

The Rabbi Leadership

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The Rabbi Leadership

Introduction and Acknowledgements

THE ORTHODOX RABBI'S LEADERSHIP AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

By : Yakov J. D. Cohen

The Rabbi and the People. This study of rabbi's past, present including leaders of the generations beginning with Moses and the Maimonides in the twelve century Spain and Egypt

The Rabbi's Moses and Maimonides were obviously head and shoulders above the ordinary rabbi however their leadership will act, as a history of past, present, and future leader should be aware of, and to use as guide.

The review of the yeshiva in the last few hundred years as the Rabbi serving as the head , on to more recently with the founding of the Lubavitcher Yeshiva with the Rebbe at it's leader Rabbi J I Schneerson during the world war II and on to the USA with his successor Reabbi M. M. Schneerson in post war serving as a Rebbe that Rabbi's and lay people find leadership and guidance.

The review of the first Rabbi Moses our teacher for all rabbi's to emulate as his self-sacrifice for the Jewish people, we will study his unprecedented leadership that like Torah is timeless.

The great Halachic (Jewish Law) rulings of Rabbi Moses

Maimonides regarding the Messianic Laws in his compendium of the entire Oral law.

We will go into great detail as he continues in the last two chapters of the Mishnah Torah a digest of the great Torah scholars as well as his contributions to philosophy and medicine.

The essence of any great leader that have led the Jewish people in our long journey of exile into the footsteps of redemption have all way looked at our first redeemer Moses that led the Jewish nation out of Egypt to be come the chosen people.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe has talked and written much about Moses and our times and the redemption of Moshiach. Our sages tell us that everyone has within himself a spark of Moses and Moshiach that we must revile.

The verses establish the third principle that is fundamental to the Jewish belief in Moshiach: that the Torah's commandments are the ultimate blueprint for life on earth, and that there will come a day when the divine plan for creation will be fully realized in our world. For certainly, as Maimonides puts it, "G-d did not command it in vain."

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I also wish to dedicate this work to the memory of my mother Esther a"s, and to my children Mina, Hadassah, Chana.

And may we all be united with Moshiach in the holy city of Jerusalem now.

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Chapter one

THE ROLE OF THE RABBI

Rabban Gamliel the son of Rabbi Judah HaNassi would say... Be careful of the government, for they befriend a person only for their own needs. They appear to be friends when it is beneficial to them, but they do not stand by a person at the time of his distress. Ethics of the Fathers 2:3

Rabban Gamliel is not only speaking to community leaders and political activists, but to each and every one of us. From the moment that Moses place his hands upon the head of his student Joshua and ordained him as the new leader of the Jewish people of Israel, (Numbers 27:18) Jews through out history have looked to their rabbis for guidance and leadership in an dynamic ever changing environment and governments, resulting in ever changing roles and expectations that communities have on their rabbis.¹

Among all who served as leaders in the Jewish community, whether they are scholars, educators or heads of community, none is as important as a rabbi, ² for leaders, to one degree or another, are depending upon the rabbi to analyze the Torah and mobilize community support for their goals and programs. In addition together with the synagogue as an institution, rabbis " have exercised the most profound influence upon the course of Jewish life throughout history". It would be not exaggerated to say that without them Judaism would have not survived the test of time ³

1 Henry Berkowitz, Intimate Glimpses of the Rabbi's Career (Cin. Hebrew Union College Press,1921),3.

2 Charles S. Liebman, The training of American rabbis, in American Jewish Yearbook 69 (1968)5.

3 Samuel Belkin, Essays in Traditional Jewish Thought (new York Philosophical Library, 1956), 154

Today at our current situation we require much guidance from all rabbis not only for its issues of Halakah whether the food is kosher, in today world with all current events taking place around the world especially in Israel the rabbis must be able to guide the Jewish people in today's difficult times.

There has been, however, no universally accepted view of what the role of the rabbi should be nor how he should relate to the American Jewish community. Some have looked upon the rabbinate essentially as it has functioned for centuries in Eastern Europe and others who sense that America is indeed different, acknowledging that "the openness of American society has created a whole new set of options for American Jews..".⁵

In the course of the last three to four decades, during which time the American rabbinate has firmly established itself as a vital force on the American Jewish society, ⁶ an increasing number of works have been published that offer an analysis and evaluation of the rabbinical seminary or of the rabbinate, by a number of individual rabbis, providing views from their unique perspectives. ⁷

⁵ Charles E. Silberman, "A Certain People " (New York Summit Books, 1985), 22.

⁷ Jeffrey S. Gurock " Resister and Accommodators: Varieties of Orthodox Rabbi, 1886-1983, The American Rabbinate , ed. Jacob Rader Marcus and Abraham J. Peck (New Jersey Ktav Publishing House 1985),10-69.

However according to Stern ⁸ no study has been made of the orthodox rabbi in his congregation and how the training he received in preparation for his professional role furthermore, no definite procedure for the evaluation of an orthodox rabbis professional performance as determined by a universally accepted understanding of the professional expectations of the orthodox rabbinate has ever been presented.

As recently as 1991, the rabbinical of America appointed a committee on the professional rabbinate to establish current guidelines to govern the relationship between the orthodox rabbi and his congregation. Now it was not a study of the

rabbinate, the committee's report reflects the difficulty in its evaluation. The scope of the rabbi's responsibilities is very comprehensive that an evaluation cannot be accomplished.⁹

⁸Frank Elash Stern, Factors Influencing the Career Decisions of North American Reform Rabbis (Ph.D. diss., University of Ca. Riverside, 1983), 2-3

⁹ Guidelines for the Relationship Between Rabbi and Congregation, Committee on the Professional Rabbinate, Rabbinical of America, New York: 1991.

IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

The rabbi are the major leader in both Rabbinic and political issues that serve the Jewish people and need to operate in a professional manor in order to have the support of the people.

This study investigated the difference between the expectations of what areas are most important for the rabbi that are currently working on a professional level.

The opportunities for rabbinic training in homiletics, pastoral counseling, Halakha , Moshiach, care for the aged and out reach programs to the not yet orthodox to name a few.

The importance of this study and specific demands made by the rabbinic profession at seeing in the eyes of the professional rabbi. The research would provide data that would enable the rabbinical college to best select the knowledge and skills to be taught that would ultimately enable the future rabbis to serve their communities with their many problems, conflicts and challenges. The accurate and precise the knowledge and skills to be taught, the more appropriate will be the training to experience and more fully will our future rabbinic leaders be ready to guide, teach minister and lead those who look to them for all this and a lot more.

HYPOTHESIS

The specific focus of this study will be an analysis of the Rabbinical Leadership is the past and the opinions of the rabbinical student from Central Lubavitcher Yeshiva Tomchei Tmimim Brooklyn, New York and the opinions of the professional Rabbi. There will be significant differences in the rank orders of the importance of specific rabbinic functions between new rabbi's students and professional rabbis.

There will be a significant difference in the importance of rabbinic leadership from the professional rabbi to the rabbinical student. This study will not take into account the following considerations the marital status of the membership nor the financial status.

LIMITATIONS

The proposed study will have the following limitations in design.

The sample

All the students in this study are students of the orthodox Lubavitcher Yeshiva Tomchei Tmimim. While it is likely that application on the findings to students of other orthodox rabbinical seminary may be appropriate, application of the findings to students of the non- orthodox seminary may not be appropriate. As many questions asked to the respondents relate specifically to orthodox Jewish living.

ASSUMPTIONS

It is assumed that the students and rabbis in this study will

share the common desire to assume that American orthodox Jewish communities are served by the most professionally prepared rabbis on United Lubavitcher Yeshiva is able to produce.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Congregation

In this study, the term congregations is viewed as an organized body of Jews who maintain an orthodox synagogue for worship, religious instruction and all other forms of social interaction.

Halakha

Body of Jewish religious law.

Chinuch

Jewish education, Hebrew day schools.

Kashrut

—

Jewish religious law that forbids the consumption of the meat of certain animals, fowl and fish and their products. As well as the separation of meat and milk.

Tephillin

Two square black boxes that containing holy biblical passages and traditionally worn on the left arm and on the head of

Jewish men over 13 years old on weekday mornings.

Talmud

The tomes of the Oral Law that discuss and elaborate upon the bible.

Family Purity

Jewish religious laws that forbids sexual relations between husband and wife and restricts physical contact between them during the wife's menstrual flow, until she goes to a Mikvah.

Orthodox Judaism

Judaism that adheres to the Torah and Talmud as interpreted by the code of Jewish law Shulhan Aruka

Applies their principles and regulations to everyday modern living.

