

# A VISION *for* MASHIACH

THE REBBE AND THE RAMBAM



IT'S  
TIME TO  
KNOW

SEIZE THE MOMENT. GAIN CLARITY IN THE  
REBBE'S TEACHINGS ON MOSHIACH

LESSON 3  
Proof Positive



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## I. AN ARGUMENT FROM REFUGE

### LEARNING EXERCISE

*How would you answer the following question: It has been nearly two thousand years and Mashiach still has not arrived. Is it possible that Hashem changed His mind?*

### INTRODUCTION

This question can be answered in many ways, two of which emerged from the lessons we learned in the last two weeks:

1. In the first lesson we discussed Hashem's promise in the Torah to redeem us. If every word in the Torah is eternal and unchanging, it is not possible that Hashem changed His mind.
2. In the second lesson we learned that Hashem informed us through His prophets that Mashiach will come. We have His word that Mashiach is coming, and Hashem doesn't lie.

Today, we will learn that, as powerful as these two answers are, there is yet a more powerful answer: one that leaves us with absolutely no doubt that Mashiach is a factual certainty.

Over the last two weeks, we delved into the Rambam's teachings about Mashiach in light of the Rebbe's profound explanations that unveil broader and deeper themes about Mashiach. We will continue this journey today and discover that, under the Rebbe's treatment, Rambam unveils the ultimate proof for the coming of Mashiach.



## CITIES OF REFUGE

Over the past two weeks, we studied Rambam's first halachah about Mashiach, in which he cited two proofs for the coming of Mashiach. The first proof is from the book of Devarim, which states that the Jewish people will return to Israel. The second proof is from the book of Bamidbar, which states that Mashiach will succeed and supersede David Hamelech as king. Today, we will study Rambam's next halachah about Mashiach, in which he cites a third proof for the coming of Mashiach:

### TEXT 1

Rambam, *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Melachim Umilchamoseihem* 11:2

אף בְּעֵרֵי מְקֻלָּט הוּא אֹמֵר, "אִם יִרְחִיב ה' אֶלְהֵיךָ אֶת גְּבֻלְךָ . . . וַיִּסְפָּךְ לְךָ עוֹד שְׁלֹשׁ עָרִים" וְגו' (דברים יט ח-ט). וַיִּמְעוֹלֶם לֹא הָיָה דְבַר זֶה, וְלֹא צָוָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְתוֹהוּ.

*Similarly, with respect to the cities of refuge, the Torah states: "When Hashem will expand your borders . . . you must add three more cities." This mitzvah was never fulfilled, and surely, Hashem did not command us in vain.*

This halachah makes three points:

1. In the future, Hashem will expand our borders.
2. At that time, we will designate three more cities of refuge.
3. Inasmuch as that has never happened yet, it is proof positive that Mashiach will come.

Let's break down these points:

### An Explicit Tenet

Both proofs are necessary. The first proof is insufficient because it speaks only of the Redemption but doesn't specify that Mashiach will be a human redeemer, and we are obligated to believe in Mashiach as a human being anointed by Hashem. The second proof describes Mashiach as a human king, thus it is necessary. The second proof is also insufficient because it is not self-explanatory—we require our sages to decode it. Rambam wants us to know that to deny the coming of Mashiach is to deny an explicit tenet of the Torah, hence the first proof is necessary.

*Likutei Sichos* 24, p. 114



## EXPANDED BORDERS

When Hashem promised to give the Holy Land to Avraham's children, he defined Israel as a block of ten lands:

TEXT 2A

Bereishis 15:19–21

אֶת־קִנִּי, וְאֶת־קִנְזִי, וְאֶת־קַדְמוֹנִי, וְאֶת־חִתִּי, וְאֶת־פְּרִזִּי, וְאֶת־  
הַרְפָּאִים, וְאֶת־הָאֱמֹרִי, וְאֶת־הַכְּנַעֲנִי, וְאֶת־הַגִּרְגָּשִׁי, וְאֶת־הַיְבוּסִי.

*The [lands of] Keni, Kenizi, Kadmoni, Chiti, Perizi, the Rephaim, Emori, Kenaani, Girgashi, and Yevusi.*

Yet, when Moshe was informed of the actual lands that the nation would inherit, three lands were omitted from the list.<sup>1</sup> Rashi explains that this wasn't a reversal of the original promise.<sup>2</sup> Every promise that Hashem makes will take place, but in the right time:

TEXT 2B

Rashi, Bereishis 15:19

עשר אומות יש כאן ולא נתן להם אלא שבעה גוים. והשלשה אדום, ומואב, ועמון, והם קיני, קניזי, וקדמוני, עתידים להיות ירושה לעתיד שנאמר, "אדום ומואב משלוח ידם ובני עמון משמעתם" (ישעיה יא יד).

