

TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE

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WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

THE BATTLE, NOT THE VICTORY

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Part I. Waiting in Mitzrayim

Years of Waiting

Before Yosef passed away, he encouraged his brothers like this: פֶּקֶד פֶּקֶד אֱלֹקִים אֲתָכֶם – Hashem is surely going to remember you (Bereishis 50:25). “It won’t be forever,” Yosef promised them. “Sooner or later Hakadosh Baruch Hu will send you a redeemer who will take you out of this place and bring you back to Eretz Canaan.”

Now, we have to know that the Bnei Yisroel remained in Eretz Mitzrayim many years after they first heard that promise. Because after Yosef Hatzaddik passed away and the slavery began, they remained there another 130 years. They were 210 years altogether in Mitzrayim and the first 81 they lived under Yosef but after that, for about 130 years, they were persecuted and there were very difficult times. וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת חַיֵּיהֶם – The Mitzrim embittered their lives.

So let’s imagine what they were thinking during those days. The people are suffering and many are even dying; they’re being buried in Mitzrayim. And so you can be sure they were thinking about that

promise, the future that was promised to them: פֶּקֶד פֶּקֶד – “Hashem will not forget you.”

The Jewish Codeword

And the *seforim* say that these words became the motto of the Bnei Yisroel in the midst of their *golus*. Even as the suffering increased, as they were being lashed by Pharaoh's taskmasters, they used to whisper these words to each other.

One Jew passed a fellow Jew – this one was carrying a heavy load of bricks and another one was carrying heavy beams and they were both being whipped by the taskmaster, “Hurry up! On the double!” – and as they passed by each other, one quietly said to the other, "פֶּקֶד פֶּקֶד – Take heart! We will be redeemed one day." That was their motto; the Medrash (Tanchuma, Vayigash 3) says that it became their codeword for their eventual redemption.

Whenever they were discouraged, dispirited, they used to say, “Hashem will remember us” in order to raise their spirits. Because they were *ma'aminim*—they knew that Hakadosh Baruch Hu had made a promise and therefore they never gave up hope. Like the Jews today, we’re *maaminim bnei maaminim*, and when eventually Eliyahu will come to us with a

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message of redemption, he'll find a willing ear. And so, the same thing by our forefathers in Mitzrayim.

Forward Minded

So you might imagine it was an *avodah* just of waiting. After all, right now it was dark and the future, on the other hand, was very bright. And so maybe they were thinking, "Right now, this is not what we're looking for. We're being persecuted terribly, this is not the fulfillment of our lives. We're looking forward to that grand time when Hakadosh Baruch Hu will finally take us out and fulfill the promises He made to our forefathers." They were living with the hope of great days ahead.

After all, what do we consider the most successful period in this history? So maybe you'll say Matan Torah. What is greater than when they're all assembled and they're hearing Hashem speak to them? To hear the Voice of Hashem?! A tremendous thing! **הִשְׁמַע עָם** – *Did any nation ever hear that?* And then to be in the Midbar for forty years with Moshe Rabbeinu under the *ananei kavod* and eating *mann, lechem min hashamayim*. And therefore, we can point to that as the summit of the achievements that they hope someday to see.

Or if you're minded to think more about *gashmiyus*, you might say that the summit of all their hopes will be reached when they come into Eretz Canaan under Yehoshua and then it will be **אִישׁ תְּחַת גִּבְּנוֹ וְתַחַת תְּאֲנִתוֹ**. Our own land! Our own homes and fields in Eretz Yisroel. That's the great hope.

And therefore you might think that it was only a matter of hopeful waiting; right now is nothing. It's the future, that's what matters most.

Looking Forward in JFK

But actually it's just the opposite. It's like, imagine this. A person is in an airport in New York and he's waiting for his plane and he has to daven Mincha before he goes. He's going to Eretz Yisroel, let's say to Bnei Brak or to Yerushalayim, and once he's there he's hoping to go *daven* in one of the big *yeshivos* there. It's quite an inspiring thing you should know. If you go

to one of the *yeshivos* – Ponovezeh, Slabodka, or Chevron – to *daven* there; even a regular weekday Minchah it's inspiring. It's worth going just for that, for a weekday Mincha. You never saw it before? It's inspiring. It's an accomplishment to *daven* in a place like that, even once.