Sefer Torah

Parchment scroll of the Pentateuch.

Moshiach

The Era of Redemption by the Jewish Messiah. According to Maimonides one of the principles of faith.

Rabbinical Student

Final year students studying rabbinical ordination to obtain degree to become a rabbi.

Chapter two

THE REVIEW OF RELATED LITRATURE

THE YESHIVA AND THE RABBINICAL SEMINARY

With the end of second Temple 3338 BC. And indeed from the time the Jewish people were first exiled from Israel. The yeshiva was the center of the Jewish nation. In the past few hundred years prior to the nineteenth century, the yeshiva was a local community organization.¹⁰ The yeshiva was managed the local the people and a majority of the students came from the local community. Among local students would be a numbered young married that would be dependent on their in laws, wife and local charities to be supported. Each day the local orthodox rabbi would give lectures and served has the head of the yeshiva.¹¹

At the beginning of the nineteenth century a number of new yeshivos were established in Europe. These yeshivos were very different from the local community yeshiva, as they were not focus only on the local rabbi and students rather the entire Jewish nation in that country.

¹⁰ Simcha Asaf, Merkorot l'Toldot (Tel Aviv:Dvir Co Ltd.,1936), Vol.III, 170-179.

¹¹ Menachem Friedman, “ The Changing

Role", The Jerusalem Quarterly 25 (Fall 1982): 85.

THE UNITED LUBAVITCHER YESHIVA

Lubavitcher Yeshiva Tomchei Tmimim was established in 1897 by the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Shalom Dov Ber Schneerson.¹² Soon the foresight of the Lubavitcher Rebbes became apparent to all, as the students and graduates of Lubavitcher Yeshiva Tomchei Tmimim steadfastly maintained Jewish tradition, even in the face of hunger, bitter cold and relentless persecution. The Rebbe Rabbi Joseph I. Schneerson himself experienced harrowing imprisonment in 1927, for his continued activities to insure a Jewish education for the next generation.

In 1933, the Rebbe Rayyatz Rabbi Joseph I. Schneerson settled in Warsaw, Poland, where he had previously established a Lubavitcher Yeshiva 12 years before. Now it became the central Lubavitcher Yeshiva with high scholastic standards. In 1936, it moved with the Rebbe to Otvotzk, outside of Warsaw. Meanwhile, affiliate Yeshivos were founded in various Polish and Lithuanian cities, educating many hundreds of students.

The Rebbe Rayyatz Rabbi Joseph I. Schneerson survived the bombing of Warsaw and the occupation of Poland by Germany. He arrived in New York in early spring of 1940. Although physically broken from his experiences, he remained strong in spirit and conviction. ¹³

¹² Beis Rebbe, (Brooklyn, New York, Kehot Publication Society. 1965)

¹³ Heroic Stuggle (Brooklyn, New York, Kehot Publication Society. 1980)

"The Divine hand has saved my life so that I may

turn America into a land of Torah,” proclaimed the Rebbe upon arrival at the New York harbor.¹⁴ “America is no different from the old country, for G-d and His Torah are timeless.” He announced immediate establishment of a new central Lubavitcher Yeshiva, and studies began the next morning.

In the 40’s the Yeshiva was established on Bedford Avenue in Brooklyn 15 and then moved to the building on Ocean Parkway, which still houses the Lubavitcher Yeshiva elementary school. The Yeshiva’s doors were open to students regardless of previous academic studies and regardless of whether or not they were able to pay the tuition. It was a particularly welcoming Yeshiva for new immigrants to the United States from far flung Jewish communities around the world.

At the time when the Rebbe Rayatz passed away, in 1950, the American ‘ice’ had long been broken.¹⁶ Under his son-in-law, Rabbi Shmaryahu Gourary, the Yeshiva expanded and flourished. Assuming leadership of Chabad Lubavitch, the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the younger son-in-law of the Rebbe Rayatz, has overseen numerous branches of new Lubavitcher Yeshivos, opening in dozens of cities around the globe.

¹⁴Marking of Chassidim (Brooklyn, New York, Kehot Publication Society. 1985)

¹⁵ ULY Dinner Journal (Brooklyn, New York 2001)

¹⁶ Ibid.

THE CENTRAL YESHIVA AT 770 EASTERN PARKWAY TODAY

From Lubavitch, Rostov, Warsaw and Otvotzk, the Central Lubavitcher Yeshiva Tomchei Tmimim is now located 770 Eastern Parkway, the very nucleus of the world Lubavitch movement. ¹⁷

Torah Scholars from all over the world seeking high standards of Torah studies flock to The Central Yeshiva each year, participating in the intense learning program and taking the challenging examinations to receive their rabbinical ordination. Each year hundreds of new students come to the Central Yeshiva from Israel alone, joining hundreds from other countries, such as South America, Argentina, Australia, England and countries across Europe.

During their years of study at '770,' the students receive practice in delivering lectures and writing Talmudic essays. They gain valuable experience in teaching, shechita (ritual slaughtering), safrus (scribal arts) and organizing outreach programs. 18

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

In the summer months, the students take on responsibilities as head counselors in camps and youth group leaders in summer programs the world over, from Honolulu, Hawaii to Tashkent in Siberia. Many participate in a program known as 'Merkos Shlichus,' where they set out to places of low Jewish population, not usually visited by Rabbis. They will be found visiting Jews in small towns in British Columbia, Canada and in the remote countryside of Idaho. They bring mezuzahs with them, Jewish books and a friendly smile for everyone. On Pesach, one hundred and fifty students travel to the Former Soviet Union to conduct seders for Jews in metropolitan areas, as well as isolated villages. Yearly Seders are conducted by the rabbinical students for the thousands of Israeli backpackers in Tibet and Nepal as well as Chili, Bolivia and Peru.19

The studies, the training and the outreach programs, of the students of 770, are all permeated with commitment to Yiddishkeit and Ahavas Yisroel (caring for one another through action as well as emotion), as future world leaders diligently prepare themselves for their colossal task ahead.²⁰

19 Merkos Shlichus, A Panorama (Brooklyn, New York, Kehot Publication Society. 1970)

20 Ibid.

NINETEEN-CENTURY EUROPE

During the early eighteen hundreds, the Reform Movement had significant success in drawing away communities in Germany away from Orthodox Judaism. The introduction of the "Science of Judaism" ²¹ States "had resulted in the deepening of the schism between the followers of the reformers and the followers Orthodox. The new science constituted a departure from the traditional manner in which Jewish studies have been taught. This science refused to tolerate an attitude of unconditional discipleship to the spirit and content of the Jewish Scripture. It placed this study of the Torah on a level with other scientific research.²² The methodology of the biblical criticism was applied to the Torah resulting in the destruction of the belief in its holiness. ²³ The fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Shalom Dov Ber Schneerson came out strongly opposing the Reform movement known as the Haskalah movement ²⁴ and met with leaders of his generation to condemn the Haskalah movement.

21 Hermann Schwab, The History of Orthodox Jewry in Germany (London, Mitre Press,1950),35.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.,36

24 Haskalah movement, (Brooklyn, New York, Kehot Publication Society. 1965)

The roots of American Conservative Judaism can be traced to the Breslau Seminary in Germany 1854, the first rabbinical college in Germany. The mission of these and other rabbinical seminary was to expose the students to the breath of Jewish culture, including Bible, Talmud, Midrash, history and rabbinical literature. It was also their objective to teach the students to analyze and utilize the scientific method of study to be dispassionately when reading the holy ancient texts.²⁵

In 1873 Israel Hildesheimer founded the Rabbinerseminar fur das Orthodox Judaism in Berlin. It was to be the answer to the intellectual problem of the nineteenth century, that challenged traditional Judaism in the modern age.²⁶ He recognize that a rabbi required more of an education than just Talmud, and for subjects other than Talmud the study pattern should follow that on the universities.²⁷ At the same time the religious standards and ideology of is seminary were different from the non orthodox seminary, including the study of Talmud, Shulhan Aruka, all biblical literature with the classical commentaries, philosophy, history, Hebrew literature and Jewish folklore.

25 Scharfstein, Vol. 1,131.

26 Isi Jacob Eisner, "Reminiscences of the Berlin Rabbinical Seminary," in Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XII (1967) 37.

