform the nature of our homes and workplaces. Good things are truly flowing in abundance.

Similarly – although we are far away from eliminating envy and competition – a fundamental message has taken hold within society. The way to achieve wealth is not by hunting for large profits and hoarding them, but by sharing. In the business world, companies are integrating technologies and cooperating on projects in the awareness that the advance of all involved par-

1. *Hilchos Melachim* 12:5.

2. *Ibid.* 12:1.

ties is the surest way for them to expand and gain. While there are still those who are grabbing for the largest piece of the pie and trying to block others from receiving a share, by and large, people are discovering that the pie is big enough for everyone. The truth is that it always has been; it's man's vision that has been too small. Indeed, even the business world has come to realize that the pie is ever-expanding and the ones who receive the largest pieces are those who enable many others to partake of it.

Similarly, while famine is far from being eliminated, it could be. Before the turn of the century, as commonplace a text as the *Encarta Encyclopedia* stated that the world produced more than enough food for all the people on the planet. It's just that some got much more than others and a great deal of it was thrown away, causing the unfortunate to starve. To combat famine and malnutrition, it is necessary to focus not only on food production but also on food distribution and consumption. The advances that science and technology have produced in the last decades have further accentuated this truth.

And while war and the threat of war dominate the headlines, beneath the headlines, there are groans of suffering from all the people who have lost loved ones in those wars, or who have been injured and maimed. Yes, there are still calls for revenge, but louder and louder are being heard the calls to stop the senselessness of it all – to let all of humanity grow and prosper in peace.³

The Fruits of Knowledge

This is what *Rambam* is saying. *Mashiach* will usher in era of knowledge, a deeper type of knowledge – the knowledge of G-d. Man's smallness, his myopic grabbing for what he immediately wants and his willingness to harm others to get it is all a result of narrow thinking. This does not have to be; man need not live this way.

To bring about the ultimate era that *Rambam* describes, it is not necessary for G-d to work miracles to change the world. It's man who has to change.

And that is the change *Mashiach* will initiate.

This is what *Rambam* means when he writes that *Mashiach's* mission is to “compel all of Israel to walk in {the way of the Torah} and repair the breaches {in its observance}” and then to “perfect the entire world, motivating all the nations to serve G-d together.” *Mashiach* will motivate the Jews and then all humanity to live their lives as G-d desires them to. All the goodness *Rambam* describes will come as a natural result of people living in this manner.

Aligning Ourselves with G-d's Intent

In the portion of the *sichah* that follows, the Rebbe explains that the above refers to the manner in which *Mashiach* will come as mandated by *halachah*, i.e., this is what man can – and must – do in order to live as G-d wants.

Afterwards, basing himself on *Rambam's* “Treatise on the Resurrection of the Dead,” the Rebbe suggests another possibility: Even while in exile, the Jews will carry out their Divine service in a manner that G-d will find them worthy. If that happens, the Redemption *Mashiach*

4. See footnote 1 in the *sichah* to follow that explains that it is possible for there to be a state where there is no war even while the natural order prevails.

will bring about will be characterized by miracles; everything described above will pale in comparison to the wondrous way of life he will introduce.

Whichever way it will happen, it is not dependent on G-d; it is dependent on us. So why not start now?

In *Ramban's* commentary on the Torah,⁴ he explains that chronology is not accidental, but part of a pattern paralleling the six days of creation leading to *Shabbos*. In that scheme, each day of creation represents a millennium. According to that conception, in the present age, it's Friday afternoon, past midday. Every week at that time, Jewish homes begin to look a little *Shabbosdik*. Similarly, at present, G-d's home, the world, is beginning to anticipate the Era of the Ultimate Redemption. When we open our eyes to the way the dynamics at work in our lives are already leading to the Era of *Mashiach*, we should be inspired to become catalysts for Redemption. Living *Mashiachdik*, anticipating that Future Era by serving G-d and relating to our fellow men with the knowledge, love, and peace that will prevail in that time, can make that future a present-day reality.

4. *Bereishis* 2:3.

What will the Era of *Mashiach* Be Like

When the Shade Trees Bear Fruit

13. Based on the above, it is possible to understand the distinction between the statements in *Toras Kohanim* and *Kesubos* cited previously.

When our Sages state, in *Kesubos*, that “in the Ultimate Future, all the shade trees in *Eretz Yisrael* will bear fruit,” they are obviously not describing an ordinary, natural phenomenon, but a special occurrence that will take place only in *Eretz Yisrael*. It could be interpreted as referring to the initial period in the Era of *Mashiach*. Nevertheless, according to this opinion in *Kesubos*, a new and miraculous order will prevail specifically in *Eretz Yisrael*.

When *Toras Kohanim*, by contrast, states, “Ultimately, shade trees will produce fruit,” it is referring to a change in the nature of trees that will prevail throughout the world. This and other changes of a like nature will occur in the later period in the Era of *Mashiach* when there will be an innovation within the natural order. As a result, the nature of even shade trees will change and they will be able to produce fruit.

From Stage to Stage

14. On this basis, it is understood that there is no contradiction between *Rambam's* statement in *Hilchos Melachim* that “there will be no difference between the current age and the Era of *Mashiach* except [our emancipation from] subjugation of the [non-Jewish] kingdoms,” which refers to the first period in the Era of *Mashiach* and his ruling in *Hilchos Teshuvah* that “the Prophets all prophesied only regarding the Era of the *Mashiach*,” which refers to the later period in that era. Initially, the natural order will continue to prevail. However, in the later period, the miraculous visions of the Prophets will be fulfilled.