*There are ten nations [enumerated] here, but He gave them only seven nations. The other three, Edom, Moav, and Amon—referred to here as Keni, Kenizi, and Kadmoni—are destined to become our heritage in the future. As the passage states, [in the era of Mashiach] "The [Jews]*

<sup>1</sup> Devarim 7:1:

כִּי יִבְיָאָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה בָּאִשְׁר־אַתָּה שָׂמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ וְנָשַׁל גֹּיִם רַבִּים מִפְּנֵיךָ הַחִתִּי וְהַגִּרְגָּשִׁי וְהָאֱמֹרִי וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַפְּרִזִּי וְהַחִזְוִי וְהַיְבוּסִי שְׂבָעָה גֹיִם רַבִּים וְעַצְמוֹת מִמֶּנּוּ.

<sup>2</sup> Rashi bases this on *Bereishis Rabah* 44:23.

*will reach out [to conquer] Edom and Moav, and the children of Amon will submit to them” (Isaiah 11:14).<sup>3</sup>*

We now understand that the first part of Text 1 speaks of Hashem expanding the borders of Israel in the era of Mashiach. Let’s now break down the second part of the reading.

## NINE CITIES

When the Jews arrived in Israel, they designated six cities of refuge: three on the West Bank of the Jordan River and three on its east bank. If a Jew committed murder on either side of the river, he would flee to one of these cities to avoid being killed at the hands of his victim’s next of kin. The killer was then transported to the courts, under guard, for trial. If he were found guilty, he would be punished. If he were found to have committed the killing inadvertently, he would return to the city of refuge as a haven from the next of kin.

He would then be required to live in that city until the passing of the *Kohen Gadol*.<sup>4</sup> So long as he remained in the city, he was safe. If he left the city, his life became forfeit because the Torah grants

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<sup>3</sup> This chapter in Yeshayahu is the famous *haftarah* for *Acharon Shel Pesach* that describes the era of Mashiach. Among other things, Yeshayahu says that Jews will conquer these three lands when Mashiach comes. See *Encyclopedia Talmudis, Erets Yisrael*, p. 205, for multiple opinions about the identity of Keni, Kenizi, and Kadmoni. The opinion that these lands are Edom, Moav, and Amon is based on Rashi, cited in the lesson. See also Rashi on Devarim 2:4, that these lands were given in the meantime to other descendants of Avraham Avinu. Edom was given to Esav, and Moav and Amon were given to Lot’s two children. (Lot merited to receive an inheritance, though he is not Avraham’s son, in reward for his silence when Avraham told the Egyptians that Sarah was his sister.) On the modern map, these lands are largely in modern day Jordan. Parts of Saudi Arabia and southern Iraq might also be included, depending on the precise boundaries of the ancient lands.

<sup>4</sup> One of the *Kohen Gadol*’s responsibilities in the *Kodesh Hakodashim* on Yom Kippur was to pray that Hashem protect us from causing tragedy inadvertently. Since the *Kohen Gadol*’s prayer failed to protect this Jew, he carried some of the responsibility. Therefore, when a new *Kohen Gadol* is appointed, this Jew may return home and rely on the next *Kohen Gadol*’s prayer to protect him from further mishap.



the victim's relatives license to avenge their loved one by taking the killer's life.<sup>5</sup>

These six cities were evenly spaced across the Land to provide equal access of refuge throughout the Land. However, when Mashiach comes and the Land will expand, people living in the expanded area, will need to travel great distances to access refuge. Wanting to ensure easy refuge for any Jew that might require it, Hashem commanded that we designate three more cities of refuge for this section of the Land when Mashiach comes.<sup>6</sup>

### RAMBAM'S PROOF

There are many *mitzvos* that we cannot fulfill today and will only be able to fulfill when Mashiach comes. However, we were able to fulfill them before we went into *Galus*. This is the only mitzvah that

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<sup>5</sup> See the next footnote for an explanation for this unusual license.