27 Libmam, 7-8

28 Shulvaas, Ibid., 997-700.

In London, Jews College was established in 1855. The inaugural meeting was convened by the Chief Rabbi, Dr. Nathan Marcus Adler as a response to an acknowledged and troubling lack of English trained rabbinic leaders. The chief rabbi presented a proposal to offer a general education with strong Jewish training. His objective was to prepare students to attend University College, London to acquire higher secular education as well as Jews College, for the appropriate theological and scholars training and preparation in order to assumed a rabbinic position. Lastly, he also sought to maintain the objectives of the traditional Beth HaMedrash.²⁹ Jews College has become one of England's great institution's of Jewish learning. Its graduates have served through out Great Britain and it has counted among its alumni those who have served as the chief rabbi of the British Commonwealth, the rabbis of the Sephardic communities of Great Britain, several Dayanim of the London Beth Din and the Jews College itself. ³⁰

29 Israel Cohen, "Dr. Michael Friedlander", in Men of the Spirit, ed. Leo Jung (New York : Kymson Publishing Company, 1964), 470-472.

30 Albert M. Hyamson, Jews' College (Great Britain : R. H. Johns Limited, 1954), 127.

THE NON-ORTHODOX RABBINATE

In his discussion of the non orthodox rabbinate, Simon Greenberg book ³¹ Understanding American Judaism asserts that " no profession feels that it plays a role in the communal

decision making process commensurate with its own conception of the knowledge, skill and general competence of its practitioners.” He further states the undefined focus of the rabbinate as a profession, both in the minds of the rabbis and the community, is responsible for the tension between the rabbi and the community.” The American Rabbinate .. is.. search of its identity.”³² As we see today that the American rabbi has seemingly endless number and the variety of expectations from the congregation and communities have on them.³³

31 Simon Greenberg, “ The Rabbinate and the Jewish Community Structure” in Understanding American Judaism; Toward the Description of a Modern Religion. (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc, 1975), 117.

32 Ibid., 118.

33 Simon Greenberg, “ The Rabbi as Darshan,” Judaism 40 No.4 (Fall 1991) , 471 –483.

THE ORTHODOX RABBINATE

In contrast to the relatively recent history of the non-orthodox rabbinate, orthodox rabbinic scholars have authored, during the last two thousand years, more than one million responsa and other great literary works. The works have been in legal, as in the Mishne Torah of Moses Maimonides and philosophy and folklore based on the biblical texts as will explain in the following chapter.

This entire body of literature, while providing guidance and insight regarding the fulfillment of the Torah principles, only presumes the apparentness of a rabbinic authority to guide the application of these laws. Entire collections of responsa devote little, if any attention to the rabbi within

the community. Even in vast work as the *St'dei Chemed*, 34 Deals primarily with discussions of the rabbi addresses the matter of identifying an appropriate responsa. Discussions' regarding the role of the rabbi in a community does not appear until the eighteenth century.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Germany (1808-1888) authored a number of articles devoted to the Jewish community in the course of his struggle with the successes of the reform movement in Germany in the later half of the nineteenth century.

34 *Sedi Chemed*, Marechet 20, Klal 31. (Brooklyn, New York, Kehot Publication Society. 1965)

In an article entitled " Jewish communal life" that appeared in the first number of the monthly magazine " Jeshurun" he states that it is the responsibility of every Jewish community to promote the knowledge and understanding of religious law, the regular practice and observance of the law, and respect and caring in inter-personal relationships. Communities must provide "schools and colleges... congregations, slaughterhouses, Mikvahs, Kosher and matzah bakeries, distributed charity funds, associations for the sick and watching the dead, cemetery." 35

Hirsch also clearly states that the community must have a rabbi to supervise these institutions to ensure that the law is properly observed. It is therefore, the duty of the rabbi to teach the law and create an atmosphere in the community to enhance its observance. The rabbi is to serve as the final and highest authority in private or public matters which are to be determined in accordance with religious law. 36 Hirsch also focuses on the growing chasm between the individual members of the community will play on role in the community, and a few lay people who share with the rabbis responsibility for the

development of the community

35 Ibid., 105-106

36 Ibid.

He declares that " Jewish communal life is not embodied in its representatives". Neither a contribution to the communal fund nor the casting of a paper into the ballot box fulfills one's responsibility to the community. If religious welfare is not being promoted and does not flourish within the community or if communal funds are not being used for their stated purpose, no individual is absolved from taking the necessary steps to assure such development. "Above in heaven nothing is known of Laity and Clergy". 37 Every person in an equally responsible member of the community is held accountable for the role he plays within it.

In Hirsch's view, it is the responsibility of the rabbi to motivate and excite the members of his community to greater religious and spiritual attainment.

37 Ibid., 98-99.

Chapter Three

Chapter three

THE REVIEW OF THE FIRST RABBI

The question one may ask "Was Moses Orthodox?" let's take a step back. Rather than trying to determine the validity of "orthodoxy," we should figure out what, in fact, makes a Jew a

Jew?

Is it culture? Education? Observance? Personality? Genes? History? Programming? Anti-Semitism? Chicken soup? The list goes on.

The answer is simple. What makes you human-and most importantly, what makes you a Jew-is one thing and one thing only: your soul, your Neshomo.

In fact, you are your soul, contained in the vehicle of the body. Your soul is shaped by G-d in His own Divine image. This soul is an "inalienable right" of every human being, unalterable and no arbitrary. Just as G-d is immutable, so too is the soul. 38 Fundamental to Torah thought is that nothing-no action, no behavior-can alter the essential Divine nature of the soul. The soul is eternal; a Jew has a unique Jewish soul. 39

38 Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, Likutei Amarim, Tanya, chapter 2 (Brooklyn, New York, Kehot Publication Society. 1960)

39 Ibid.,

Even if a person, G-d forbid, sins and transgresses, there is always the hope for teshuvah (atonement). Maimonides wrote, "The Torah assures that at the end of exile Jews will ultimately do teshuvah." 40 Even if one does not atone, the affect of his behavior is on his body and the relationship of the body to the soul;

On the soul. There is, unequivocally, no such thing (in Judaism) as eternal damnation of the soul.

This is not an opinion or a viewpoint, but a fundamental component of Jewish faith-faith in the immortality of G-d and the Divine soul, and absolute belief in the realization of G-d

's plan for existence. Judaism teaches that evil is transient and good is eternal. Good must and will prevail. This is the entire basis of our belief in the Messiah and redemption: that the world will realize the purpose for which it was created. Anything less questions the validity of G-d Himself. 41

40 Rabbi Moses Maimonides, Mishne Torah Yad Hachzakah, Introduction

41 Ibid.,

The well-known statement from Hillel reads, "Love all creatures, and bring them close to Torah." 42 When Hillel uses a seemingly strange expression, "creatures" instead of "people," he is reminding us somewhat arrestingly that even if a person has no apparent quality or virtue, he must be loved by the mere virtue of being G-d's creature; G-d chose to create him or her and that is the greatest reason to love one another. We therefore love everyone unconditionally, including a criminal and someone who is not living up to his calling.

It does not stop there. True unconditional love also means that you want the best for your beloved. Thus Hillel continues: "And bring them closer to Torah." 43 Love for your fellow man dictates that you do everything in your power to inspire and motivate him to live up to his greatest potential. I may therefore disagree with another Jew's behavior or choices, but I never disagree with the person. I embrace him as my brother, both of us children of G-d.

42 Ethics of the Fathers 1:13

43 bid.

THE ANONYMOUS ESSENCE

And Moses returned to G-d and said: "I beseech You: this nation has sinned a great sin, and have made themselves a god of gold. Now, if You will forgive their sin—; and if You will not, erase me from the book that You have written."

And G-d said to Moses: "Whoever has sinned against Me, him will I erase from My book."

Exodus 32:31-33

No human being is as deeply identified with the Torah as Moses: the prophet goes so far as to refer to the revealed wisdom of G-d as "The Torah of My servant Moses." 44 As the Midrash explains, "Because he gave his life for it, it is called by his name." 45

And yet, there was one thing that was even more important to Moses than his connection with the Torah: his connection with the people of Israel. In order to secure G-d's forgiveness of Israel for their sin in worshipping the Golden Calf, Moses was prepared to forgo his place in the Torah. Following Israel's transgression, Moses gave G-d an "ultimatum": if you cannot forgive them, obliterate my name from the book that You have written.