יג. ומעתה יובן גם החלוק בין המאמר בתורת כהנים והמאמר בכתובות: בגמרא כתבות שנקטו “עתידין כל אילני סרק שבארץ ישראל שיטענו פרות”, לשון המורה על ענין שאינו טבעי, אלא ענין מיוחד ובארץ ישראל דוקא, מירי בתקופה הראשונה, שבה יהיה - לדעת מאן דאמר זה - חדוש (נס) בארץ ישראל.

מה שאין כן בתורת כהנים שנאמר סתם “אף אילני סרק עתידין להיות עושים פרות” ושכך יהא טבע האילנות בכל העולם, מירי בתקופה השנייה של ימות המשיח, שאז יחול שנוי של חדוש במעשה בראשית, וממילא ישתנה טבעו (גם) של אילן הסרק להוציא פרות.

יד. ומוכן על פי זה שאין פסקי הרמב”ם סותרים, שמה שכתב “אין בין העולם הזה לימות המשיח אלא שעבוד מלכות בלבד” קאי בתקופה הראשונה של ימות המשיח, ואילו מה שכתב “כל הנביאים כלן (לא) נבאו (אלא) לימות המשיח וכו’” קאי בתקופה המאחרת בימות המשיח.

This also explains *Rambam's* ruling that one who goes out into the public domain wearing weapons unknowingly violating the *Shabbos* laws is liable for a sin offering. This ruling depends on the prophecy, “They shall beat their swords into plowshares,” which speaks of the situation that will prevail in the world in the Ultimate Future. *Rambam* maintains that this promise will be fulfilled according to its straightforward meaning; it is not only an analogy. However, its fulfillment will take place only in the later period of the Era of *Mashiach*. Nevertheless, since weaponry will be nullified in that period of the Ultimate Redemption,¹ that is proof that weapons are not ornaments and therefore may not be carried in a public domain on *Shabbos*.

וְאֵתֵי שְׁפִיר גַּם מָה שֶׁכָּתַב
שֶׁהֵיוּצֵא בְּכָלֵי זֵינ בְּשַׁבַּת חַיִּב
חֲטָאת, כִּי הַפְּסוּק “וְכַתַּתוּ
חַרְבוֹתֵם לְאֵתִים” הַמְדַבֵּר עַל
מִצַּב הָעוֹלָם שֶׁיְהִיָּה לְעֵתִיד
לְבֹא, מִפָּרֶשׁ הַרְמַב”ם כְּפֶשׁוּטוֹ
וְלֹא דֶרֶךְ מִשְׁלַל בְּלִבָּה, וְזֶה יִהְיֶה
כְּאִמּוֹר בִּתְקוּפָה מְאֻחֶרֶת יוֹתֵר
בִּימֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ, וְכִיּוֹן שְׁבֹאוֹתָהּ
תְּקוּפָה (עַל כָּל פְּנִימִים) בְּטָלִים
כְּלֵי זֵינ”^ע, הָרִי זֶה הוֹכַחָה שְׁכָלֵי
זֵינ אֵינָם תְּכַשִּׁיטִים.

Following a Sage’s Line of Thought

15. The above concepts enable us to clarify another point. After recording the difference of opinion between Rav Chiya bar Abba and Shmuel, regarding the statement, “The Prophets all prophesied only regarding the Era of the *Mashiach*,” the Talmud quotes the following difference of opinion:

Rabbi Chiya bar Abba states..., “The Prophets all prophesied only regarding *baalei teshuvah*, [those who repented and returned to Torah observance]. In contrast, the perfectly righteous [are described by the verse], ‘G-d, no eye but Yours has seen.’”

This conflicts with the opinion of Rabbi Abahu who maintains, “In the place where *baalei teshuvah* stand,² the righteous do not stand.”³

טו. וְהִנֵּה בְּבִרְכוֹת שָׁם
אָמְרוּ בְּהַמְשִׁיךְ לְגִמְרָא הִנֵּה לְ
(כָּל הַנְּבִיאִים לֹא נִתְנַבְּאוּ אֱלָא
לִימֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ כּו'): וְאָמַר
רַבִּי חִיָּיא כּו' כָּל הַנְּבִיאִים
כָּלָן לֹא נִתְנַבְּאוּ אֱלָא לְבַעֲלֵי
תְּשׁוּבָה, אֲבָל צְדִיקִים גְּמוּרִים
עֵינֵי לֹא רָאִתָּה אֱלָקִים זוּלָתָהּ,
וּפְלִיגָא דְרַבִּי אֲבָהוּ דְאָמַר רַבִּי
אֲבָהוּ מְקוּם שְׁבַעֲלֵי תְּשׁוּבָה
עוֹמְדִין”^ע צְדִיקִים גְּמוּרִים
אֵינָם עוֹמְדִין.³

1. By contrast, even though “there will be no famine, nor war” (*Rambam, Hilchos Melachim* 12:5) in the first period of the Era of *Mashiach*, that is not proof that weaponry will not exist at that time. Instead, since, as *Rambam* proceeds to state in that source, “good things will flow in abundance and all the delights will be as freely available as dust,” this prevalence of good will prevent famine and war from actually occurring. However, man’s nature will

not change. Hence, weaponry will not cease to exist.

Note *II Shmuel* 2:14, which speaks of “the young men mak[ing] sport before us,” dueling with actual weapons, not with the intent to battle, but as entertainment to see who is more adept at swordplay, even though ultimately, that sport led to bloodshed (see *Metzudas David* and other commentaries on the verse.) See *Keilim* 24:1, which also speaks of using weaponry as sport.

2. It is possible to explain that according to Rabbi Abahu, the verse, “G-d, no eye but Yours has seen,” refers to *baalei teshuvah*.

3. The wording *Rambam* uses when citing this teaching in *Hilchos Teshuvah* 7:4 is: “...the perfectly righteous are not able to stand...” This version is also found in *Dikdukei Sofrim to Berachos, loc. cit.*, based on the *Gilayon*. Similar wording is also frequently cited in *Chassidus*.