<sup>6</sup> This raises a double question. Inasmuch as all inadvertent sin is divinely orchestrated to expose the sinner's sinful predilections (see *Igeres Hakodesh* 28) and inasmuch as we will be free of the *yetser hara* in the era of Mashiach, there should be no inadvertent killers when Mashiach comes. Moreover, since victims are only killed because they committed an unobserved capital crime and, therefore, deserved to die (*Makos* 10b), and this won't occur in the era of Mashiach, there should be no victims of inadvertent killing. Accordingly, why will there be a need for cities of refuge in the first place?

Another question is, why will the victim's relatives avenge their loved one by killing the killer if we will be free of the urge for revenge when Mashiach comes.

The Rebbe explains that the cities of refuge will be necessary for Jews who killed inadvertently during *Galus*. Rabbi Yishma'el famously kept a diary of his inadvertent sins so he could atone for them with a *korban chatas* when Mashiach arrives. Similarly, those who committed the sin of inadvertent killing during *Galus* will need to rectify it through exile in cities of refuge.

The avengers won't seek to kill them out of revenge, but out of a desire to expiate the sinner's sin. The Torah doesn't provide the avenger license to kill to satisfy his blood lust, but rather because it brings atonement to the inadvertent killer. There are punishments that are facilitated by Hashem and punishments that are facilitated by the human hand. Among these, most are facilitated by the courts and this one, specifically, by the victim's relatives. These punishments only bring atonement if the correct person executes them. With respect to inadvertent killers, since he killed a living soul, the sin can only be expiated by those whose hearts are broken over the loss—the victim's relatives. Thus, they will feel driven to kill the inadvertent killer, not by revenge, but by the desire to expiate his sin. The only alternative atonement available to the inadvertent killer is to reside in the city of refuge. Hence, these cities will be needed when Mashiach comes. See *Likutei Sichos* 24, pp. 107–114.



was given to Moshe and recorded in the Torah but could never be fulfilled. It's activation awaits the expansion of the Land that will only occur in the era of Mashiach.

Rambam cites this mitzvah as proof positive that Mashiach will certainly come. There is a mitzvah suspended in midair, so to speak, just waiting to be activated; and a mitzvah can't be suspended or erased because *mitzvos* are eternal, just as Hashem is eternal. Hashem did not issue commandments in vain, so if He gave us a mitzvah to designate these cities, He will certainly give us the opportunity to fulfill it.

Rambam thus concludes that Mashiach will certainly come, and we will certainly inherit these lands.

## TWO QUESTIONS

This is a resounding argument, but the Rebbe poses two questions:

1. What does Rambam gain from the third proof that has not already been established by the first two proofs?
2. If the third proof is necessary, why did Rambam cite it in a separate paragraph? He should either have presented all three proofs in separate paragraphs or placed all three in the same paragraph. Placing two in one paragraph and the third in another is unusual.

These questions might seem overly pedantic to the casual reader. Why does it matter that Rambam brought a third proof and placed it in a separate paragraph? Can't we just say, as the old saying goes, "If two are good, three are even better"?

Yet, to the Rebbe, these questions are compelling. If you read Rambam with the assumption that every detail, including the placement of paragraphs, is precise, you must wonder why Rambam deviated from the normal course. What was he trying to tell us about this proof, by placing it in its own paragraph? If you take note of these abnormalities, they can open deep windows into Rambam's train of thought.

### **Mashiach: A Spiritual Refuge**

Of all the *mitzvos*, Hashem chose to include Mashiach in the mitzvah of the cities of refuge because Mashiach is also a refuge. Just as certain places serve as a refuge, so do certain times. The era of Mashiach is a refuge from all that is unhealthy and inappropriate in *Galus*. This includes famine, war, jealousy, and unhealthy competition. Even today, we can find refuge in the Torah. Just as those who took a life required refuge, so too, we require refuge when our sins impact our spiritual life force. We find this refuge in the Torah, which absorbs and protects our spiritual integrity.

*Likutei Sichos* 34, pp. 121–122





Indeed, as we will see, the Rebbe uses these questions as a springboard to reveal the profound depth of Rambam's words.

#### SUMMARY

After citing two proofs that Mashiach will come, Rambam cites a third proof from the fact that a mitzvah about cities of refuge was given to Moshe that will only be applicable when Mashiach comes. This raises two questions: (a) why the third proof is necessary, and (b) why Rambam cites it in a separate paragraph rather than together with the first two proofs.

In the next section we will present the Rebbe's answer that will reveal a profound depth in Rambam's words.