44 Malachi 3:22. Cf. "The Five Books of Moses."

45 Mechilta Beshalach 15:1.

Our sages tell us that "the righteous emulate their Creator." 46 The same is true in this case: in giving precedence to Israel over Torah, Moses was following the divine example. As the Midrash states, "Two things preceded G-d's creation of the world: Torah and Israel. Still, I do not know which preceded which. But when Torah states 'Speak to the children of Israel...,' 'Command the children of Israel...'-I know

that Israel preceded all” 47

In other words, since G-d’s purpose in His creation of the universe is that the people of Israel should implement His will as outlined in the Torah, the concepts of “Torah” and “Israel” both precedes the concept of a “world” in the Creator’s “mind.” Yet which is the more deeply rooted idea within the divine consciousness, Torah or Israel? Does Israel exist in order that the Torah might be implemented, or does the Torah exist in order to serve the Jew in the fulfillment of his mission and the realization of his relationship with G-d? Says the Midrash: 48if the Torah describes itself as a communication to Israel, this presumes the concept of Israel as primary to that of Torah. The very idea of a Torah was conceived by the divine mind as a tool to enhance the bond between G-d and His people—a bond that “predates” it and which it comes to serve.

46 Midrash Rabbah, Bereishit 67:8.

47 Tana D’vei Eliyahu Rabbah, ch. 14.

48 Ibid.,

Thus our sages have said: “A Jew, though he has sinned, is still a Jew.” 49 Even if the Jew sins, thereby violating his relationship with G-d as defined by Torah, he is still a Jew. For the essence of his relationship with G-d runs deeper than that aspect of it that is realized through his fulfillment of the divine will as formulated in the Torah.

Therein lies the deeper significance of Moses’ declaration to G-d, “...if You will not [forgive them], erase me from the book that You have written,” and G-D’s response, “Whoever has sinned against Me, him will I erase from My book.” At first

glance, Moses' words, dramatic and moving as they are, are very puzzling: other than its dubious value as some sort of "threat" to G-d (?), how would Moses' eradication from the Torah (G-d forbid) help the people of Israel attain atonement for their sin?

G-D's reply also requires explanation. G-d seems to be rejecting Moses' plea, saying, in effect, "I will do what I see fit with My Torah. You are in; they go out." But that is not what G-d does. He forgives the Jewish people and gives them a second set of tablets engraved by His hand with the Ten Commandments to replace those broken as a result of their sin. Moses' words have their desired effect: the Jewish people are rehabilitated, and their place in Torah is preserved, even enhanced. 50

49 Talmud, Sanhedrin 44a.

50 Midrash Rabbah, Shemot 46:1 and Talmud, Nedarim 22b, .

But according to what we said above, we can understand the deeper stratum of meaning implicit in their exchange. True, Moses is saying to G-d, Your people have sinned a great sin. A sin so great, a sin that so acutely violates Your relationship with them as formulated in Your "marriage contract" 51 with them, the Torah, that in terms of this relationship, their betrayal is unpardonable. But Your bond with them runs deeper than Torah, deeper than anything that can be expressed or destroyed by their deeds. If You cannot forgive them, it is because You are continuing to relate to them on Torah's terms, continuing to define Your bond with them on a level on which their sin cannot be tolerated.

Well, said Moses, I, for one, will not accept such a state of affairs. If there is no way that Torah allows for their forgiveness, then erase me from the Torah. Erase (cut) me out of the very thing that has consumed my mind, heart and life so

completely that the book that You have written has come to be called “the Torah of Moses.” 52 Strip me of my very identity; so that I shall stand denuded of all save my very essence—my relationship with my people.

51 Talmud, Berachot 57a on Deuteronomy 33:4; Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 30; Rashi, Exodus 34:1.

52 Ibid.,

Now it was the Creator who emulated the righteous. “Whoever has sinned against me, him will I erase from My book,” G-d promised. Those whom Torah cannot forgive, those with whom I can no longer sustain the relationship delineated by My book, I will exempt from My book. I will transcend My Torah to revert to the quintessential bond between them and Myself that precedes and supersedes My word, wisdom and will. I will follow your example, Moses, you who are prepared to relinquish everything you have and are, should it interfere with your most quintessential priority: your oneness with your people.

Ultimately, Israel’s “erasure” from the Torah resulted not in a diminution, G-d forbid, of their Torah-defined relationship with the Almighty, but, on the contrary, in its reinforcement and intensification. For once the quintessential bond between G-d and Israel had been reiterated, this selfsame relationship could now be manifested via the vehicle of Torah, which would now be “broadened” to accommodate that which earlier was beyond its realm. Torah would now incorporate the highest level of teshuvah (“return”)—the level on which “sins are transformed into virtues” 53 and the greatest failing and the most terrible betrayal can be sublimated into even greater achievement and even deeper connection.

53 Talmud, Yoma 86b.

In the words of our sages, “The First Tablets contained only the Ten Commandments. The Second Tablets contained also Halachah, Midrash and Aggadah.” 54 “Had Israel not sinned with the Golden Calf, they would have received only the five books of Moses and the book of Joshua. Why? Because, as the verse says, ‘Much 55 wisdom comes through much grief.’ 56

The same is true regarding Moses: his readiness to divest himself, G-d forbid, of his identity as the vehicle through whom G-d communicated His Torah to man, actually resulted in a deepening of his identification with Torah, as we shall see. 57

Given the centrality of Moses’ role to the transmission of Torah to humanity, it comes as no surprise that his name is mentioned, often as much as several dozen times, in every single parshah (section) of the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers.58

55 Midrash Rabbah, Exodus 46:1.

56 Ecclesiastes 1:18.

57 Talmud, Nedarim 22b. As Chassidic teaching explains, the “Oral Torah” –the dimension to Torah that was added in the wake of Israel’s sin, G-d’s forgiveness, and re-issue of Torah in its “broadened” form –is synonymous with the concept of teshuvah, as it employs the doubt, contradiction and refuted assumptions that are part of every intellectual discourse (and reach their height in the pilpul of the Babylonian Talmud) to achieve an even deeper appreciation of a truth than is possible by the more “tranquil” approach of faith and tradition (see Yom Tov Shel Rosh Hashanah 5666, pp. 85-93; Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat, vol. I, pp. 364-370; et al.).

58 The first of the Five Books of the Torah, Genesis, relates events that occurred before Moses’ birth. The fifth book,

Deuteronomy, consists wholly of Moses' words to the people of Israel before his passing.

Every parshah (section), that is, but one. The single exception is the parshah of Tetzaveh (Exodus 27:20-30:10), in which the word "Moses" does not appear. Most amazingly, Tetzaveh is the section that, by rights, should be most saturated with Moses' name: in the annual Torah-reading cycle, Tetzaveh is almost always read either on the Shabbat preceding the 7th of Adar or on the Shabbat that follows it.⁵⁹ Adar 7 is the day most closely related to the life of Moses, as it is both the date of his birth (in the year 2368 from Creation—1393 BCE), and the date of his passing (2488—1273 BCE).

In his commentary on Torah, the Baal haTurim ⁶⁰ explains this omission as the result of Moses' words, "erase me from the book that You have written." Our sages have said that the words of a tzaddik, even when expressed conditionally, always have an effect. ⁶¹ So once Moses uttered these fateful words, they were destined to somehow be realized. Thus, concludes the Baal haTurim, even after G-d forgave the Jewish people and the conditions for Moses' proclamation no longer applied, there remains one section of the Torah devoid of his name.⁶²

⁵⁹ Cf. Shaloh, introduction to Parshat Vayeishev: " 'To everything there is its season, the appointed time for each purpose' (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Certainly, the arrangements of the festivals and days of commemoration of the year, both the [biblical] 'seasons of G-d' and those rabbinically ordained ... all have a connection to the [weekly] parshah in which they fall, for all is arranged by the hand of G-d."

⁶⁰ Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher, 1268-1340.

⁶¹ Talmud, Makot 11a.

62 Baal HaTurim on Exodus 27:20.

But upon closer examination, Moses is hardly absent from the section of Tetzaveh—indeed, he is more profoundly present there than any mention of his name could possibly express. Tetzaveh consists entirely of G-D's ongoing communication to Moses, instructing him with the details of the menorah-lighting in the Sanctuary, the construction of the priestly garments, and the Sanctuary's inauguration. All that is missing is the customary "G-d spoke to Moses, saying..." that precedes the divine directives in the rest of the Torah. Thus, Tetzaveh begins almost in mid-sentence: "And you [Moses] shall command the children of Israel to bring you pure olive oil, crushed for illumination, to light up a constant lamp..."

On the surface, there is a diminution of Moses' presence—his name does not appear in the entire parshah. But he is the subject of its first word, v'atah, "and you"—a word that is a truer and deeper reference to Moses than his name. A name, after all, is something that is given to a person, something appended to an already existent being (in Moses' case, the name "Moses" was given to him by Pharaoh's daughter when he was more than three months old); "you," on the other hand, is a reference to the person himself. Thus, a person's "name" represents his manifest self—his intellect and character, his communicable thoughts and feelings—while the abstract "you" refers to his anonymous essence, anonymous because it is too sublime and ethereal to be articulated. 63 Tetzaveh is thus the parshah in Torah that embodies the "you" of Moses, his transcendent essence.