But now, he's not there yet. And he's thinking that there's not much he can accomplish right now. Well, even in the airport he has to *daven* Mincha. So he does. Of course, he knows that this is not the place; this is only a preparation for that great opportunity when he'll stand with three or four hundred young men, all full of fire, all full of Torah, and altogether they'll shout *yehei Shmei raba!* And the rafters will tremble at their voice and the echo will awaken in his heart echoes of greatness.

But meanwhile he's standing in the corner, behind a little wall and he's *davening* Mincha quickly on one foot. He's in a hurry. On all sides there are announcements; flight this and this is taking off, go to this and this gate. People are running with suitcases, they're bumping into him, but he's standing in a place as secluded as he can in a corner trying to keep his mind on what he's saying. He's a good Jew and so despite all the difficulties he accomplishes the best Mincha he can. And sooner or later he's redeemed from the airport and he's on his way to Eretz Yisroel.

The Big Reveal

Now let's imagine this man lived out a fully happy life, a hundred and twenty years and after that he comes to the *Yeshivah shel Maalah*. He's in the Next World and there he expects when they take out all of his deeds—he has some things of course he would prefer they weren't taken out, but there are other deeds he's waiting to be displayed. And he's waiting for that great Mincha that he *davened* in Bnei Brak in the big *yeshivah* to come up on the screen.

But how surprised he's going to be when they take out the Mincha in the airport and that one is the most resplendent of all of his Minchas that he ever *davened*. Because there it was difficult to *daven* with *kavanah*. There he had a lot of reasons that his mind should

wander. He was tired and he was nervous about his flight, he shouldn't be late. And on all sides people were looking at him, "What's he doing, this fellow here, bending over? A lunatic?"

Now it doesn't mean he *davened* with more *kavanah*; I'm sure he *davened* with more *kavanah* when he came to the yeshivah; I'm sure it was a better Mincha there. But when it comes to the scales of Heaven, where they weigh how much sterling there is in that Mincha, that Mincha is going to be so much heavier, so much more valuable.

Because the Mincha in the airport, despite all the difficulties, he put everything that he had into it. He didn't say, "Since I'm waiting for the real thing, so this Mincha doesn't mean much." No, not this man. This man knew better and therefore he put all he had into that Mincha. And he was thanking Hashem for the great opportunity to serve Him even when it's not so easy. So when he came to *modim anachnu lach* it was pouring out from his heart. Someone maybe was snickering that he's bowing down to a wall but he was too busy to notice. He was too busy becoming great in the midst of difficulty.

No Pain No Gain

The principle involved here is **לְפֹנִים צְעָרָא אַגְרָא** – *the reward is according to the difficulty*. That's a statement in Pirkei Avos and it's one of the most important statements in the entire Torah ideology. Everything there is important but this one stands out as one of the greatest. **לְפֹנִים צְעָרָא** – *According to the difficulty*, **אַגְרָא** – *so is the reward*.

And so, when we consider the real truth, we'll see that the greatest opportunity for achievement, the time when they were most successful, was *before* they were redeemed from Mitzrayim, while they were still waiting and hoping. Because almost no people subsequently suffered as much as our forefathers did then; and yet while they were there, besides fighting to maintain their courage and uphold their faith in the future promise of *pakod yifkod*, at the same time they made sure to succeed where they were.

A Pakod of Procrastination

You know there are a lot of ways to rely on *pakod yifkod* and be a failure. When you see that the *goyim* have dominion over you and they're hitting you and you are run into the dust, you can forget everything and look only to the future. "One day, one day in the future..."

So the women said, "Nothing doing! We're going to make ourselves a great nation right now. We insist on having a lot of children!"

But the husbands said, "What do you mean?! They're throwing children into the water! They're immuring them into the walls!" Jewish children were killed in the walls; entombed alive in the bricks. "They're doing such things to our children and you say we need children?! One day, when *pakod yifkod*..."

So the Jewish women said, "No, we want to have more children. We have to raise up a big nation right now."

And that's how the nation became great. We have to know that our forefathers, although they lived for the future too, they achieved more perfection in their lives than anybody after them did. They didn't say, "We're in the airport waiting for our plane to come in. We can't *daven* a good Mincha now. We're suffering, that's all."

No, they didn't say that. They understood that you have to *daven* the best Mincha possible under the circumstances; and that whatever you accomplish then is worth more than what you'll accomplish after *pakod yifkod* is fulfilled and you leave Mitzrayim and have the opportunity to do much more.

Blood of Persecution

Reb Yisrael Salanter says that. He said the greatness of our forefathers in Mitzrayim was not because they did many *mitzvos*. They didn't have too many; but the few *mitzvos* that they had, Reb Yisroel said, they did under the greatest difficulty.

