

Maimonides in That Era

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Rabbi Yakov Dovid Cohen

The prophets of Israel describe a future in which a great leader shall arise in Israel, awaken his people to return to G-d, restore them to their homeland, rebuild the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, and bring about an age of universal enlightenment, harmony and perfection. As Maimonides States in the Laws of Kings, chapter 12, law 5. "In that Era there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition, for good things will flow in abundance and all the delight will be as freely available as dust. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D" [1]

The Rebbes Rabbi M. M. Schneerson explains this applies to the "nations of the world" for them to know and study the seven laws of Noah. This is the reason Maimonides write "The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D.

“ [2]

The Laws KINGS

At the outset it must be emphasized that for Maimonides the belief in the coming of the Messiah is not a concession to the national feeling which unconsciously urged him to include this belief among the articles of faith, but is inherently connected with his entire religious and ethical view.

In the last book of the Mishnah Torah Law of Kings chapter eleven [3] “In future time, the King Mashiach (Messiah) will renew the Davidic dynasty, restoring it to its initial sovereignty. He will rebuild the Mikdash (Temple) and gather in the dispersed remnant of Israel. Then in his days, all the statutes will be reinstated as in former times. We will offer sacrifices and observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years according to all their particulars set forth in the Torah”.

Whoever does not believe in him, or does not await his coming denies not only the statement of the other prophets, but also the Torah and of Moses our teacher, for the Torah attests to his coming, stating [4] “And the L-rd your G-d will bring back your captivity and have compassion upon you. He will return and gather you... Even if your dispersed ones are in the furthest reaches of the heavens, ... G-d will bring you...”

We must understand as to the detailed laws concerning the Messiah as Maimonides wrote the Mishnah Torah as a book of laws as he writes. It is a digest of all Jewish law, as Maimonides states that one needs only to study the Mishnah Torah or Yad-Hazaka to learn the entire Jewish law Torah. Why we must know all details regarding the days as he states “We will offer sacrifices and observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years according to their particulars set forth in the Torah”

He continues [5] in the second law “Similarly, in regards to the cities of Refuge, it is stated, When G-D will expand

your borders. You shall add three more cities..."

The Mishnah Torah is a book of laws that provides a clear guide as to the Halachah. To know what to do as is this information in our current stage. We must therefore say that all it is critical.

As Maimonides has stated in his introduction to the [6] Mishnah Torah is to provide a single reference for Halachic. "Ruling". Why does he go into detail as to the Times of the Messiah "In future time, the King Mashiach (Messiah) will renew the Davidic dynasty, restoring it to its initial sovereignty. He will rebuild the Mikdash" This information does not have any bearing on the person that is required to believe in the coming of the Messiah. And moreover Maimonides has already told us of the commandment to believe in the coming of Messiah as part of the thirteen principles of faith that one must believe and await his coming.

As Maimonides is one of the few that brings Halachic ruling regarding the Messianic Laws I will go into great detail as he continues in the second Law[7]"Similarly, in regards to the Cities of Refuge, it is stated "when G-D will expand your borders. you shall add three more cities. "This command has never been fulfilled. (Surely) G-D did not give this command in vain, and thus the intent was that it be fulfilled after the coming of Messiah. " There is no need for us to know this information from an Halachic book of Laws.

Maimonides [8] continues with the following" who ever does not believe in him, or does not await his coming, denies not only the statement of the other prophets," but also the Torah and of Moses our teacher " for the Torah attests to his coming, stating, and G-D will bring back your captivity" Maimonides, however, does not content himself with a single proof text, and continues" there is also a reference in the passage concerning Bilaam, who prophesies about the two anointed kings the first anointed king, David who saved Israel from her

oppressors, and the final anointed king who will arise from among his descendants. Save Israel at the ends of days that passage states [9] "I see it, but not now" this refers to David "I perceive it, but not in the near future" This refers to King Messiah. "A star shall go forth from Yaakov" this refers to David "and a staff shall arise in Israel" This refers to King Messiah." He shall crush all of Moab's princes" this refers to David, as it is written Samuel 8:2 "He smote Moab and measured them with a line"; he shall break down all of Seth's descendants " This refers to King Messiah about whom it is written" He will rule from sea to sea ". This extensive quotations from the bible and Torah prophecies is not Maimonides normal style as he rarely brings quotations as well as sources in his writings.