63 Our sages have said that a person's name is the conduit of his life, the channel that carries the flow of vitality from his soul to his body (Shaar haGilgulim, Hakdamah 23, et al.). But this itself indicates that it is secondary to the person's very essence, as "the soul, prior to its entry into the body,

has no name whatsoever (Likkutei Torah, Behar 41c).

This is fully in keeping with the Baal haTurim's explanation that Moses' anonymity in Tetzaveh is the result of his expressing the possibility that he be erased from G-d's book. Moses was prepared to forgo his place in Torah because his bond with his people was on the level of his "you," his truest, most quintessential self—a self even deeper than his connection to the Torah. In effect, Moses actually did obliterate his "name"—his identification with Torah—in order to be one with his people. As a result, G-d, too, was moved to forgo His insistence on relating to His people on the "name" level—i.e., on Torah's terms 64—and to reaffirm His quintessential bond with them. This was followed by a renewed giving of the Torah in which this deeper bond could also be "named" and expressed. Nevertheless, even after Moses' and Israel's identity were re-grounded in Torah, there remains one parshah—the parshah most intimately related to Moses—in which his anonymous essence reigns supreme, unencumbered by name and name-defined identity. Tetzaveh stands as an eternal tribute to Moses, as the Torah's own testimony to his greatness in relinquishing everything, including his bond with Torah, in order to preserve his bond with his people and restore them to their G-d.

64 The entire Torah is names of G-d" (Nachmanides' introduction to his commentary on Torah).

Moses Today

The "Mosesless" section of Tetzaveh attests to Moses' self-sacrifice for his people, and is an example and lesson for every leader of Israel. It is also of eternal relevance to each and every one of us.

We all sense that beyond our expressed self lies a deeper, more intimate self—thoughts, feelings, convictions and

potentials that are too sublime to articulate to others, or even to our own conscious self. But what effect does this deeper self have upon our actual behavior and accomplishments? Does it remain in a “seventh heaven” of abstraction, or can it somehow be made to impact our daily lives? We know that Moses, in his greatest moment, touched this purest core of self. But Moses was the most perfect human being to ever walk the face of earth; 65 what do his achievements imply to us?

The Talmud cites the verse “And now, Israel, what does G-d want of you? Only that you be in awe of G-d...,” 66 and asks: “Is awe of G-d a minor thing?” The answer given is: “Yes, for Moses it is a minor thing.”67 But G-d’s request is addressed to all of Israel. How does Moses’ capacity for the awe of G-d answer the question?

65 Maimonides’ introduction to chapter Chelek, principle 7.

66 Deuteronomy 10:12.

67 Talmud, Berachot 33b.

Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi explains: “Each and every soul of the house of Israel contains within it something of the quality of our teacher Moses, for he is one of the ‘seven shepherds’ who feed vitality and G-dliness to the community of the souls of Israel... Moses is the sum of them all, called the ‘shepherd of faith’ 67 in the sense that he nourishes the community of Israel with the knowledge and recognition of G-d.”68

Indeed, it was Moses’ uncompromising identification with his people, no matter to what depths they might have fallen, that ensured that each and every Jew, regardless of his spiritual station and moral circumstances, possesses, and can readily access, the “Moses” within him—his quintessential source of faith and oneness with his Creator. 69

67 Raaya mehemna, usually translated “faithful shepherd”; here Rabbi Schneur Zalman renders it “shepherd of faith,” in the sense that Moses is Israel’s conduit of faith, the one who inculcates them with their quintessential recognition of G-d as a shepherd who feeds his flocks their vital needs.

68 Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, Likutei Amarim, Tanya, chapter 42 (Brooklyn, New York, Kehot Publication Society. 1960)

69 Based on the Rebbe’s talks, Shabbat Tetzaveh 5740 and 5751 (March 1, 1980; February 23,1991)

Now let us once again consider the question of Moses’ religious “affiliation.” So again we ask, was Moses an “Orthodox Jew?”

The word “orthodox” has been politicized and bureaucratized. To most secular people it does not mean “Torah observant” and “G-d- fearing Jew.” It means a “political party,” a “dogmatic minority” that wants control and power, and imposes its will on others. For better or worse, this is the way “orthodoxy” has been “spun,” and this is its image in many people’s minds. They do not see Orthodox Jews as G-dlier people.

Who can say that they are wrong? How many Jews have been “turned off” of Judaism for legitimate reasons, escaping religiously oppressive homes, experiencing deep alienation in synagogues and with rabbis who are bureaucratic, punitive, angry, hypocritical or even abusive, all supposedly in the name of “orthodoxy” and fulfilling “G-d’s Will.” These rabbis miss the point, following the letter of the law while missing its spirit.

“Orthodox” often implies inflexible and stagnant. In truth, Halakha (Jewish law) also means halicho (motion), as it is a dynamic and live system. Not a throwback to archaic times, but

a vibrant approach to life, and one that continues to play infinitely new combinations of Divine music uses the same "musical notes" of our holy ancestors.

Nowhere in the Torah is there any mention of the word "orthodox," or in fact "reform" or "conservative." The denomination called "Orthodox Jewry" was created only after the birth of the reform and conservative movements in order to contrast between them, man-made labels and definitions have no place in a relationship between our souls and G-d. Each Jew should emulate Moses' uncompromising identification with his people.

THE WRITINGS OF RABBI MOSES MAIMONIDES

Maimonides began his literary career at an early age. His earliest work, written at the age of sixteen, was the *Millot ha-Higayon*; it is succinct exposition of the meaning of various technical terms in logic and metaphysics. It was written in Arabic and then translated into Hebrew

Another of this early works was his *Essay on the calendar*, written originally in Arabic but now available only in Hebrew translation.

The first great work of Maimonides was the commentary on the *Mishnah*, which he began at the age 23 and completed in ten years. 70 The *Mishnah* summarizes the opinion of the great master of the Jewish who functioned in the Palestinian academies until the third century of the Common Era. As Moses Maimonides states in his introduction to the commentary on the 71 *Mishnah*," I Moses the son of Maimon the Spaniard have built it, from the ocean of the Talmud did I draw it "it is doubtful that he traveled with an entire library Talmudic manuscripts. However his knowledge is vast.

70 Maimonides, Mose. Commentary on the Mishnah. 7 volumes. Arabic original with Hebrew translation by Joseph Kafih, Jerusalem, 1968.

71 Maimonides, Moses. Mishneh Torah : The Code of Maimonides. An English translation has had 13 volumes appear by 1977. Yale Judaica Series. New Haven.

The Babylonian and Palestinian Talmud's were based in it, and to that extent offered some exposition of it. He wrote it during his travels while having only limited sources of information.

His commentary is concerned with elucidating the individual passage as well as the larger themes to which it is addressed. He defines words and phrases, entering upon philosophical discussions when necessary. He supplies archaeological and scientific background to certain texts without which they cannot be understood.

His introductions and philosophical discussions have become famous in themselves without any reference to the text one of these is his historical introduction to the Mishnah, which include the thirteen principles of faith.

Maimonides spent another ten years in the compilation of what is known as the Mishnah Torah or Yad-Hazakah the mighty hand. It is a digest of all Jewish law, as Maimonides states that one needs only to study the Mishnah Torah or Yad-Hazakah to learn the entire Jewish law Torah. 72

The Mishnah Torah or Yad-Hazakah is a triumph of the art of systematization of the whole Torah. It brings together the entire Talmudic law as well as philosophy and folklore into one coherent whole, rendering final decisions as a guide to action.

Each of the thirteen books into which the code is divided deals with a number of commandments that comprises the general

theme. More than 200 commentaries have been written, dating back to the time when it was first written.

72 Ibid.,

The most imposing philosophical work of Maimonides was the *Moreh Nevuchim* or the guide to the perplexed. 73 He began working on it about the year 1185. He labored on it for approximately fifteen years it is the greatest philosophical work produced in Judaism. Its aim is to meet the challenge of Greek philosophy, especially that of Aristotle, Maimonides wrote this great work in Arabic, where it has been translated into Hebrew and English.

The *Moreh Nevuchim* or the guide to the perplexed is organized around the teachings of the bible, which require clarification. The importance of this work extends beyond the Jewish community. For a number of great philosophers like Thomas Aquinas and Spinoza have preferred to the guide to the perplexed.