Like it says about the nation in Mitzrayim. **וְאָמַר לְךָ ה' בְּרַמְיָהּ הָיִי וְאָמַר לְךָ בְּרַמְיָהּ הָיִי** – *Hashem said, "You will live because of your blood."* (Yechezkel 16:6). What blood?

Dam milah and *dam korban pesach*. It was very difficult to do those *mitzvos*, to slaughter the *korban pesach* under the eyes of the Egyptians who worshipped the lambs.

The angry Egyptian is looking on and he says, “What’s going on here?” He raised a lash; he wanted to hit the Jew.

So the Jew said, “I’m going to slaughter it.”

“Slaughter it?!”

To slaughter a lamb in Egypt is a capital crime. There could have been a pogrom. But they did it anyhow. It’s easy to read it in Chumash but it wasn’t so easy when it was carried out. You were liable to get a rock thrown at your head.

Mass Circumcision

And to circumcise? **בְּיָמֵינוּ כָּל הָעָם הַיִּצְאָאִים** – They were all circumcised before they left Mitzrayim (Yehoshua 5:5). It’s an easy thing to circumcise? So if your father and grandfather are circumcised so you can’t help yourself—especially if you’re a little boy you have nothing to say about it. But here was a nation of adults. They didn’t have any tradition of circumcising. It was difficult in Mitzrayim, and many didn’t circumcise before and now suddenly a command came that all must be circumcised.

And so the nation was **מִתְנַבֵּסֶט בְּדַמֵּיהֶם**; they were wading in their own blood, the blood of *milah*, and also the blood of *korban pesach*. So in Yechezkel he says Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, “I say to you, ‘Live because of your blood.’” It means the *tzaar*, the difficulty, that made them great. Because the greatness of a person is not judged only by how much he succeeded – it’s the battles, fighting the battles, that matters more than the victory.

Part II. Waiting in Golus

Achakeh Lo!

Now what are we learning from this? That *pakod yifkod* doesn’t mean that our hopes and success are only in the future. Hashem is remembering you right now; right now in Golus Mitzrayim He’s with you,

watching over you, and waiting for your accomplishments. And so of course it’s true that our forefathers didn’t remove their eyes from the future but nevertheless they didn’t waste their lives by saying “we’re only preparing for the future”. They put everything they had into the present.

And therefore we have to realize that everything we said till now is the story of our waiting for Moshiach too. Because the same way the Bnei Yisroel in Mitzrayim were promised, the same is us – we also have been told by the *neviim* that Hashem will surely remember us. We are promised the future redemption and Days of Moshiach. And it’s a big mitzvah to look forward to him coming. **חַכְהֵ לּוֹ** – *Wait for him* (Chavakuk 2:3). It says it openly in the *Neviim*. Hope for him. Wait for Moshiach.

Waiting for Greatness

It means that we’re hoping for great times. That’s what we say in *Aleinu* every day, that we look forward **לְרֵאוֹת מְהֵרָה בְּתִפְאַרְתּוֹ עֲזָרָה** – *to see speedily the beauty of Your strength*. The ‘beauty of the strength of Hakadosh Baruch Hu’ means when Moshiach will come finally the truth will be revealed that Hashem Elokeinu is Hashem Echad; that the Hashem of the Am Yisroel, He’s the only One and that we are His chosen people.

We have to yearn for that time! All the Jews will be *ovdei Hashem* together! You walk in the street today and you see Jews with uncovered heads. We yearn for the time when all the Jews will wear black hats. That’s what we want. Every Jew should wear black hats! All the women should have their head covered with *sheitlech* or whatever it is.

That’s the minimum that will happen when Moshiach comes. **בְּיָוֵם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה ה’ אֶחָד וְשֵׁמוֹ אֶחָד** means that the honor of Hakadosh Baruch Hu will be revealed. It will be the entire world all being *modeh* to the truth that *Hashem Echad u’Shmo Echad!* What a glorious time to live!

The Frum Apkoris

That’s why the Rambam considers a man an *apikores* if he doesn’t *desire* Moshiach. Because if a

person doesn't desire Moshiach then he doesn't really believe in Moshiach. How is that so? Because when a person knows that Moshiach is something as portrayed by the *neviim*, a time of *kevod Shamayim*—that the whole world will finally agree that we are right, that ה' הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים—and this man is not desirous that it should happen already, then certainly he is a man full of faults. Either he doesn't believe in Yemos HaMoshiach or he doesn't care about *kevod Shamayim*.