The fact the *Talmud* connects these two statements of Rav Chiya bar Abba, mentioning one after the other, appears to indicate that they are interrelated. In other words, according to his approach that “the Prophets all prophesied only regarding the Era of the *Mashiach*,” it follows that “the Prophets all prophesied only regarding *baalei teshuvah*.” These statements conflict with both Rabbi Abahu and with Shmuel.

As mentioned, *Rambam* quotes Rav Chiya bar Abba’s statements regarding the Era of the Ultimate Redemption, as mentioned above, sec. 8. Nevertheless, he rules,⁴ “Our Sages stated, ‘In the place where *baalei teshuvah* stand, the perfectly righteous cannot stand.’” Since the Sages understand the two concepts as parallel, the fact that *Rambam* accepts Rav Chiya bar Abba’s opinion in one instance, but rejects it in another appears problematic.

Based on the above, the following resolution can be offered: From Rav Chiya bar Abba’s perspective, the opinion that the perfectly righteous surpass *baalei teshuvah* is integrally related to his understanding that from the beginning of the Era of *Mashiach*, the natural order as we know it will cease, and that all the Prophets prophesied regarding this phenomenon.

Rambam, however, does not accept Rav Chiya bar Abba’s approach regarding the initial stage of the Era of *Mashiach*. Instead, he maintains that the natural order will continue to prevail. Despite this, he does accept and quote Rav Chiya bar Abba’s words regarding the later period of the Era of *Mashiach*. Nevertheless, taking that stance does not compel him to maintain that the perfectly righteous surpass *baalei teshuvah*.⁵

The Possibility of Miracles

16. After all the above, there is still a fundamental point that must be clarified: Since, according to *Rambam*, the period within the Era of *Mashiach* associated

ומכיון שב' המימרות של רבי חייא בר אבא אמר רבי יוחנן באו כאחד, משמע דשייכים אהדדי; הינו שלשיטתו ש"כל הנביאים כלן לא נתנבאו אלא לימות המשיח כו" צריך לומר גם ש"כל הנביאים כלן לא נתנבאו אלא לבעלי תשובה כו", לא כרבי אבהו (ולא כשמואל).

אולם הרמב"ם, אף על פי שכתב "אמרו חכמים כל הנביאים כלן לא נבאו אלא לימות המשיח כו", מכל מקום פסק⁴ "אמרו חכמים מקום שבעלי תשובה עומדין אין צדיקים גמורין יכולין לעמוד בו".

ולחנ"ל מובן, שלא אמר רבי חייא בר אבא אמר רבי יוחנן שצדיקים גדולים מבעלי תשובה, אלא לשיטתו שגם בתחלת ימות המשיח יהיה בטול מנהגו של עולם ועל זה "נתנבאו כל הנביאים", אבל לשיטת הרמב"ם שבתחלת ימות המשיח עולם כמנהגו נוהג, הרי אין זה מכריח שצדיקים גדולים מבעלי תשובה⁵.

טז. אלא שלאחרי כל הנ"ל עדין צריך באור: כיון שגדר ימות המשיח (שבא בהמשך לביתא

4. *Hilchos Teshuvah* 7:4.

5. The reason *Rambam* rules according to Rabbi Abahu’s position – which is also accepted as a given in many places in the *Chassidus* – is

explained in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 14, p. 361ff. Among the explanations that are given there is that *Rambam* is not speaking about a lower level of *baalei teshuvah*. Instead, he is

referring to those who return to G-d motivated by powerful feelings of love that surpass even the love experienced by *tzaddikim*.

with his coming is characterized by the natural order continuing to prevail, what forces us to postulate that there will be a period in the Era of *Mashiach* when the natural order will cease? Also – and of primary importance – what will bring about this wondrous innovation and initiate this second period?

These questions can be resolved by first explaining *Rambam's* statement in his “Treatise on the Resurrection of the Dead,”⁶ where he clarifies that his explanation that the supernatural prophecies in the future (e.g., “a wolf will dwell with a lamb,” and the like) are “allegories” is not necessarily “definitive,”⁷ and it is possible that the prophecies will be fulfilled according to their simple meaning.⁸

On the surface, according to the explanations in secs. 11-12, clarification is required regarding the prophetic promises that speak about *Mashiach* and his coming as not involving the disruption of the natural order. That approach is fundamental, because the purpose and mission of *Mashiach* is to affect the world expressly as it continues to exist within the context of its natural framework.⁹ How then is it possible to conceive of the prophecies being fulfilled in a miraculous manner? Would that not contradict the core of *Mashiach's* mission?

On the Clouds or on a Donkey

17. It is possible to answer the above question by first explaining a well-known passage from the Talmud¹⁰ that focuses on an apparent contradiction between Daniel's vision¹¹ of *Mashiach's* coming, “Behold with the clouds of the heaven, one [with

הַמְשִׁיחַ) קָשׁוּר (לְדַעַת הַרְמַב"ם) בְּכַךְ שְׁעוֹלָם כְּמִנְהַגוֹ נוֹהֵג, מִיָּנִין הַהֲכָרַח שְׂבִימוֹת הַמְשִׁיחַ עֲצָמָם תְּהִיָּה תְּקוּפָה נּוֹסֶפֶת שְׁבָה יִבְטַל מִנְהַגוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם? וְעוֹד (וְעַקְר): מֵהִי אוֹתָהּ סִבָּה נִפְלְאָה שֶׁתְּבִיא וְתַגְרוֹם לְחִדוּשׁ נִפְלְאָה זֶה שֶׁל הַנְּהַגַת הַתְּקוּפָה הַשְּׁנִיָּה?