The influence of the *Moreh Nevuchim* or the guide to the perplexed has had on Jewish philosophy is enormous. Maimonides was also the author of a number of minor works including *Resurrection of the Dead* and *Epistle to Yemen*. 74 Show him as a leader of the Jewish community.

73 Maimonides, *Moreh Nevukim*. Translation into Hebrew by Samuel ibn Tibbon with 5 commentaries : Abravanel, Narboni. New York, 1975.

74 Maimonides, Moses. *Iggeret Teman: Epistle to Yemen*, English translation by Boaz Cohen. New York, 1952.

The contributions of Maimonides to medicine are less well known but they were significant. Maimonides wrote at least ten

works on medicine. His Aphorisms consisting of twenty-four chapters was his most popular work on medicine. Another popular work was a miscellany of health rules, stressing the importance of moderate living for proper health Screening 75

THE LAWS KINGS

At the outset it must 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 76 "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.

75 Twersky, Isadore. A Mianomides Reader. New York 1972.

76 Ibid.,

Whoever dose not believe in him, or dose 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 77 "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 sacrifice and observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years according to their particulars set forth in the Torah"

He continues 78 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.

77 devarim 30: 3-5

78 Ibid.,

As Maimonides has stated in his introduction to the 79 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 the Rambam 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 80 "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 Halachaic book of Laws.

79 Maimonides, Mose. Commentary on the Mishnah. 7 volumes. Arabic original with Hebrew translation by Joseph Kafih, Jerusalem, 1968.

80 Ibid.,

Maimonides 81 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 texts, 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 82 "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.

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80 Numbers 24; 17-18

82 Ibid.,

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 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 83 "Israel was commanded to fulfill three Mitztvot and when they entered the holy Land to a point a king. to destroy the descendants of Amalek., and to build G-ds chosen house." 84

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.

83 Ibid.,

84 Ibid.,

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 fulfil 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 totally. As he writes at the conclusion of chapter four," The king purpose and intend should be to elevate the true faith." 85

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

85 Maimonides, Moses. Shemonah Perakim. Translation into English by J L Gorfinkle under the title The Eight Chapters of Maimonides on Ethics. New York, 1912.

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 was 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. 86

86. W.D. Davies, Torah in the Messianic Age and/ or the age to Come. Journal of Biblical Literature, Monograph series, vol. VII, 1952.

THE MESSIAH ACCORDING TO MAIMONIDES

The Era of the Messiah is a time that the Mitzvot 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." 87

87 Ibid.,

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 Mitzvoth. 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. 88

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 reinstated as in former times.

88 Ibid.,

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson 89 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 90 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.

89 The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson Likutei Sichos vol. 27 p250

90 Ibid.,

Maimonides is telling us 91 "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 Mitzvot 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.

91 Ibid.,

In the laws of Kings. 92 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 be affected not only must man receive the divine blessings, but he must also be conscious of them, otherwise he may fall prey to envy and competition.

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.

92 Ibid.,

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 mitzvoth perfectly into a relatively short time. Therefore our attention will be devoted into the deeper dimensions of Torah study.

And goes on to say 93 "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.

93 Ibid.,

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.

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.

94 Maimonides, Moses. Mishneh Torah : The Code of Maimonides. An English translation has had 13 volumes appear by 1977. Yale Judaica Series. New Haven.

Maimonides begins by saying the first Mitzvoth is " 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 95 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 96 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."

95 Reines, Alvin J. Maimonides and Abarbanel on prophecy. H.U.C.A.Press

96 Ibid.,

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.

Therefor 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.” 97

Likewise in Mitzvoth we also have three stages One: before any Mitzvoth, one must except the yoke of haven, 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.

97 Ibid.,

And the third stage will only be when the Messiah comes that one will be totally “Only to know G-D” 99 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 will be free to study Torah and its wisdom.

99 Rambam, Finkel, Avraham Yaakov, Yeshivah Beth Moshe 2001, 62

Chapter Four

Chapter Four

THE ESSENCE OF LEADERSHIP

Moses is Israel and Israel is Moses.... For the leader of the generation is as the entire generation, for the leader embodies them all Rashi, Numbers 21:21

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

We expect our leaders to be wise: to be able to discern right from wrong and make the proper decisions on issues that affect our lives. To provide us with a vision of where we stand and where we are headed, and guide us toward the realization of our goals.

We expect our leaders to be caring and committed: to empathize with our needs and aspirations and devote themselves to their fulfillment.

We expect our leaders to be strong: calm and decisive in times of crisis, capable warriors and diplomats in the furtherance of our aims. We expect our leaders to be individuals of high moral character and integrity, bearers of an ethical standard for young and old to emulate.

But the most important (and probably the most overlooked) function of the leader is to unite us: to knit diverse individuals into a single people and to inspire diverse—and often conflicting—wills to coalesce into a common destiny. A Chorus in Three Versions destruction of their former enslavers when the Red Sea split, to allow them passage and drowned the pursuing Egyptians. The Torah relates how, upon beholding the great miracle. 100

100 Deuteronomy 4:34.

One of the first things we did together as a people was sing. The nation of Israel was born on the 15th of Nissan in the year 2448 from creation (1313 bce)—the day that G-d “extracted

a nation from the bowels of a nation,¹ freeing the children of Israel from Egyptian slavery. Seven days later, the Israelites witnessed the

Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to G-d, saying:

I shall sing to G-d for He is most exalted;
Horse and rider He cast in the sea.
G-d is my strength and song; He is my salvation
This is my G-d, and I shall glorify² Him
The G-d of my fathers, and I shall exalt Him...¹⁰¹

This song, known as Shirat HaYam—"Song at the Sea,"—goes on to describe the great miracles that G-d performed for His people, G-d's promise to bring them to the Holy Land and reveal His presence among them in the Beit HaMikdash (Holy Temple) in Jerusalem, and Israel's goal to implement G-d's eternal sovereignty in the world. Its forty-four verses express the gist of our relationship with G-d and our mission in life, and thus occupy a most important place in the Torah and in Jewish life.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹. Exodus 15. Rabbi Chaim ibn Attar points out in his Ohr HaChaim commentary that the words "I shall sing" are in first person singular, implying that the people of Israel sang the "Song at the Sea" "as a single man, without difference and separation."

¹⁰² The Song at the Sea is recited daily in the morning prayers. The annual Shabbat on which this song is read in the synagogue as part of the weekly Torah reading is given the special name of Shabbat Shirah, "The Shabbat of Song."

Our sages also focus on the prefatory line to the Song at the Sea, in which the Torah introduces it as a song sung by “Moses and the children of Israel.” Moses was obviously one of the “children of Israel,” so the fact that the Torah singles him out implies that Moses took a leading role in the composition and delivery of this song. Indeed, the nature of Moses’ role is a point of much discussion by our sages: the Talmud 103 relates no fewer than three different opinions on exactly how Moses led his people in their song of praise and thanksgiving to G-d.

According to Rabbi Akiva, it was Moses who composed and sang the Shirat HaYam, while the people of Israel merely responded to each verse with the refrain “I shall sing to G-d.” Moses sang, “For He is most exalted,” and they answered, “I shall sing to G-d”; Moses sang, “Horse and rider He cast in the sea,” and they answered, “I shall sing to G-d”; and so on with all forty-four verses of the song. Rabbi Eliezer, however, is of the opinion that the people repeated each verse after Moses: Moses sang, “I shall sing to G-d for He is most exalted,” and they repeated, “I shall sing to G-d for He is most exalted”; Moses sang “Horse and rider He cast in the sea,” and they repeated, “Horse and rider He cast in the sea,” and so on. A third opinion is that of Rabbi Nechemiah: according to him, Moses simply pronounced the opening words of the song, following which the people of Israel all sang the entire song together. In other words, each of them, on their own, composed the entire—and very same—forty-four verses! 104

103 Talmud, Sotah 30b.

104 Rashi on Talmud, *ibid.*, as per Mechilta on Exodus 15:1.

These three versions of how Moses led Israel in song express three different perspectives on unity, particularly the unity achieved when a people rally under the leadership of their leader. 105

Rabbi Akiva describes an ideal in which a people completely abnegate their individuality to the collective identity embodied by the leader. Moses alone sang the nation's gratitude to G-d, their experience of redemption, and their vision of their future as G-d's people. The people had nothing further to say as individuals, except to affirm their unanimous assent to what Moses was expressing.