And therefore it's an important part of our *avodas Hashem* to look forward to those great days of *kevod Shamayim*. Now, I'm not saying I do it, that I fulfill it the way I should, but that's what we should aim for however. And at least if we talk about it, maybe we'll do it.

That's why we talk about it so much. Every day we say אֶת צִמְחָה דְּדוֹר עֲבָדָה מְהֵרָה תִּצְמַח. It means you're storming the heavens! Unless you're not thinking about what you're saying — this, that it's printed in the *siddur* is not enough. But suppose we really meant what we are saying. אַחֲכָה לוֹ – We are waiting for him every day! We want him to come! We long for him because at that time there will be a revolution in the world — the glory of Hashem will be reestablished everywhere.

A Banner and a Blow

And that's why it's going to require a שָׂא נֵס – a *lifting of a banner*, and also a תִּקַּע בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל – a *blow of a great shofar*. Why do you need a banner and also a *shofar*? Because a banner is good only for people who are willing to look at the banner. We'll see the banner and we'll be overjoyed—we'll come right away. But the nations won't want to look.

Saudi Arabia and Syria and Egypt — America too and England and Russia — they'll ignore the banner. The Jewish Messiah came? Nah, we're not interested. The New York Times will be making jokes about it and telling all the *goyim* to ignore. Even some Reform Jews might say forget about it. "It's foolishness," they'll say. "We're not interested."

And so Hakadosh Baruch Hu will blow with a great *shofar*. Oh, a big *shofar* you can't ignore. It will be a

thunderous blast. It will shatter the world and they'll have to yield.

The Volcanic Shofar

Now exactly what form the *shofar* will take, I cannot tell you. Today we can sometimes hear a noise when a volcano explodes; you hear the noise for thousands of miles. It is remarkable what a big noise it can create. And Hakadosh Baruch Hu can make bigger noises. Hakadosh Baruch Hu knows how to make noise in this world and when the time comes, He will make it. He doesn't need a ram's horn; don't worry about Him. He knows how to make it known to the world that Moshiach has come.

And so whatever it is there will be an announcement in the world. The whole world will discover. They'll find out. It might be on the radio. All of a sudden an announcement, 'Moshiach has come! The Sanhedrin, the great Jewish body of holy Sages, has spoken to him and they recognize he is Moshiach.' All the radios and televisions will be talking about it. There will be a tremendous announcement and an excitement all over the world and everybody will be clearly aware that the end has come to their power. The time has come finally when Hakadosh Baruch Hu is telling the nations to get out of the way and let Am Yisroel take their rightful place in the world.

From the River to the Sea

Like Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to Moshe Rabbeinu the first time we were redeemed—"Go to Pharaoh and say in My Name that בְּנִי בְּכוֹרִי יִשְׂרָאֵל – 'My firstborn son is Yisroel.'" Many people of Yisroel themselves are a little bashful to say that but what can we do; it's one of the most important teachings of the Torah. And for it to be fulfilled, for Yisroel to take their place at the head of humanity, it requires that the nations understand that and yield their place. They must liberate the Am Hashem; we have to be liberated from any pressure — whether it is physical or ideological — from the nations of the world and from Jews who act like the nations of the world.

So first and foremost, Eretz Yisroel has to be restored to us. So not only will the *shofar* announce

the time to liberate Yisroel from subjection, but they should liberate the land as well. They'll have to hand over every part of Eretz Yisroel to be solely in the hands of the Bnei Yisroel, nobody else. We are the only ones who will own the land. There won't be any pluralism, there won't be any democracy; the Am Hashem will live in Eretz Yisroel and all the nations must consent to that.

The NYT Folds

And so there won't be any editorials in the New York Times decrying the fact that Arabs are being oppressed in Eretz Yisroel. There won't be any movements of Jews for crazy agendas in order to help the Arabs express themselves more freely in Eretz Yisroel. No; that *shofar* blow will shatter all those ideas. It'll blast them and the nations will just yield; they'll say, "The land is yours."

Once the nations yield, then Hakadosh Baruch Hu will raise a great banner. On the headlines of New York Times – I hope by that time it won't exist anymore – and all the newspapers in big blue letters. "Jews Returning to Israel From All Sides of the World!" That'll be the whole front page!

And any *goy* who tries to book passage on a ship or an airplane—he has to go somewhere for business let's say—so he'll be told, "Sorry, no space. The Jews are traveling to Eretz Yisroel now."