וְיֻבְּן בְּהַקְדָּם דְּבָרֵי הַרְמַב"ם בְּאַגְרַת תְּחִיַּת הַמֵּתִים שְׁלוֹפֵי שְׂמֵה שְׁפָרַשׁ אֶת הַיְעוּדִים דְּלַעֲתִיד (וְגַר זָאב עִם כֶּבֶשׂ וְכִיּוֹצֵא בְּזֶה) שֶׁהֵם דְּרָךְ מִשָּׁל וְחִידָה "אֵינִן דְּבָרָנוּ זֶה הַחֲלֻטִּי" כּו', שֶׁהֵם מִשָּׁל וְאִפְשָׁר שִׁיתְקִימוּ כְּפִשׁוּטָם.⁹

וְלִכְאוּרָה לְפִי מֵה שְׁנִתְבָּאָר לְעֵיל (סְעִיף יֵאֵיב) הֵרִי הַכְּרַח לְפָרַשׁ אֶת הַיְעוּדִים הַקְּשׁוּרִים בְּמִשְׁיחַ וּבִיאָתוֹ שְׂאִינָם בְּטוֹל דְּבַר מִמְּנַהֲגוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, לְפִי שְׁגָדְרוּ שֶׁל מִשְׁיחַ הוּא לְפִעוֹל בְּעוֹלָם כְּפִי שֶׁהוּא "כְּמִנְהַגוֹ נוֹהֵג" דּוֹקָא, כְּנִ"ל?

6. Sec. 6.

7. This follows Rav Kappach's translation. Rav Shmuel ibn Tibbon' translates the phrase differently implying that the prophecies “are not an [irrevocable] decree.”

8. See the details in *Rambam's* “Treatise on the Resurrection of the Dead,” *loc. cit.*

9. As explained in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 18, p. 277ff. (translated in the first installment of this series), *Mashiach's* purpose and mission is to bring the *mitzvos* and *halachos* of the Torah to their consummate fulfillment. *Halachah* involves refining this physical world as it exists in its present context (see *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 31, p. 48ff., translated in *Selections from Lik-*

kutei Sichos, *Shmos*, p. 175ff., *et al.*). Therefore, it would appear necessary that *Mashiach* carry out his mission without miracles, in the context of the ongoing natural order. See also the Rebbe's *Hadrash* on *Rambam*, 5735, which deals with this concept.

10. *Sanhedrin* 98a

11. *Daniel* 7:13.

a visage] like a man was coming,” and Zechariah’s prophecy¹² that *Mashiach* will appear as “a poor man, riding on a donkey.” Our Sages reconcile the difference in these visions by explaining: “If [the Jews] are worthy, *Mashiach* will come ‘with the clouds of the heaven.’ If they are not worthy, he will come as ‘a poor man riding on a donkey.’” The Talmud¹⁰ uses that same logic to explain other apparent contradictions between Scriptural verses.

The same applies regarding other matters regarding the Era of *Mashiach*. If the Jewish people are meritorious, everything will follow an entirely different course, one characterized by miracles.¹³

A similar explanation can be used to resolve an apparent contradiction in the sources regarding the *Beis HaMikdash* of the Future Era. Several sources¹⁴ state that the Third *Beis HaMikdash* is already “built and perfected [in all its details.] It will be revealed and descend from Heaven.”¹⁵ In contrast, there are other sources¹⁶ (and this opinion is adopted by *Rambam*¹⁷) which maintain that the Third *Beis HaMikdash* will be built by *Mashiach*.

Here, too, it can be explained that if the Jews are found worthy, they will be granted a heavenly *Beis HaMikdash*; if not, the *Beis HaMikdash* will have to be built by mortals,¹⁸

ורוכב על חמור, זכו עם ענני שמיא לא זכו עני רוכב על חמור” (ועל דרך זה מתרצת הגמרא¹⁰ סתירות של פסוקים אחרים וכיוצא בזה).

ומוכן מזה לגבי שאר ענינים שבימות המשיח, שבשעה שישאל ישראל יהיו במצב של “זכו” יהיו כל הענינים באפן אחר לגמרי, אפן נסיי.¹³

[שזהו אחד מאופני התווך במחלקת לגבי בנין המקדש דלעתיד: שבכמה מקומות איתא¹⁴ שהמקדש השלישי “בנוי ומשקלל הוא יגלה ויבא משמים”¹⁵, ובמקומות אחרים נאמר¹⁶ (וכן פסק הרמב”ם¹⁷) שמשווח בונה מקדש, שזהו תלוי בשני אופני גאלה הנ”ל, אם “זכו” הרי “יגלה ויבא משמים”, מה שאין כן אם “לא זכו” יהיה הבנין בידי אדם”¹⁸

12. Zechariah 9:9.

13. See *Keraisi U’Plaisi (Yoreh Deah*, sec. 110, the end of the portion entitled *Beis HaSafeik*) and *Otzar Baloom to Ein Yaakov, Sanhedrin, loc. cit.*, which explain that the question of whether Eliyahu the Prophet will come before *Mashiach* is also dependent on the same issue. If the Jews are meritorious, *Mashiach* will come before Eliyahu. Otherwise, Eliyahu will come to help prepare them for that future era. See *Rambam, Hilchos Melachim* 12:2, where *Rambam* states that this matter is unresolved and it is undesirable to speculate about it. See the fourth essay in this series which focuses on this issue.

14. *Rashi, Sukkah* 41a, *Rosh HaSha-*

nah 30a. *Tosafos* follows the same approach in *Sukkah, loc. cit.*, s.v. *ee nami, Shevuos* 15b, s.v. *ein*. In that source, *Tosafos* concludes, “This is explicitly stated in *Midrash Tanchuma*.” (It appears that the intent is *Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Pekudei*, sec. 11.) See also *Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 28a, Vol. 2, pp. 59a, 108a, Vol. 3, p. 221a; *Yalkut Shimoni, Tehillim*, the end of sec. 841 and the end of sec. 848. And see the Buber edition of *Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Bereishis*, the end of sec. 17.