At first glance, this seems the ultimate in unity: 106 more than two million hearts and minds yielding to a single program and vision. Rabbi Eliezer, however, argues that this is but a superficial unity—an externally imposed unity of the moment, rather than an inner, enduring unity. When people set aside their own thoughts and feelings to accept what is dictated to them by a higher authority, they are united only in word and deed; their inner selves remain different and distinct.

105 Cf. Mechilta *ibid.*: “Moses being the equivalent of the children of Israel, and the children of Israel being the equivalent of Moses”; See also Rashi on Numbers 21:21 (quoted at the beginning of this essay) and Tanya, end of ch. 2.

106. The census taken one year after the Exodus counted 600,000 males between the ages 20 and 60; a rough demographic estimate makes for a total of 2-3 million Jews.

Such a unity is inevitably short-lived: sooner or later their intrinsic differences and counter-aims will assert themselves, and fissures will appear also in their unanimous exterior.

Thus, says Rabbi Eliezer, if the people of Israel achieved true unity under the leadership of Moses at the Red Sea, then it must have happened this way: that the people of Israel repeated each verse that issued from Moses' lips. Yes, they all submitted to the leadership of Moses and saw in him the embodiment of their collective will and goals, but they did not suffice with a "blind" affirmation of his articulation of Israel's song. Rather, they repeated it after him, running it through the sieve of their own understanding and feelings, finding the roots for an identical declaration in their own personality and experience. Thus, the very same words assumed two million nuances of meaning, as they were absorbed by two million minds and articulated by two million mouths.¹⁰⁷

This, maintains Rabbi Eliezer, is the ultimate unity. When each repeats the verses uttered by Moses on his own, relating to them in his individual way, the singular vision of Moses has penetrated each individual's being, uniting them both in word and in essence. AND UNITY

¹⁰⁷ Talmud, Sotah 30b.

Rabbi Nechemiah, however, is still not satisfied. If Israel repeated these verses after Moses, argues Rabbi Nechemiah, this would imply that their song did not stem from the very deepest part of themselves. For if the people were truly one with Moses and his articulation of the quintessence of Israel, why would they need to hear their song from his lips before they could sing it themselves?

No, says Rabbi Nechemiah, the way it happened was that Moses pronounced the opening words of the song, following which each and every Jew, including “the infant at his mother’s breast and the fetus in the womb,”⁹ sang the entire song themselves. Indeed, it was Moses who achieved the unity of Israel, as evidenced by the fact that their song could not begin until he sang its opening words. Were it not for his leadership, they could not have risen above the selfishness that mars the surface of every character. Had not the people of Israel abnegated their will to his, they could not have uncovered the singular core of their souls. But once they made that commitment, once they unequivocally responded to Moses’ opening words, each independently conceived and articulated the very same experience of the historic moment in which they stood.

Each and every individual Jew, from the octogenarian sage to the unborn infant, expressed his deepest feelings and aspirations with the very same 187 words. For in Moses they had a leader in whom the soul of Israel was one. (Based on an address by the Rebbe, Shabbat Beshalach, Shevat 11, 5748 January 30, 1988) 108

108 At a farbrengen (gathering) marking the passing of the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, on the tenth of Shevat, 5710 (1950), and the Rebbe’s formal assumption of the leadership of Chabad-Lubavitch on the same date, one year later. Likkutei Sichot, vol. XXXI, pp. 69-76.

FREEDOM

And G-d said to Moses: "...Go to Pharaoh... and say to him: G-d, the G-d of the Hebrews, has sent me to you, saying: Let My people go, that they may serve Me."

Exodus 7:14-16

Our sages call Passover "The Season of Our Freedom." For the Exodus from Egypt was more than one of the many salvation's of Jewish history; it was the first and ultimate bestowal of freedom upon man. Before the Exodus, there was no true freedom; and having experienced the Exodus, the Jew is forever and invariably free, and no force on earth can enslave him.¹⁰⁹

"Freedom," in the most basic sense of the word, is the removal of all constraints on a person's development and self-expression. In other words, we assume that freedom is the natural state of man; that if we liberate a person of all external forces that limit and inhibit him, we have a free human being.

But if that were all there was to freedom, Passover would hardly qualify as "The Season of Our Freedom." For while the Exodus freed us from Pharaoh and his taskmasters, it committed us to a greater, more embracing servitude. "When you take this nation out of Egypt," G-d said to Moses from the burning bush at the foot of Mount Sinai when He first revealed Himself to him and commissioned him to redeem the people of Israel, "you shall serve G-d at this mountain."¹¹⁰

109 Gevurot Hashem, chapter 61.

110 Exodus 3:12.

Standing before Pharaoh, Moses did not merely demand in the name of G-d, "Let My people go," but, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me." 111 The *raison d'être* of the Exodus was to bring us to Mount Sinai to be bound in a covenant with G-d as His "nation of priests and holy people"112 –a covenant delineated by the 613 commandments of the Torah.

Thus, the festival of Shavuot, which marks the day on which we received the Torah at Sinai, is the only festival that has no calendar date: the Torah designates it not as a certain day of a certain month—as it does all other festivals—but as the 50th day after Passover. This is to emphasize that Shavuot is an extension and fulfillment of Passover, for the purpose of the Exodus was realized only on the day we stood at Sinai.

Why, then, is freedom the defining quality of Passover? Granted, servitude to G-d is preferable to servitude to Pharaoh, and every moral person will insist that servitude to G-d is preferable to a hedonistic "freedom" in a lawless world. But servitude and freedom, by definition, are diametric opposites. So why is Passover the quintessential season of freedom? If anything, it should be called "The Season of Our Servitude"!

To understand the freedom achieved by the Exodus, we must examine the nature of Israel's enslavement in Egypt.113

111 Ibid., 7:16, et al.

112 Ibid., 19:6.

113 Exodus 1:14.

Our sages state that "All galuyot (exiles and persecutions)

are called by the name of Egypt.” The very name Mitzrayim (Hebrew for “Egypt”) means “boundaries” and “constraints.” Every time we are limited—by a foreign power, by a hostile or merely alien environment, by the corporeality of our bodies, the subjectivity of our minds or the shortcomings of our character—we are in Mitzrayim. If freedom means the absence of constraint, Mitzrayim is the limitation of man on all levels —physically, emotionally, intellectually, morally, or spiritually.

But there is more to galut than constraint and limitation. To refer to the Egyptian prototype, our galut in Egypt entailed more than an imprisonment of the body and a stifling of the spirit; we were slaves in Egypt, whose “lives were embittered with hard labor, with mortar and bricks and in all manner of work in the field—all the work to which they subjected them was crushing labor.” 114

The phrase “crushing labor” (avodat perech) appears repeatedly in the Torah’s account of the Egyptian galut, the text of the Passover Haggadah, and the symbolism of the seder observances. What is “crushing labor”? Maimonides defines it as “work that has no limit and no purpose.”¹¹⁵

114 Karpas, the vegetable dipped in salt-water at the beginning of the seder, alludes to samech perech—“sixty myriads (600,000) enslaved by crushing labor.”

115 Mishneh Torah, Laws of Servitude 1:6; see Hagahot Maimoniot, *ibid*.

Work even most difficult work—that has a defined end-point and a defined objective is not as demoralizing as endless, futile

work. The Egyptians, whose aim in enslaving the Jewish people was to break their spirit, refused to impart any schedule, logic, efficiency or utility to their work. They worked them at the most irrational hours, gave to each of them the task most ill-suited to his or her abilities, and repeatedly destroyed what they had built only to order them to rebuild it again and again.¹¹⁶

Pharaoh had whip-wielding taskmasters to enforce his work-edict. Today, our world has “progressed” to the point that millions voluntarily subject themselves to “work that has no limit and no purpose”: work that spills over from its five-day, forty-hour framework to invade every moment and thought of the week; work that is dictated not by the capabilities and resources of the worker but by status, profitability and vogue; work that is not the means to an end but a self-perpetuating labor that becomes its own aim and objective.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ See Midrash Tanchuma, Vayetzei 9; Midrash Rabbah, Shemot 1:14-15.

¹¹⁷ Tanya, chapter 2; et al.

Ultimately, the capacity for such labor can have only one source: the “spark of G-dliness” that is the essence of the human soul. ¹¹⁸ The physical self is finite and pragmatic; how, then, is it capable of “work that has no limit and no purpose”? What can be the source of the drive to scale

mountains because they are there or to search for centuries for a way to turn lead into gold? Only the infinite well of divinity at our core. From where stems the bottomless commitment to the ever-receding goal of material “success”? Only from a soul that possesses limitless vigor and fortitude, from a soul whose commitment to its Creator is not contingent upon envisionable goals and calculable objectives.