To understand as to why Maimonides goes into great detail regarding the Messiah. We must compare the first Messiah referring to King David as quoted above, as being the anointed one and does not include King Saul who was also anointed.

Again it must be emphasized that for Maimonides the belief in the coming of the Messiah is not a concession to the national or to the national feeling which unconsciously urged him to include this belief among his Laws, but is inherently connected with an Halachahic ruling to provide a clear halachahic guide to action and is not a story and connected with his entire religious and ethical view.

These questions can be resolved within the context of the explanation of a more general issue, namely the location the law of kings at the conclusion of the Mishnah Torah. At the beginning of these laws of Maimonides has stated that [10] "Israel was commanded to fulfill three Mitztvot and when they entered the holy Land to appoint a king. to destroy the descendants of Amalek., and to build G-ds chosen house." [11]

Accordingly, it would appear appropriate to record the laws

governing the appointment of a king at a much earlier stage within the book of code.

He nonetheless chooses to make these laws at the conclusion of the Mishnah Torah, as a compendium of the entire Oral law. With this he emphasizes that the ultimate and complete performance of all Mitzvoth of the Torah will be attained when a king rules over Israel. It is then that we will fulfill the Mitzvoth of waging the wars of G- D, destroying Amalek, and building the Temple Mikdash. Similarly, our observance of the Torah and its Mitzvoth will be enhanced in totality. As he writes at the conclusion of chapter four," The king purpose and intend should be to elevate the true faith." [12]

This conception of the monarchy found full expression in King David, who united the entire Jewish people, completed that conquest of Israel, secured peace for our nation and began the preparation for the building of the Temple Mikdash in Jerusalem.

Within this context we can appreciate Maimonides understanding of the Messiah in the beginning of chapter eleven" king Messiah will arise and renew the Davidic dynasty," And therefore when we pray three times a day the Amidah or Shemone Esrei, eighteen benediction the fourteenth benediction that is a prayer for the rebuilding of Jerusalem clearly makes reference to king David " Return in mercy to Jerusalem your city and dwell therein as you have promised: speedily establish their in the throne of David your servant," and in the fifteen for the arrival of are Redeemer the Messiah again makes reference to king David

The Amidah are as old as our people and date back to the times of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and our current prayer books dates back to a later time, to the time of Ezra the scribe and the Men of the Great Assembly more than 2300 years ago. That was the time of the Babylonian exile, for the men of the Great Assembly saw the need to establish one prayer in Hebrew for

all the Jewish people regardless of the place and time.

He therefore implies and defined Messiah as a King who will not only redeem the Jews from exile, but also bring about the complete and total observance of the Torah and Mitzvots, even greater than the times of the Temple Mikdash, as there will be an additional three cities of refuge, that were never available only when the Messiah comes.

Our faith and our yearning for the Messiah is an integral part of the belief in the coming of the Messiah. And only now can we understand why it is necessary to know the times of Messiah in all its detail. The time of Messiah will be the ultimate practices of the Laws Mitzvot. As he states "all the statutes will be reinstated as in former times. We will offer sacrifices and observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years according to all their particulars set forth in the Torah. [13]

Messiah according to Maimonides

The Era of the Messiah is a time that the Mitzvots will be in their complete glory and will be even greater than the times of the Mikdash; Temple. And is part of the belief of the coming of Messiah. And therefore it is paramount to explain that "We will offer sacrifices and observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years according to their particulars set forth in the Torah. Therefore in the times of Messiah will be even greater than the times of the Mikdash Temple. As it is written in "Jer 36:26 he will remove the stone from your breast"

As Maimonides states in the Laws of Kings, chapter 12, law 5. "In that Era there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition, for good things will flow in abundance and all the delight will be as freely available as dust. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D.

The Jews will therefore be great sages and know the hidden matters, and will attain an understanding of their Creator to

the full extent of mortal potential; as it is written Isaiah 11:9 "for the world will be filled with knowledge of G-D as the waters cover the ocean bed." [14]

The understanding of the stages of Messiah is part of the basic obligation to believe in the coming of Messiah; outlined in the Thirteen principle of faith that one must believe and await his coming. Is part of the perfection of keeping the Miztvot. The Messianic Age is the only one, which will enable men to realize their real and ultimate purpose in life.