So they'll try maybe on some freighter, a banana ship maybe. No; even that's packed with Jews. Everybody is going back to Eretz Yisroel. All the ways of transportation will be focused on one objective, bringing the Jews back. That's what's going to take place because all the nations will shudder and everybody will say, "הַיּוֹם יוֹם ה' – Now it's the day of Hashem all over the world." All the nations will yield and we'll get ready to go up *b'simcha*.

The Real Happiness

And it'll be a great happiness. There's a Sefer HaGeulah written by Reb Moshe Chaim Luzzatto and he describes there the *bias haMoshiach*. When Moshiach will come there's going to be happiness

without equal. You'll have to be very healthy to withstand that, so you'd better start sleeping regularly and living normally because it might come suddenly and catch you unaware and your heart *chas v'shalom* won't be able to take it. There's going to be such an overmeasure of joy.

It'll be so much laughing that you'll split your sides. אֶז יִמְלֵא שְׂחוֹק פִּינוּ – *Then your mouth will be full of laughter.* We'll laugh because we'll see our dreams being fulfilled in front of our eyes; we'll be so happy that we won't be able to contain ourselves.

You'll be standing on Eastern Parkway and Utica Avenue and you'll open your mouth and guffaw.

And all over they'll say, "Yo man! What are you laughing about?"

So you'll say, "I'm laughing at you! You see we were right all along! Hashem is Elokei Yisroel!"

And they'll all be respectful to you.

And you'll go on Benson Avenue and do the same. And go down West Street and do the same. And in all the neighborhoods of the *sonei Yisroel* it'll be the same because all of them now, וְלִכְבוֹד שְׁמֵךְ יְיָ יִתְנוּ – *they'll all give honor to the glory of Your name.*

Tagging Along

They'll say, "Man, are you a Jew? Can we go along with you? We want to go with you." Like it says in the *Nevi'im*: בְּיָמֵי הַהֵמָּה – *In those days they'll say to you, נִלְכֶּה עִמָּכֶם – "Let us go with you" (Zechariah 8:23).* "You're a Jew, let us go with you." They'll want to follow you.

So you tell them, "Look, we can't accept you as a Jew. It's too late. Now we don't accept any more converts."

They'll say, "We don't care. We want to go with you anyhow. Let us tag along."

יְחִזְקוּ עֲשָׂרָה אֲנָשִׁים מִכָּל לְשׁוֹנוֹת הַגּוֹיִם וְהִחֲזִיקוּ בְּכַנְף אִישׁ יְהוּדִי – *Ten people from every nation will take hold of the corner of a Jewish man's garment, לְאֹמֹר נִלְכֶּה עִמָּכֶם, – and they'll say, "Let us go with אֲלֵקִים עִמָּכֶם – because we understand now that Hashem is with you. You are the aristocrat of the world (ibid.)."*

Ooh ah! How much we're looking forward to those days! It'll be a most glorious time for the Am Yisroel!

And so, Moshiach, that's our greatest wish. The truth is it's an attitude that's expressed in all the words of the *nevi'im*; all of our prophets spoke about the great future. Not a future that's going to take place in their lifetime, a future that's *b'achris hayamim*. Yeshayah Hanavi spoke most profusely about *achris hayamim*, the End of Days, but so did all the *neviim* and therefore there is in every Torah Jew a longing for *yemos haMoshiach*, for our great future when the *yeshuah* will come and we'll merit **לְרֵאוֹת בְּתַפְאֶרֶת עֶדָּה**.

Part III. Waiting and Accomplishing

Missing Out on Moshiach

Now the question is, does that mean those who won't be there, that they lost out? Did Rashi lose out? Did the Baal Shem Tov lose out? Did Reb Yisroel Salanter or Rav Aaron Kotler lose out? Did all the Jews who lived in Golus for two thousand years lose out?

And so we come back to the lesson we learn from our forefathers who waited in Mitzrayim for the promise of **יִפְקֹד יִפְקֹד** to be fulfilled. After all, many of the men and women didn't live to see the *geulah*—most of them passed away before they came out of Mitzrayim. How long could you live after all? Moshe Rabbeinu himself didn't live more than 120 years. Certainly many of the Bnei Yisroel didn't live 120 years. They died in Mitzrayim and were buried there. So are they lost? Did they live without a purpose?