15. *Rashi, Sukkah, loc. cit.*

16. The *Jerusalem Talmud, Megillah* 1:11; *Vayikra Rabbah* 9:6; *Bamidbar Rabbah* 13:2. See also *Talmud Yerushalmi, Pesachim* 9:1; *Tosefta,*

Pesachim 8:2, according to the version cited by *Minchas Chinuch, mitzvah* 380 and the interpretations in that source.

17. *Hilchos Melachim* 11:1, 4.

18. This conception also explains a seeming contradiction between the opinion that “the *Beis HaMikdash* will be revealed and descend from Heaven” and a narrative related by the *Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah* 64:10). “In the time of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya, the wicked kingdom (Rome) decreed that the [Third] *Beis HaMikdash* should be built, they appointed Pappus and Lulianus... and provided the immigrants from the exile with silver, gold, and everything they

led by *Mashiach*.¹⁹

The reason why in his *Mishneh Torah*, a book of *halachic* rulings, *Rambam* decides that the natural order will not be nullified is because the concept of *Mashiach*, his coming, and the Redemption as a whole is a clearly defined ruling of Jewish Law. Therefore, just as Jewish Law is specific and defined, so too, the description of the manner in which the Redemption will be manifest must be such that it will certainly take place, without being dependent on when, how, or why human beings perform their acts of Divine service.

By contrast, for the Redemption to be manifest in a manner associated with *Mashiach's* coming “with the clouds of the heaven” or the like, it is necessary that the Jews conduct themselves in a worthy manner. That cannot be clear-cut and defined, because “everything is determined by Heaven except for the fear of Heaven,”²⁰ and “free choice is granted to all men,”²¹ i.e., there is no assurance that the Jewish people will conduct themselves in a manner G-d deems worthy.

Therefore, *Rambam* describes the Redemption in a manner that reflects *halachah* – i.e., the way it must happen, without being dependent on the spiritual status of the Jewish people.²²

needed” in order to build the *Beis HaMikdash*. The Sages did not await the descent and the revelation of the *Beis HaMikdash* from Heaven.

Even though the Romans rescinded their permission and the *Beis HaMikdash* was not rebuilt, the narrative raises a strong challenge to the conception that the *Beis HaMikdash* will descend from Heaven. We see that the Sages were involved in actions indicating that the *Beis HaMikdash* will be built by human activity. (See also *Minchas Chinuch, mitzvah* 95.) Since the performance of acts by Sages is the final arbiter of *halachah*, how is it possible that there be a conception that the *Beis HaMikdash* will descend from Heaven?

In explanation, it could be said that in the time of Rabbi Yehoshua ben

Chananya, the state of the Jewish people was “not meritorious” – as evident from the fact that they required “the wicked kingdom” to decree that the *Beis HaMikdash* be built. Therefore, the *Beis HaMikdash* was to be built by human activity. However, there remains the possibility of the Jewish people reaching a spiritual state when they are “meritorious,” at which time the *Beis HaMikdash* will descend from Heaven. See sec. 18 below, where this subject is discussed further.

19. This follows *Rambam's* opinion. It reflects the statements of Rabbi Elazar in *Vayikra Rabbah* and *Bamidbar Rabbah*, *loc. cit.* However, the other sources mentioned in footnote 16 do not state that the *Beis HaMikdash* will be built by *Mashiach* specifically. This explains why in the time of Rabbi

(על ידי משיח¹⁹).
 וזה שבספר ה' ספר ה' הלכות
 הלכות, פסק הרמב"ם שלא
 יהיה בטול דבר ממנהגו של
 עולם, הוא כיון שענין משיח
 וביאתו והגאולה בכלל, הוא
 הלכה, הלכה ברורה ופסוקה,
 וכך הוא גם האפן בזה שהוא
 אינו תלוי באפן דמעשה בני
 אדם (מה שאין כן הגאולה באפן
 דארו עם ענין שמיא וכיוצא
 בזה, שתלוי בזה שישאל הם
 במצב של "וכו", שאינו ברור
 ומחלט, כי הכל בידי שמים
 חוץ מיראת שמים²⁰ והרשות
 לכל אדם נתונה כו²¹), ולכן
 הרמב"ם מתאר את הגאולה
 באפן כזה שהוא הלכה, מוכרח
 להיות (ללא תלות במצבם של
 ישראל).

Yehoshua ben Chananya, the people and the Sages desired to build the *Beis HaMikdash* although *Mashiach* had not come. At that time, the concept that it is specifically *Mashiach* who will build the *Beis HaMikdash* was not known. It is a new insight developed by an experienced Sage, Rabbi Elazar, who lived after the time of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya.

20. *Berachos* 33b.

21. *Rambam, Hilchos Teshuvah* 5:1.

22. As mentioned in footnote 9, *halachah* involves the consummate observance of *mitzvos* in this material realm. “If they are not worthy,” it will be *Mashiach* who will inspire the Jewish people to upgrade their observance and reach that state. However, since, as stated in the main text, “free choice is granted,” the

What Will Enable the Miraculous to Become Reality

18. On a deeper level, *Rambam's* intent in describing the Redemption in a manner that does not involve the negation of the natural order is not because he maintains that the Redemption will come when the Jews are not in a worthy state, Heaven forbid. Instead, *Rambam* understands that our Sages' description of the Redemption in a manner that results from the Jews conducting themselves in a worthy manner – and thus precipitating the occurrence of many lofty matters including a miraculous mode of existence – is an added dimension, beyond the fundamental definition and categorization of *Mashiach* and the era he will introduce.

In other words, the fundamental definition of *Mashiach's* coming according to *halachah* is that he, and the Redemption he will bring about, will lead to perfection in the observance of the *mitzvos* and laws of the Torah. That is connected with the world continuing in its natural order.