Maimonides states this view in the code saying, in chapter twelve law 4: " the sages and prophets did not yearn for the Messianic Era in order that the Jewish people rule over the world, nor in order that they have dominion over the gentiles, nor that they be exalted by them, nor in order they eat, drink and celebrate. Rather, their aspiration was that the Jewish people be free to involve themselves in Torah and its wisdom, with out any one to oppress or disturb them, and thus be found worthy of life in the World to come, as we explained in Hilchos Teshuvah. [15]

We thus see that the belief in the Messiah is integrated with the entire view of Maimonides that the Torah as a whole was given for the purpose of helping man to self development in order to reach the human genus of the highest degree of intellectual perfection, the realization of which is only possible in the coming of the Messiah.

In chapter eleven of the Mishah Torah law 1;" He will rebuild Temple Mikdash and gather in the dispersed remnant of Israel. Then, in his days, all the statutes will be to reinstitute as in former times.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson [16] Explains that the times of the Messiah will be even greater than the times of the Temple Mikdash. This knowledge of the Messiah and all its details is connected to

the first Mitzot of knowing G-D, and since at that time we will have an increased in knowledge "for the world will be filled with knowledge of G-D as the waters cover the ocean bed." and this is not possible to fully understand G-D without the Messiah.

And therefore is crucial and fundamental part to know that only in times of Messiah we will "and will attain an understanding of their Creator to the full extent of mortal potential"

And continues [17] in chapter 12, law 5. "In that Era there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition, for good things will flow in abundance and all the delight will be as freely available as dust. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D." Why is necessary to know the stage of the world. "The Jews will therefore be great sages and know the hidden matters, and will attain an understanding of their Creator to the full extent of mortal potential" why does have to say mortal potential it is obvious as we are merely men.

Maimonides is telling us [18] "The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D." Is part of our Mitzvoth according to Torah in our times that are occupation is purely to know G-D. That even a person that his occupation is Torah must sustain themselves with business, however in the times of the Messiah "will be solely to know G-D". And solely for that reason and for the sake of Torah, and this is why he writes "Only" for the will be no other motives even holy ones.

Halachah is to refine the world at large so that it will exist in harmony with G-D's will. There have been times during which this intent has been put into practice by Jewish kings. In the most complete sense, it will be realized when the Messiah comes, when the observance in all the Mitzvot associated with the Mikdash Temple will be restored and our people will devote all their energies to this

goal. Similarly, the effect of the Mitztvot in the world at large will be completed. There will be no pressure or disturbances hindering the observance of the Torah. Furthermore, knowledge, wisdom, and truth will be abundant.

In the laws of Kings. [19] Maimonides explains that there is a relationship of cause and effect between the obstacles and the generous flow of the divine beneficence. " There will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition, for good things will flow in abundance". For this relationship to the affected not only must man receivers the divine blessings, but he must also be conscious of them.

Furthermore for this reason he emphasizes that in the time of the Messiah " good things will flow in abundance and all the delights will be freely available. Being involved in material delights in the time of the Messiah is however somewhat problematic. At a time when humanity and the world at large will be refined and elevated to a state of perfection, it is difficult to conceive a man that would choose to invest his time in physical delights, by stating it will be" as freely available as dust". Although they will be accessible to man and he will partake of them for the sake of his health, he will consider them like dust as being worthless.

Although we will live in an Era of material prosperity our attention will not be focused on it. Rather the occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D. Is part of our Mitzvoth according to Torah. This implies two concepts. One. Because good things will flow in abundance in all the delights will be freely available, and we will be able to direct all of our energies to the study of Torah. Two. More particularly, our energies will be directed to the knowledge of G-D.

At present our study of Torah has many different objectives, most obvious among them and knowledge of how to perform the Mitzvot, however in the Era of redemption our study of the Torah will have a single goal, the knowledge of G-D. In that

Era we will still observe the Mitzvot in perception. Nevertheless since nothing will disturb our Torah study, we will be able to learn how to observe the mitzvot perfectly into a relatively short time. Therefore our attention will be devoted into the deeper dimensions of Torah study.

And goes on to say [20] "for the world will be filled with knowledge of G-D as the waters cover the ocean bed." this example of the water covering the ocean does not seem to fit with understanding, for covering implies is beyond comprehension, can just as the water concealed that what is in the sea.

To the contrary by quoting "for the world will be filled with knowledge of G-D as the waters cover the ocean bed." He highlights the manner in which the knowledge of G-D will permeate the world and the thought processes of every individual person. To understand the simile, the vast varieties of creatures that live on dry land are readily discernible as separate entities. [21]21

A vast multitude of creatures likewise inhabits the ocean, however when looking at the ocean, what we see is the ocean as a whole and not the particular entities which it contains. Similarly, although in the Era of the Redemption the world will continue to exist, individual creatures will lose consciousness of their separate identity and will be suffused with the knowledge of G-D.