Waiting in Mitzrayim

No! They are the ones who were most successful! Because success is not measured by the end, that you go out of Mitzrayim **בְּרֵכוֹשׁ גְּדוֹל** – *with great property*; that you go into Eretz Canaan and **בְּתַיִם טוֹבִים תִּבְנֶה** **וְיִשְׁבְּתָהּ**, each one takes land and becomes a wealthy homeowner (Devarim 8:12). No, that's not the measure of a person's success.

You know what the measure is? What did you suffer for Hashem, that's your greatest accomplishment. **לְפָנַי צַעֲרָא אֲגָרָא**. And therefore

although we look at the Bnei Yisroel in Mitzrayim with a very great commiseration — certainly we have sympathy with them and we talk about their sufferings — but we must know that they are sitting now in Gan Eden. These generations that encouraged each other with the promise of **יִפְקֹד יִפְקֹד** and *at the same time they achieved greatness*, they are the ones who were the most successful of all. Because whatever they achieved was accomplished under the most difficult conditions.

Waiting in America

And therefore when we talk about Moshiach today, when we look forward to *yemos haMoshiach* when the promise of *pakod yifkod* will be fulfilled to the Am Yisroel, we have to emulate our forefathers. Absolutely we have to fulfill *tzipisa*; we have to hope and wait and ask for the days when the honor of Hashem will be made great in the world—but at the same time we have to accomplish all the great things available to us right now.

Now, we can't deny that in the days of Moshiach it certainly will be much easier to keep *mitzvos*. When the entire world knows that we're right, that our *avodas Hashem*, our *kirvas Elokim*, is the most important ideal so even the *goyim* will help us; they'll want us to succeed.

Gentile Help

It's written in Yeshayah (49:23) that **וְהָיוּ מְלָכִים אֲמֹנִיךָ** – *kings will be the ones who will tend to your children*, **וְשָׂרוֹתֵיהֶם מִיְּמִינֵיךָ** – *and their princesses will be your nursemaids*. It means even their royalty will want to help you; they'll want to do housework for you. We'll be busy with *da'as Hashem* and the work will be left for the *goyim*. **וְעַמֵּדוֹ זָרִים וְרַעוּ צֹאנֶכָם** – *Strangers will come to pasture your flocks*, **וּבְנֵי גֵבֶר אֲכָרִיכֶם וְכַרְמֵיכֶם** – *and the gentiles will be your farmers and vintners* (*ibid.* 61:5).

It means there will be laboratories of science and the good *goyim* of this world — Hashem will give them jobs in scientific laboratories. They'll be busy discovering ways and means for the Am Hashem to live more comfortably and it will be for them a big *zechus*. They'll be very happy with that *zechus* that

they're working in laboratories and investigating the secrets of chemistry and physics and biology; all these things they'll investigate further and further and learn more and more things to help the Am Yisroel fulfill its function.

IRS Abolished

That's what the Rambam says that in those days opportunities for *shleimus* will be much more because we'll be free of the necessity to work for the *goyim*. You know how much of our work goes to paying high taxes? Our hard earned money is supporting a tremendous amount of loafers in Bedford Stuyvesant. In Harlem hundreds of thousands of loafers are lying in their basements and smoking marijuana and taking drugs on our money; we are paying our taxes for them. All that time we spent making that money we could have used to learn Gemara. We could have sat down and learned Mesillas Yesharim.

And in the *yemos haMoshiach* we'll finally be able to do that. We'll be free from the *shibud* of the *goyim* and we will have time to sit and learn. That's what the Rambam says; when Moshiach comes we'll be able to be *koneh* all the various forms of *shleimus*, and be worthy of a greater share in Olam Haba.

The Big Drawback

But there's a certain drawback too. Because it'll be so much easier! Everything will be easier! It will be the easiest thing to be a *frum* Jew. For instance, today if a person is going to wear his *tzitzis* out, let's say, in a neighborhood where there are no Jews or only irreligious Jews, so it's not so easy. Sometimes people say, "Dirty Jew!"

Now, he could stick his *tzitzis* in his pants when he goes in those neighborhoods, but he doesn't do it. And so he gets much more *sechar* for being a loyal and proud Jew, **לְפֹנִים צְעָרָא אֲגָרָא**.

You have to know that in Moshiach's time we are going to lose that big privilege of being insulted for being Jews. Because in those days it will be the biggest *kavod* to be called a Jew. The gentiles would like that you should call them Jew, but you won't do it. It will be

ossur to accept converts in that era when Moshiach will come. The gentiles would like to wear *tzitzis*; we won't let them, no. "I'm so sorry sir but *tzitzis* is only for the Am Yisroel."