Nevertheless, by conducting themselves in a lofty manner and acting meritoriously, there will be a further development: As a result of their actions, G-d will work miracles, responding to the Jews' lofty level by showing them an extra measure of love and manifesting wonders that transcend the natural order on their behalf.

A parallel exists regarding the above-mentioned resolution of the conflicting sources that describe the building of the future *Beis HaMikdash*: The descent of the *Beis HaMikdash* from Heaven does not represent a contradiction to *Mashiach* building it. Instead, from the standpoint of *halachah*, the construction of the *Beis HaMikdash* is a *mitzvah* incumbent on the Jewish people, as it is written,²³ “They shall make a Sanctuary

יח. בעמק יוֹתֵר: זֶה שֶׁהֶרְמַבְּ”מֵתָאֵר אֶת הַגְּאֻלָּה בְּאִפְּן שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה בְּטוֹל דְּבַר מִמְּנֵהֶגוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם הוּא (לֹא מְשׁוּם שֶׁמִּתְאֵר אֶת הַגְּאֻלָּה שֶׁתְּבֵא בְּאִפְּן שֶׁל “לֹא זָכוּ” חֵס וְשָׁלוֹם, אֲלֵא) מְשׁוּם שֶׁהוּא מִפְּרֵשׁ, שֶׁמָּה שֶׁאָמְרוּ חֲזוֹ”ל שֶׁבְּמִצְבַּ שֶׁל “זָכוּ” יִהְיוּ כְּמָה וְכְמָה עֲלוּיִים בְּהִנְהֵגָה נְסִית כּו', הֵרִי זֶה עֲנִין נוֹסֵף לְעֲצָם גְּדוּרָה שֶׁל מְשִׁיחַ.

כְּלוֹמֵר: מִצְד גְּדוּרָה שֶׁל מְשִׁיחַ וּבִיאָתוֹ הַסֹּדֵר הוּא שֶׁל “עוֹלָם כְּמִנְהֵגוּ נוֹהֵג”, כִּי כְּאֹמֵר חֲדוּשׁוֹ שֶׁל בִּיאַת הַמְּשִׁיחַ בְּהִלְכָּה הוּא שֶׁעַל יְדוֹ תְּבֵא שְׁלֵמוֹת קִיּוֹם מִצְוֹת וְהִלְכוֹת שֶׁל תּוֹרָה (שֶׁקְשׁוֹר בְּעוֹלָם שֶׁכְּמִנְהֵגוּ נוֹהֵג). אֲלֵא שֶׁבְּשִׁעָה שִׁישְׂרָאֵל הֵם בְּמִצְבַּ נְעִלָה שֶׁל “זָכוּ” יִהְיֶה עֲנִין נוֹסֵף, שֶׁהַקְּבָ”ה יִרְאֶה נְסִים וְכו' לְהִרְאוֹת תּוֹסֵפוֹת הַחִבְיָבוֹת וְהַמְעֵלָה שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

יְעַל דְּרָךְ זֶה בְּעֲנִין תּוֹדֵד הַנִּ”ל בְּבִנְיַן הַמִּקְדָּשׁ דְּלְעֵתִיד: הַפְּרוּשׁ בְּזֶה הוּא (לֹא שֶׁמָּה שֶׁ”יִגְלֶה וּבֵא מְשִׁמִּים” הוּא סוּתֵר לְ”מְשִׁיחַ בּוֹנֵה מִקְדָּשׁ”, אֲלֵא) שֶׁמִּצְד גְּדוּרָה הַהִלְכָּה, עֲנִין בִּנְיַן בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הוּא חִיּוֹב מִצְוָה עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְכִמוֹ

Jews have the potential to become “worthy” by reaching such a state of observance on their own initiative and, in that way, establish a setting appropriate for redemption before *Mashiach's* coming. Should they do this, *Mashiach* will come “on

the clouds of the heaven,” bringing about an entirely different pattern of redemption, as explained in the following section.

23. *Shmos* 25:8. See *Rambam's* statements at the beginning of *Hilchos*

Beis HaBechirah, where he describes this *mitzvah* and, in that description mentions the *Beis HaMikdash* that will be built in the Ultimate Future, implying that its construction is included in that *mitzvah*.

for Me...” As *Rambam* states,²⁴ through *Mashiach*’s activity “all the statutes will be reinstated in his days as they were beforehand.” The complete observance of the Torah involves the appointment of a king. Afterwards, he will build the *Beis HaMikdash*.²⁵ Therefore, *Rambam* rules that *Mashiach* will bring about the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of building the *Beis HaMikdash*.

Should the Jewish people reach a meritorious state, that will bring about an enhancement of the earthly *Beis HaMikdash*. The *Beis HaMikdash* that is Above will descend from Heaven and enclothe itself in the earthly *Beis HaMikdash*.²⁶

Attaining the Ultimate Horizon

19. On this basis, we can understand the logical necessity for a second period in the Era of the Redemption (see sec. 16). After *Mashiach*’s coming – regardless of the manner in which he comes – the Jews will live in an era in which no one “oppresses or disturbs them,”²⁷ nor “who does not allow them to occupy themselves in the Torah and its *mitzvos* in a desirable manner.”²⁸ On the contrary, “they will be free to occupy themselves with the Torah and its wisdom.”²⁷ Indeed, “the occupation of the entire world [including the non-Jewish nations] will be solely to know G-d. Therefore, the Jews will be great sages... and the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as “the waters cover the ocean bed.”²⁹ In such an era, the Jews will surely attain the level at which they are considered “meritorious” in a complete sense. This will lead, of necessity, to the second period in the Era of *Mashiach*. At that time, the natural order of the world will be nullified and there will begin a miraculous order, including – what *Rambam* describes³⁰ as “a fundamental matter” – the Resurrection of the Dead.