The Era of the Redemption will not negate the world existence; on the contrary, it will affirm the true existence of the world. As Maimonides 94 bring in his very first law Yesodei Ha Torah 1:1 " All the Beings of the heavens, the earth, and whatever is between them came into existence solely from the truth of His Being." And this how Maimonides begins and concludes the Mishnah Torah, the compendium of the entire Oral law. With this he emphasizes that the ultimate purpose of creation of the world will be when King Messiah Comes.

Maimonides begins by saying the first Mitzvoth is [22]“ to know that there is a G-D” and since one must know of G-D before any Mitzvoth therefore we can not say this is the first Mitzvoth. The Knowing of G-D .As the 22 Abarbernel writes, “The first Mitzvoth to believe that there is a G-D. We already know that he exists. Therefore we must say that it means, that G-D is complete and that he dose not need any thing, and that all, need him.” And this that “He Is” and needs no one is understood according to intellect, since he created intellect he is not bound by it. As explained by the Rasbah he can be two opposites and no rules apply.

We might further add that it will be an age of peace and plenty and the chief interest of man will be the knowledge of G-D. In that Maimonides in speaking of man’s objective, says in Moreh Nevukim [23] Guide to the perplexed“ the fourth kind of perfection is the true perfection of man, the possession of such notion which lead to true metaphysical opinions as regards G-D. With this perfection man has obtained his final object, it gives him true human perfection, it remains to him alone, it gives him immortality and in its account he is called man.”

Thus we see that Maimonides is of the conviction that immortality is based upon ideas, upon knowledge. “His (Man’s) aim must be the aim of man as man, viz., the formation of ideas and nothing else. The best and sublimes among them is the idea which man forms of G-D, angels and the rest of the creation according to his capacity.” Consequently the intellectual perfection attained by the soul of the righteous after death is the final purpose of human life.

Therefore the belief and knowledge of G-D in three stages. One: The general belief that G-D exists before the Mitzvoth. Two: The belief and knowledge according to intellect that he is the first. And all come from him. This is the first Mitzvah. Three: And even grater knowledge, that he is not limited by intellect. And the mind itself understands this. As

it says " the greatest knowledge that you do not know him." [24]

Likewise in Mitzvoth we also have three stages One: before any Mitzvoth, one must except the yoke of heaven, like when the Jews said before receiving the Torah we will "Do" and then we will hear. As the belief that G-D exists before the Mitzvoth of knowing G-D. Two: To understand with ones intellect the Mitzvoth, action to be able to do by learning Torah. Three: Great is study that brings to action. To fulfill because it his (G-D'S) will.

And the third stage will only be when the Messiah comes that one will be totally "Only to know G-D" [25] one will have no other motives even holy ones. Only for the sake of the knowledge and understanding of Torah. And not to be rewarded in the world to come. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D. The Jews and the nations of world will be free to study Torah and its wisdom.

In the words of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi: the founder of the Chabad branch of the Chassidic movement. Chabad (an acronym of the Hebrew words for "Wisdom, Understanding and Knowledge") is a philosophy and approach to life in which the mind and intellect play a key role in man's endeavor to serve his Creator.

Rabbi Schneur Zalman summarized the fundamentals of his philosophy in a slim volume known as "Tanya," on which he labored for twenty years. On the title page of Tanya, Rabbi Schneur Zalman states the aim of his book: to demonstrate how the fulfillment of the divine purpose in creation "is indeed exceedingly close, in a long and short way."

"The era of Moshiach ... is the culmination and fulfillment of the creation of our world—it is to this end that it was created... In the future [world of Moshiach], the light of G-d will be revealed without any obscuring garment, as it is

written: 'No longer shall your Master be shrouded; your eyes shall behold your Master'[26].

"A semblance of this was already experienced on earth at the time that the Torah was given, as it is written: "You have been shown to know that the L-rd He is G-d, there is none else beside Him"[27] ... [But] then their existence was literally nullified by the revelation, as our sages have said, 'With each utterance [the people of Israel heard from G-d at Mount Sinai], their souls flew from their bodies...'[28]Yet in the end of days the body and the world will be refined, and will be able to receive the revelation of the divine light ... via the Torah."[29]

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