## II. THREE TIERS

The Rebbe begins his explanation by laying out three types of assurances, each of which inspires a different level of confidence. We will call them:

1. Stipulated assurance
2. Adjustable assurance
3. Definite assurance

### STIPULATED ASSURANCE

Suppose your teacher assures you that you will receive a reward if you maintain your grade average. What level of confidence would you have in this assurance?

You will feel good about your chances, but you won't feel certain that you will receive the reward. You know that if your grades slip, you will lose the reward. You won't be able to claim that it had been promised to you because it was clearly stipulated that it would depend on your grade average.

This means that even if you are determined to maintain your grades, your teacher's assurance doesn't inspire your confidence. Your determination might give you confidence, but the assurance is not foolproof.

Let's compare this to assurances that Hashem delivered through His prophets. When a prophet foretells a negative event, we are not assured that it will occur. It depends on our behavior. If we repent and earn a reprieve, the event will not occur. Moreover, if a prophet foretells a good event, it is only a surety if Hashem instructs the prophet to publicize the prophecy. If it was a private communication, it can be reversed in the event of sin.

In this sense, prophecies can be like the teacher's promise. Under certain circumstances, they can depend on our behavior. This tells us that prophecies are not always foolproof. Even if we are somehow

certain that we will maintain our steadfast loyalty to Hashem, our level of confidence is not assured by the prophecy. It is assured by our determination.

The same applies to prophecies about Mashiach.

TEXT 3

The Rebbe, *Likutei Sichos* 34, p. 117

דאף שלהיותה הבטחה לטוב, ומה שאמר הקדוש ברוך הוא לנביא להבטיח לבני אדם בבשורה טובה אי אפשר שיתבטל מפני גרימת החטא, ועוד זאת שמעיקרא לא שיין בנדון דידן שיגרום החטא שהרי בלשון הרמב"ם, "כבר הבטיחה תורה שסוף ישראל לעשות תשובה בסוף גלותן, ומיד הן נגאלין . . . היינו שהובטחנו על זה גופא שישראל יעשו תשובה ולא יהי מצב של יגרום החטא.

מכל מקום, הוודאות שבזה היא רק מצד גדרי הנבואה ואופנה.

*This prophecy foretells a good event, and when Hashem instructs a prophet to publicize a positive future event, it is not subject to reversal by sin. Moreover, in this case such reversal is impossible because "The Torah assured us that by the end of their exile, Jews will repent and be instantly redeemed" [Mishneh Torah, Laws of Repentance 7:5]. If our very repentance is assured, we will be unable to reverse the prophecy by sin.*

*Nevertheless, our certainty is [not produced by the prophecy itself, but] by external factors—the method of its delivery and the rules that govern it.*

Prophecies are not inherent sureties. Though Hashem never lies, prophecies are stipulated affairs and can, therefore, be subject to reversal. And though the Mashiach prophecy is not technically reversible because (a) it was prophesied publicly, and (b) we are certain to repent, our confidence doesn't derive from the prophecy itself, but from these external technicalities.



In other words, the prophecy itself doesn't inspire confidence; the technicalities inspire confidence. Thus, the simple answer, that Mashiach must come because it has been prophesied, is dishonest. Mashiach must come because of certain conditions attached to the prophecy, neither of which are as compelling as a prophecy.

#### ADJUSTABLE ASSURANCE

Suppose your parents promise you a ten-thousand-dollar vacation to the Caribbean after your graduation. Can you be certain you will end up in the Caribbean once you graduate?

Well, a lot depends on conditions in the Caribbean. If there is a hurricane and the resort they booked was destroyed, your vacation might be postponed, or they might send you elsewhere. Also, if they didn't specify that they would make the arrangements for you, they might intend to give you the money and let you make the arrangements. In other words, you can trust that you will receive a ten-thousand-dollar vacation, but it might come in any number of guises.

Let's compare this to promises that are recorded in the written Torah. The Torah is eternal—nothing in it is subject to change. If something is promised in the Torah, it will certainly occur, yet it can occur in more than one way:

#### TEXT 4

The Rebbe, *Likutei Sichos* 34, pp. 117–118

בשאר חלקי התורה אפשר שענין הנצחיות שבהם יתקיים לא כפשוטו  
אלא רק בתוכנם הרוחני... כן הוא גם בענין הבטחות הקדוש ברוך הוא  
שנכתבו בתורה. שקיומן בפועל תלוי באופן ההבטחה, לפי התנאים  
וגדרים שפירשו חכמינו זכרונם לברכה. ואם נכתבה ההבטחה בלי  
תנאים אלה אינו ודאי שתתקיים לפי פשוטה דוקא.