שְׁנֵאמַר וְנִשְׁמַר לִי מִקִּדְשׁ^ט, וְלִכְנֹן פּוֹסֵק הָרַמְבַּ"ם שְׁמִשִּׁיחַ - שְׁעַל יְדוֹ "חֻזְרִין" כָּל הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים בְּיָמָיו כְּשֶׁהָיוּ מִקִּדְשׁ" וּמוֹנִין מִלֶּךְ (וְאַחַר כֵּן) בּוֹנֵה בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ^ק - מִלֶּךְ הַמִּשִּׁיחַ יִבְצַע אֶת מִצְוַת בְּנֵן בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ; וְהַמְצָב שֶׁל "זְכוּ" פּוֹעֵל הוֹסְפָה, שְׁבִתוֹךְ הַ"מִּקְדָּשׁ דְּלִמְטָה" יָבֵא וְיִתְלַבֵּשׁ הַ"מִּקְדָּשׁ דְּלִמְעֵלָה" שֶׁ"יָבֵא וְיִגְלֶה מִשְׁמַיִם"^{קכ}.

י.ט. וְעַל פִּי זֶה מוֹבֵן הַהִכָּרָה לְתַקּוּפָה הַשְּׁנִיָּה שְׁבִימוֹת הַמִּשִּׁיחַ, כִּי לְאַחַר בִּיאַת הַמִּשִּׁיחַ (בְּאִיזָה אִפֵּן שֶׁהוּא), מֵאַחַר שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל "נוֹגֵשׁ וּמִבְטֵל"^{קכ} שֶׁ"אֵינֶן מְנִיחוֹת לָהֶן לְעִסוֹק בַּתּוֹרָה וּבְמִצְוֹת כַּהֲגֵן"^{קכ}, וְאַדְרָבָה יִהְיֶה "פְּנוּיִן בַּתּוֹרָה וְחֻכְמָתָה"^{קכ} עַד שְׁאִפְלוּ "עֵסֵק כָּל הָעוֹלָם" (כָּל הָאֲמוֹת) יִהְיֶה "לְדַעַת אֶת ה' בְּלִבָּד וּלְפִיכֹךְ יִהְיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל חֻכְמִים גְּדוֹלִים כּו' פְּמִים לִיָּם מְכֻסִּים"^{קכ}, שְׁזָהוּ שְׁלִמּוֹת הַמְצָב שֶׁל "זְכוּ" - הָרִי זֶה יָבִיא בְּהִכָּרַח לְתַקּוּפָה הַשְּׁנִיָּה (בִּימוֹת הַמִּשִּׁיחַ גּוֹפָא) בְּהִיָּה בְּטוֹל מְנַהֵגוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, הַהֲנַהֲגָה הַנְּסִית (פּוֹלֵל הָעֲגִין הַיְסוּדִי - כְּלִשׁוֹן הָרַמְבַּ"ם^{קכ} - תַּחֲתֵית הַמֵּתִים).

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

25. *Ibid.* 1:1. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 16, p. 304, and footnote 49 there.

26. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 18, p. 418ff., and the sources men-

tioned there.

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

28. *Ibid.*, *Hilchos Teshuvah* 9:2.

29. *Ibid.*, *Hilchos Melachim* 12:5, quoting *Yeshayahu* 11:9. See *Likkutei*

Sichos, Vol. 27, p. 246ff., which explains that, in the Ultimate Future, knowledge of G-d will encompass the entire world and all humanity.

30. The standard published text of *Rambam's Commentary on the Mishnah, Sanhedrin*, Introduction

Thus, in the *Mishneh Torah*, *Rambam* describes *Mashiach* and his coming as defined by *halachah*. Therefore, he describes *Mashiach's* coming and the situation in the world at large as a time when the natural order continues to prevail. This is appropriate according to the definition and purpose of *Mashiach*.

However, in his "Treatise on the Resurrection of the Dead," *Rambam* adds a further explanation to the *Mishneh Torah*, saying that his words are not necessarily "definitive," leaving open the possibility that if the Jews conduct themselves in a meritorious manner while – and despite – being in exile, a unique pattern of revelation from Above will be manifest even at the beginning of the Redemption. The natural order will be nullified, and we will witness the fulfillment of the prophecy, "As in the days of your exodus from the land of Egypt, I will show [the people] wonders."³¹

ולכן, בספר היד, שבו מסביר הרמב"ם את גדרו של משיח וביאתו על פי הלכה, הוא מסביר איך יהיה מצב העולם בזמן ואפן של "עולם כמנהגו נוהג" (בהתאם לענינו וגדרו של משיח);

אבל באגרת תחית המתים הוא מוסיף (באור בספר היד) ש"אין דברנו זה החלטתי", שהרי במצב של "זכו" הרי עוד בהיותם בגלות תהיה בפעל, מיד בתחלת הגאולה, הנהגה מיחדת מלמעלה של בטול מנהגו של עולם, וכימי צאתך מארץ מצרים אראנו נפלאות".³¹

to ch. 10, states, "It is one of the foundations established by Moshe our teacher." Rav Kappach translates the phrase as "[one] of the

foundations of the Torah of Moshe our teacher."

31. *Michah* 7:15. See *Zohar*, Vol.

I, *hashmatos*, sec. 25, p. 261b: *Or HaTorah, Nach*, Vol. 1, p. 487, subsections 7-8.

ראש השנה ל, סוף ע"א. וכן הוא בתוספות סוכה שם. שבועות טו, ריש ע"ב ד"ה אין, ומסיים "וכן מפרש במדרש תנחומא" (ויש לומר שהכוונה לתנחומא פקודי יא). זהר ח"א כה, א. ח"ב נט, סוף ע"א. קה, סוף ע"א. ח"ג רכא, א. ילקוט שמעוני תהלים רמו תתמא בסופו, תתמח בסופו. וראה תנחומא (באבער) בראשית יז (בסופו).