Looking Back

And so in the *yemos haMoshiach* there are going to be people who look back to the good old days and they'll sigh for what once was. "Aaah, how good it was when I walked through Bensonhurst, in the higher up streets after Bensonhurst, and the boys who were out of school sent their dogs upon me because I was a Jew." A true story. I had a beard and they laughed and set their dogs on me. So he'll say, "How good it was then! How lucky I was then to be persecuted because I'm a Jew. What a *zechus* it was."

Because now, in *yemos haMoshiach*, you'll walk through those same streets everybody will look with reverence at you. They might even run out to kiss your hand. "Father Yankel," "Father Chaim," they'll say to you. "Is there anything I can do for you today?" So therefore, you will be lacking in the **לְפֹנִים צְעָרָא אֲגָרָא** – the reward according to the difficulty. It will be more opportunity for *shleimus* but the **לְפֹנִים צְעָרָא אֲגָרָא**, the reward we get today we'll lose out on.

Mitzvos and Teshuva

And so it's a wonderful opportunity right now when it's difficult to do *mitzvos*. Today when you sleep in a *sukkah*, many times it's a little dangerous too. And *af al pi kein* you do it. People still sleep in *sukkos* today too even though Cuomo is the governor in New York and he's against capital punishment. People are still *mekayem* the *mitzvah*. So they'll get a bigger reward.

When Moshiach comes we'll have lost the great opportunity. What credit will you get for making *sukkos* then? In the days of Moshiach everybody will have a *sukkah* and they'll sleep in their *sukkah*. The Gemara says that even the Puerto Ricans and the Italians will try to make *sukkos*.

How much credit can you get for learning Torah when the entire world is helping you learn? Or what

credit will you get for doing *teshuvah* then? Of course we'll do *teshuvah* then but it will be too easy.

The Time is Now

And therefore now is the time! Let's imagine a family in Brooklyn. They're waiting every day for Moshiach. They fulfill **לֹא בְּכֹל יוֹם שְׂיִבּוּא**, to hope every day for Moshiach. So what are they doing in the meantime? Just giving up all hope? Not doing anything? No; they're very busy. They're having babies one after the other, raising *frum* children.

Here is a family with ten children—I'm thinking of a certain family—all of them growing up *frum* boys and girls. The mother is maintaining a very *frum* house. The father is working very hard for *parnasah*. And if in addition at night he drags himself off to a *shiur* where he learns Gemara what could be better? Sometimes he falls asleep over the Gemara? I don't blame him. He's a *ben Olam Haba!* He'll sit next to big *tzaddikim* and his wife will have a throne of glory, a golden throne, because they did it all in the midst of difficulty.

These people are living for the future by living as best as possible in the present. They couldn't do better under any circumstances. People who are living sensibly, constructively, living for a purpose, for them it's already *yemos haMoshiach*. *Yemos haMoshiach* is for the purpose of acquiring *Olam Haba* and they're accomplishing that right now. So what's more glorious than that?

Now don't think I'm trying to downplay *yemos haMoshiach*. We have to wait and hope for Moshiach but our lives right now have to demonstrate we know how to make use of the opportunities when he will come.

Chinese Jokes

Even the waiting for Moshiach, the mitzvah of **לֹא אֲחַכָּה לוֹ**, is a perfection that you'll lose out on when he comes. Because maybe it's not so easy now. You might feel a *yeiush*—it's so long already and he didn't come yet. Also, the whole world is laughing at you waiting for Moshiach.

I was once talking to a Chinese doctor. He said, "You Jews are still waiting for Moshiach?"

I said "Yes, absolutely."

He looked at me funny. He was squinting at me. He doesn't understand that, because it's a long time already. "Yes," I said, "we're waiting for Moshiach."

The perfection of waiting and hoping and believing, **לְפָנֵים צַעֲרָא אַגְרָא**, we're going to lose out on that when Moshiach comes. Right now is our great chance, when he didn't come yet and the Chinese doctors are laughing at you and still you say, "Yes. **אֲנִי מְאַמְּיֵן בְּאַמוּנָה שְׁלִימָה** I'm waiting for Moshiach," that's a great reward. When Moshiach comes it's all over. No more reward for that.