*[Though the Torah is eternal, and every word must be true,] its words can be fulfilled in a spiritual sense rather than literally.<sup>7</sup> . . . The same applies to the divine promises recorded in the Torah. They must certainly come true, but subject to the conditions and definitions transmitted by our sages of blessed memory. If an assurance was recorded without stipulation [that it was intended literally], it might not occur in a literal sense.*

For example, the Torah promises long life to those who honor their parents.<sup>8</sup> Yet, some people who obey their parents die young. The Talmud asks about this and explains that Hashem always keeps His promise of long life—sometimes in this life and sometimes in the afterlife.<sup>9</sup>

The same can apply to the promises about Mashiach recorded in the Torah. The fact that the Torah promises that Mashiach will come doesn't put every mind at ease. It can't prevent us from questioning whether this promise will be kept in a literal sense or in a metaphorical sense. Though our sages informed us that this promise will be fulfilled literally, you can't be called a heretic if you question that.<sup>10</sup> Denying our sages' teachings is wrong, but it is not heretical.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For example, the historical events recorded in the Torah are not meant to be understood as eternally continuing or recurring. The eternal dimension of these stories lies in their eternally relevant homilies and spiritual messages.

<sup>8</sup> Devarim 5:15.

<sup>9</sup> Chulin 142a.

<sup>10</sup> In addition, even if you accept the teachings of our sages, your assurance doesn't result from the Torah, but from our sages. The Torah's promise doesn't quiet all our fears; that is done by our sages' explanation.

<sup>11</sup> The point that we made earlier about prophecies—that they can be reversed if we don't deserve them—can also apply to promises made in the Torah. For example, Moshe *Rabbeinu* said in *Az Yashir* that the neighboring nations will tremble in dread, "עד יעבור עמך ה', עד יעבור עם זו קניית"—"Until your nation passes, O G-d, until this nation that you acquired passes." The Gemara (Berachos 4a) explains that the first "your nation," refers to the generation that came to Israel in the days of Yehoshua. The second one refers to the generation that returned to Israel to build the second Beis Hamikdash. They, too, deserved to travel with an outstretched arm (Rashi), but they didn't because they were unworthy of the miracle. Thus, they returned to Israel under the aegis of a foreign power—Persia. This demonstrates that even assurances given in the Torah can sometimes depend on our state of worthiness.



## DEFINITE ASSURANCE

The only kind of assurance that inspires absolute confidence is an absolutely definitive promise.

When the Torah tells us that there is a mitzvah that could never be fulfilled and will only be fulfillable when Mashiach comes, it is a definitive and absolute assurance that Mashiach will come. This is because there is nothing more absolute than a divine commandment:

### TEXT 5

The Rebbe, *Likutei Sichos* 34, pp. 115–116

וכמו שכתב הרמב"ם בהלכות יסודי התורה, "דבר ברור ומפורש בתורה שהיא מצוה עומדת לעולם ולעולמי עולמים אין לה לא שינוי ולא גרעון ולא תוספת" . . . ולכן כיון שענין הגאולה הוא פרט במצות ערי מקלט, הרי כשם שערי מקלט היא מצוה עומדת לעולם, כו' אין לה לא שינוי כו', כך אי אפשר להיות שינוי חס ושלום בהבטחה זו.

*Rambam wrote, "It is clear and explicit in the Torah that a mitzvah remains forever without change, addition, or diminishment" [Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah, 9:1] . . . Once we establish that the Redemption is part of a mitzvah, which is eternal and is not subject to change, it becomes impossible to suggest that the promise of Mashiach is, G-d forbid, subject to change.*

Belief in Mashiach is a foundational Jewish concept, but it is not a mitzvah. As a non-mitzvah, it is possible to argue that, "If he didn't come until now, he won't come." We would reject the argument, but we could not reject it categorically.

By introducing the cities of refuge, Rambam demonstrated that Mashiach *is* part of a mitzvah. Once we are told that Mashiach is part of a mitzvah, the fact of his coming becomes an absolute verity that is not subject to change. As Hashem is not only unchanging, but also unchangeable, so is a mitzvah. If you argue that Mashiach's coming is subject to change, you are also arguing that *mitzvos* are subject to change. This is untenable in the Jewish faith. It is tantamount to heresy.