(צב) לשון רש"י סוכה שם.

(צג) ירושלמי מגילה פ"א ה"א. ויקרא רבה פ"ו, ה. במדבר רבה פ"ג, ב. וראה גם ירושלמי פסחים פ"ט ה"א (תוספתא פסחים פ"ח, ב) - לגירסת ופירוש המנחת חנוך מצוה שפ.

(צד) הלכות מלכים ריש פי"א ובסופו. (צה) על פי זה מתורצת גם כן הדיעה הנ"ל שהמקדש יגלה ויבוא משמים, ולכאורה: הרי מסופר במדרש (בראשית רבה סוף פס"ד) ש"בימי ר' יהושע בן חנניה גזרה מלכות הרשעה שיבנה בית המקדש הושיבו כו' והיו

מקומות בדא"ח "צדיקים גמורים אין יכולין לעמוד (שם)".

(פא) הלכות תשובה פ"ז ה"ד.

(פב) טעמו של הרמב"ם לפסוק כרב אבהו (וכן מובא בפשיטות בכמה מקומות בדא"ח) - ראה לקו"ש ח"ד ע' 361 ואילך.

(פג) אות ו'.

(פד) כן הוא בתרגום קאפח. ובתרגום ר' שמואל אבן תיבון "אין דברנו זה גזירה".

(פה) עיין שם בפרטיות.

(פו) סנהדרין צח, א.

(פז) דניאל ז, יג.

(פח) זכרי' ט, ט.

(פט) סנהדרין שם.

(צ) ראה כרתי ופלתי (יו"ד סימן ק"י סוף בית הספק); אוצר בלום לעין יעקב סנהדרין שם - שבוה תלוי גם כן אם אליהו בא מאתמול לפני ביאת המשיח. וראה רמב"ם הלכות מלכים פי"ב ה"ב.

(צא) פירוש רש"י סוכה מא, סוף ע"א.

(עח) מה שאין כן בתקופה הא' דימות המשיח, אף שגם אז "לא יהיה שם לא רעב ולא מלחמה" (רמב"ם הלכות מלכים ספ"ב) - אין ראייה שכלי זיין יבטלו, כי אם, שמכיון "שהטובה תהיה מושפעת הרבה וכל המעדנים מצויין כעפר" (כהמשך לשון הרמב"ם שם) "לא יהיה רעב ומלחמה" בפועל, אבל לא שישתנה טבע בני אדם, ויבטלו הכלי זיין. ולהעיר מ"יקומו נא הנערים וישחקו לפנינו" (שמואל"ב ב, יד) - בכלי זיין (חרב) אבל באופן של שחוק (לראות מי מלומד בשמימוש בחרב יותר, ועד שפך דם) ולא מלחמה (מצודת דוד שם ועוד). וראה כלים ריש פכ"ד.

(עט) ויש לומר דלר' אבהו עין לא ראתה אלקים זולתך - על בעלי תשובה נאמר.

(פ) גירסת הרמב"ם (הלכות תשובה דלקמן בפנים): אין צדיקים גמורים יכולין לעמוד. וכן הוא בדקדוקי סופרים ברכות שם מ"גליון". ובכמה

- מספקין לעולי גולה כסף וזהב וכל צרכם כו" כדי לבנות בית המקדש (ולא ציפו שיגלה ויבוא משמים) - ותמוה דעה הנ"ל, שהרי זה מעשה רב שיבנה בידי אדם (וראה גם מנחת חנוך מצוה צה) -
- אלא דבימי ר' יהושע בן חנניה היה מצב דלא זכו (וכדמוכח מזה גופא שהיו זקוקים לזה שתגזר מלכות הרשעה), ולכן היה בית המקדש נבנה על ידי בני אדם דוקא.
- כלשון הרמב"ם שם. והוא דעת ר' אליעזר בויקרא רבה ובמדבר רבה שם - מה שאין כן בשאר מקומות הנ"ל (הערה צג) לא נאמר שיהיה על ידי
- משיח דוקא. ובוה מתורץ זה שבימי ר' יהושע בן חנניה רצו לבנות בית המקדש בלא משיח - כי זה שמשיח (דוקא) יבנה בית המקדש הוא חידוש התלמיד ותיק - ר' אלעזר שהיה לאחר זמן ר' יהושע בן חנניה.
- זב) ברכות לג, ב.
- צח) רמב"ם הלכות תשובה רפ"ה.
- צט) ראה רמב"ם הלכות בית הבחירה בתחלתן; ועשו לי מקדש כו' בנין העתיד להבנות כו'.
- ק) רמב"ם הלכות מלכים ריש פי"א.
- קא) רמב"ם הלכות מלכים בתחלתו. וראה לקו"ש חט"ז ע' 304 והערה 49 שם.
- קב) ראה גם לקו"ש חי"ח ע' 418 ואילך
- ובהנסמן שם.
- קג) רמב"ם הלכות מלכים פי"ב ה"ד.
- קד) רמב"ם הלכות תשובה פ"ט ה"ב.
- קה) רמב"ם סוף הלכות מלכים. וראה לקו"ש חכ"ז ע' 246 ואילך.
- קו) פירוש המשנה בהקדמתו לפרק חלק; הוא יסוד מיסודי משה רבינו ע"ה. ובתרגום קאפח: מיסודות תורת משה רבינו. וראה לעיל הערה סא המשך לשונו.
- קז) מיכה ז, טו. וראה זהר ח"א השמטות סכ"ה. אור התורה להצמח צדק (נ"ך כרך א') ע' תפז סק"ז"ח.



SICHOS IN ENGLISH