Desiring His Glory

Now, even so we still want Moshiach to come — and very much so! Because we don't care for ourselves. We want *kevod Shamayim*. We want the honor of Hashem in the world. And that's why we ask for Moshiach. "Ay Ribono Shel Olam! **לְתַקֵּן עוֹלָם בְּמַלְכוּת שׁ - קִי וְכֹל בְּנֵי בְּשֶׁר יִקְרְאוּ בְּשֶׁמֶךְ** Hashem is right."

But we should remember now that in *yemos haMoshiach* we will look back longingly. Only it will be such good times that some people will forget the lost opportunities. It's so much fun to walk through the streets and have everybody come down and lick your boots; it's so much fun that a lot of people will forget the good old days. But the *baalei daas* surely will yearn for the olden days, no question about it.

Looking for Tomorrow and Accomplish Today

And that's why I say, keep looking forward! Moshiach is coming! One day he'll come. But enjoy life right now! Enjoy the opportunities! Like it says **זָכֹר אֶת יְיָ בְּחוּרֵיךָ** - *remember your Creator in your young days*, **בּוֹרְאֶיךָ בְּיָמֶיךָ בְּחוּרֵיךָ** - *there come the days when you'll say there isn't any purpose in living* (Koheles 12:1). And the Gemara (Shabbos 151b) says, what does that mean 'the days you won't want'? **אֵלּוּ יְמֵוֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ** - *It's the Days of*

Moshiach, מוֹשִׁיָּח, מְשִׁיחַ, מְשִׁיחַ, מְשִׁיחַ – the days you won't be able to earn the reward that you can earn now.

And so Koheles urges us, "Enjoy life now! Remember your Creator now before Moshiach comes." It pays to live right now! Do teshuvah before Moshiach comes. That's what Koheles is saying. Hurry up right now as long as you have the opportunity. Because when יִבְרִיחוּ וְיִדְעוּ כֹּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תְּבִילָה, whenever everybody will say שְׂמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֶחָד, you won't be a yachsan anymore. So the time to do it is right now when the others don't say it and you are saying it. That's your great success!

Have a Wonderful Shabbos

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Let's Get Practical

This week, I will try to live the way our forefathers did in Mitzrayim – waiting for the future while making the most of the present. Each day during Shemoneh Esrei, before the bracha of Es Tzemach Dovid, I will, bli neder, take five seconds to remember what I'm waiting for: the day when Hashem's honor will be revealed and Moshiach will come. Then, after the bracha, I will think about one opportunity that day to serve Hashem specifically where it's difficult or unnoticed – a mitzvah done in the "airport," not the yeshivah. Throughout the week, I will remind myself that the waiting itself is part of the avodah, and that the greatest accomplishments are often made before the redemption arrives.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

386 – The Battle, Not the Victory | **630** – Who is Like Your People Israel | **795** – Waiting for Moshiach | **900** – Greatness in the Midst of Difficulty | **E-248** – A Program for Effective Doing

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ש א ל א ב ר ו ו י ג ד ה ז ח ט י כ ל מ נ ס ע פ צ ק ר ש ת

QUESTION

How could anybody really believe in the coming of a melech haMoshiach? If we don't see him in front of us, so how could someone say he really believes in it?

ANSWER

And the answer is when a person trains himself to be an *eved Hashem* he comes to believe in the Word of Hashem. It's absolutely possible! If Hakadosh Baruch Hu told us that there's going to come a *goel*, and you're a loyal *eved Hashem*, absolutely you could believe in it!

It's only when people are stubborn and they prefer to listen to the foolishness of the outside streets. You walk in the streets, what are they talking about? Mets. Yanks. That's all. A *meshugeneh* crazy world. They're steeped in foolishness. But people yield to them. He wants to be part of the world and he yields.

No! I'm an *eved Hashem*. I disregard the *umos haolam*. They're nothing. What they're speaking about is nothing, it's *sheker*. What Hakadosh Baruch Hu told me by means of His *neviim*, that's *emes*. It's more *emes* than this world is *emes*.

What do you think? Broadway in Manhattan is going to last forever? Someday Broadway in Manhattan will be wiped out. It will happen someday. Even the forests might grow where Broadway is today. So it's all foolishness, Olam Hazeh. But דְּבַר אֱלֹהֵינוּ – the words of Hashem, יְקוּם לְעוֹלָם – will be forever; it will always be fulfilled (Yeshaya 40:8).

So a person who is an *eved Hashem*, he can understand that, absolutely. To him, the coming of Moshiach is a reality, as true as anything else. It's only a matter of gaining the proper Torah attitude.

October 14, 1999