### Not a Mitzvah

Belief in Mashiach is foundational to Judaism because, as we learned in Lesson One, Torah can't become obsolete. Unless Mashiach comes, the Cities of Refuge mitzvah will never be activated and many more will become obsolete. Yet, belief in Mashiach is not a mitzvah because *mitzvos* are specific instructions. A comprehensive Jewish concept can't be defined as a specific mitzvah, even if it entails specific requirements (*Sefer Hamitzvos, shores 4*). Mashiach is a comprehensive concept; hence it is foundational to Judaism but not a mitzvah.

*Likutei Sichos* 18, p. 280



### III. THE REBBE'S NOVEL INSIGHT

#### THE NEED FOR THREE PROOFS

This, explains the Rebbe, is why Rambam adds the third proof. By citing the cities of refuge, Rambam provides categorical and irrefutable proof of the verity of Mashiach. You can't deny that Mashiach will come in a literal sense without claiming that the mitzvah has changed.

Rambam's first proof was from an assurance given to us in the Torah that Mashiach will come. A person who wishes to deny Mashiach's coming could reinterpret and twist that promise, without being called a heretic, by simply arguing that it is to be understood as a spiritual deliverance.

Rambam's second proof was from Bilam's prophecy. This, too, could be denied, without appearing to be a heretic, simply by claiming that prophecies are subject to forfeiture if you don't deserve them.<sup>12</sup>

Rambam's third proof, which demonstrates that Mashiach is part of a mitzvah, is not just another proof. It upgrades the promise of Mashiach to the category of irrefutable. You can't be a believing Jew and suggest that a mitzvah might be obsolete. You certainly can't be a believing Jew and suggest that a mitzvah might be a nonstarter. Inasmuch as this mitzvah must be activated, it follows that Hashem must bring Mashiach.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> We might respond with two forceful arguments: (a) this prophecy was publicized, and (b) we were assured that we will repent before the end of *Galus*. We might win the debate, but it won't be as resounding as the proof from the mitzvah. This is so for two reasons: (a) denial of either of these points doesn't render one a heretic, and (b) these details are extraneous to the assurance inherent in the prophecy itself.

<sup>13</sup> The obvious question is: Once we have the third proof, why do we need the first two proofs? The answer was provided at length in the first two lessons. They demonstrate that Mashiach will (a) restore the Torah to its original complete state (and as we learned in this lesson, add the one mitzvah that wasn't practicable in its original state), and (b) change the global atmosphere to one of holiness and G-dliness. See also sidebars titled "The Escalating Pyramid" and "The Explicit Tenet."

#### The Escalating Pyramid

Although the Torah is holier and more important than prophecies, the punishment for infraction of a prophecy is more severe than the punishment for violating a commandment in the Torah. There is a sliding scale of punishments for violating a mitzvah, but one who violates or denies any aspect of a prophecy is punished by an early passing. The reason is that prophecies are Hashem's direct communication to us. If we deny or violate them, it is tantamount to denying or ignoring a personal instruction from Hashem.

Accordingly, Rambam's three proofs can be understood in escalating order. First, a proof from the Torah. Then a proof from (Bilam's) prophecy, a personal communication from Hashem to every Jew. Finally, a mitzvah, which renders Mashiach as an incontrovertible fact.

*Likutei Sichos* 34, pp. 120–121



## THE NEED FOR A SEPARATE PARAGRAPH

The Rebbe's clue to this entire argument is that Rambam placed this proof in a separate paragraph and didn't include it with the other two proofs. To the Rebbe, this indicated that this isn't just another proof. To the Rambam, it is in a category of its own.

The first two proofs share the common denominator that they are resounding but not conclusive. Both are subject to change on some level and require additional arguments to bolster their surety. This proof stands alone and doesn't need to be propped up, because it is conclusive. This is why Rambam presented this proof in its own paragraph.

The very knowledge that there is a mitzvah in the Torah that awaits the coming of Mashiach—that Hashem is holding in reserve until the coming of Mashiach—fortifies our belief in his coming. May we merit seeing him speedily in our days.

## KEY POINTS

1. A prophecy can be subject to reversal under certain conditions. Thus, the confidence that it inspires is not foolproof even when we are certain that a particular prophecy will come to pass.
2. A promise in the Torah can be fulfilled in a literal sense or in a spiritual sense. Thus, the assurance that it offers is not foolproof even when we are certain that a particular promise will be fulfilled in the literal sense.
3. A mitzvah is inherently not subject to change. As Hashem is unchanging, so are His *mitzvos*.
4. Knowing that Mashiach is included in a mitzvah that has never been fulfilled, and is waiting for Mashiach to activate it, is proof positive that Mashiach will certainly come.