The soul of man is thus subjected to a galut within a galut: not only is it prevented from expressing its true self, but it is forced to express itself in ways that are completely opposed to its true desires. Not only is it constrained by a material self and world—it also suffers the usurpation of its quintessential powers to drive the material self’s mundane labors. Not only is the soul’s capacity for infinite and objectiveness commitment inhibited and repressed—it is distorted into an endless quest for material gain.

118 Exodus 20:9 (as per Rashi’s commentary).

The road out of Egypt passes through Sinai.

The Torah regulates our involvement with the material world. It commands that we may, and should, create, manufacture and do business six days a week, but that on the seventh day, not only must all work cease, but we should assume a state of mind in which “all your work is concluded.” On a daily basis, it tells us to set aside inviolable islands in time devoted to Torah study and prayer. And at all times, a multitude of Torah laws define the permissible and the forbidden in business and pleasure.

The Torah also enjoins us to “eat of the toil of your

hands"—to invest only our marginal faculties in the business of earning a living, leaving our choicest talents free to pursue more spiritual goals.¹¹⁹ And it insists that all material pursuits should be but a means to an end, but a vessel to receive G-d's blessings and a tool to aid us in our life's work of bringing sanctity and G-dliness into our world.¹²⁰

In so restricting our physical lives, Torah liberates our souls. By limiting the extent and the nature of our material involvement's, Torah extricates our capacity for infinite commitment from its material exile, freeing it to follow its natural course: to serve G-d in a manner of "no limit and no purpose"—in a manner that transcends the parameters of self, self-gain and our very conception of "achievement." Based on the Rebbe's talks on Passover 5719 (1959) and 5720 (1960) 121

119 Psalms 128:2. See *Beyond the Letter of the Law* (VHH, 1995), pp. 188-189.

120 See *Bread From Heaven*, WIR, vol. VI, no. 20.

121 *Likkutei Sichot*, vol. III, pp. 848-852

HOLY LAND AND SEE

And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan; and he said to them: "Go up this way by the south, and go up into the high land. And you shall see the land—what it is..."

Numbers 13:17-18

One of the greatest tragedies of Jewish history was the debacle of "The Spies." Fifteen months after the Exodus from Egypt, as the people of Israel camped in the Paran Desert poised to enter the Holy Land, Moses dispatched twelve men—each a leader and representative of one of the twelve tribes of Israel—to spy the land that G-d had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Forty days later the

spies returned praising the fertility of the land and bewailing the military might of its inhabitants. "But the people who dwell in the land are strong," they said, "and the cities fortified and very great; we saw giants 122 there... We won't be able to go up against these people, for they are mightier than we."

The Spies incited panic among the people, who wept that entire night in terror and despair. "Why is G-d bringing us to this land," they cried, "to fall by the sword, and that our wives and children be put to prey? Why, it would be better for us to return to Egypt!"

That night of faithless tears became "a weeping for generations." 123 G-d delayed Israel's entry into the Holy Land for more than 38 years, until that entire generation had died out and a new generation, more trusting of G-d's promises, had grown up to replace them. When the people of Israel entered the land of Canaan, it was not Moses who led them but his disciple, Joshua, who was but a pale moon to Moses' sun.¹²⁴

122 Numbers 13:27-31.

123 Talmud, Taanit 29a; see note 6 below.

124 Ibid., Bava Batra 75a; Rashi on Numbers 27:20.

Our sages point out that Moses' achievements were all eternal: the Torah he transmitted to us transcends the vicissitudes of time; the Sanctuary he built was never destroyed (unlike the Temples built by King Solomon and Ezra in Jerusalem). If Moses had brought us into our land, we would never have been driven from it; if Moses had built the Holy Temple, it would never have been destroyed. 125 Thus, all the travails and defeats of Jewish history are descendent from the night that Israel wept for lack of trust in the divine promise.¹²⁶

The Reality of Sight

Where did the Spies go wrong? Why did their mission, dispatched by Moses with G-d's approval, fail so miserably?
127

Before their departure, Moses had instructed the Spies to observe the nature of the land, the quality of the soil, and the strength of its inhabitants. Of these they gave an honest account, reporting on these realities as they saw them. But Moses had prefaced his instructions with the injunction: "You shall see the land."

125 See Talmud, Sotah 9a; Megalleh Amukot, Ofan 185; Ohr HaChaim on Deuteronomy 1:37 and 3:25; Ohr HaTorah, Va'etchanan, pp. 65, 93 and 2201; *et al.*

The reason that Moses' work is eternal is that his every thought, word and deed was done in a state of utter attachment to G-d. Thus, the angel who appeared to Joshua to aid Israel's conquest of the land said, "Now I have come" (Joshua 5:14)—"Now," since in the days of Moses, when G-d proposed to send an angel to accompany them, Moses had insisted: "If Your own self is not going [with us], do not take us out of here" (Exodus 33:15; Midrash Tanchuma, Mishpatim 18).

(The difference between Moses and Joshua is alluded to by the Talmudic saying that compares Moses to the enduring sun and Joshua to the fluctuating moon, whose light waxes and wanes and, on the darkest of nights, is completely concealed.)

126 The night following the return of the Spies was the night of Av 9—the day that saw the destruction of both the first and second Temples and numerous other tragic events in our history.

127 Ibid.

Sight is more than a faculty, more than just another sensory tool. To hear, smell, taste or touch something is to “perceive” it, to collect data that informs us about its nature and characteristics; to see something is to experience it. When we say, “I saw it myself,” we are really saying: “This is a truth I have experienced absolutely. So there is no way that you can convince me otherwise. This is not something that has been ‘proven’ to me and which might therefore be ‘disproved’ with stronger, more compelling arguments and proofs. This is something I have seen. This, to me, is reality.”

“You shall see the land,” said Moses to the Spies. I am not sending you as mere gatherers of data; I am sending you as spies in the most literal sense of the word: as those whose mission is to see.

I am sending you, Moses was saying, to serve as the eyes of Israel: the eyes through whom the nation would achieve an absolute and unequivocal identification with their divine heritage; the eyes through whom they would experience its reality in a way that cannot be swayed by mundane data, however adverse or threatening.

This was where the Spies failed their mission. They traversed the land, examined and probed it, sniffed about and sounded it out, and analyzed the facts they had garnered. But they failed to see the land, and failed to bring back sight of the land to the people of Israel. Before his passing, Moses pleaded with G-d: “Please, let me cross over and see the good land across the Jordan; the goodly mountain and the Lebanon.”¹²⁸

128 Deuteronomy 3:23-25. “Lebanon” refers to the Holy Temple.

G-d did not allow Moses to “cross over,” but He did grant him his request to see. “Ascend to the summit, and lift your eyes westward, northward, southward and eastward, and see with your

eyes... I have shown it to you so that you see it with your eyes, though you shall not cross over to there.” 129 Our sages tell us that every soul possesses a spark of the soul of Moses. 130 Moses’ sight of the land empowers each and every one of us to “see” the holiness and perfection of G-d’s native home and make it an unequivocal reality in our lives. 131

And G-d spoke to Moses, saying: “Send you men that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel. One man, one man, per tribe shall you send, each a prince among them... Numbers 13:1-2

And you all approached me, and said: “Let us send men before us, that they may search out the land and bring us back word regarding the road by which we shall go up and the cities into which we shall enter.” And the thing was favorable in my eyes; and I took twelve men from amongst you, one man per tribe... Deuteronomy 1:22-23

The commentaries reconcile these two accounts of the sending of the Spies by explaining that the initiative indeed came from the people of Israel. Moses then consulted with G-d, who said to him, “Send you men...” to imply: “Send them as dictated by your understanding. I am not telling you what to do. Do as you see fit.” 12 Thus, the Spies’ mission, while receiving G-d’s consent, was a purely human endeavor, born of the desire of the people and dispatched because “the thing was favorable” in Moses’ eyes.

129 Ibid. v. 27; 34:4.

130 Tanya, ch. 42.

131 Torat Menachem–Hitvaaduyot, vol. III, pp. 164-173.

The result was a tragic setback in the course of Jewish history. The Spies brought back a most demoralizing report and

caused the people to lose faith in G-D's promise of the land of Israel as their eternal heritage. The entire generation was then deemed unfit to inherit the land, and it was decreed that they would live out their lives in the desert. Only 40 years later did Moses' successor, Joshua, lead a new generation across the Jordan River and into the Promised Land. (Joshua and Caleb were the only two spies to speak in favor of conquering the land, and the only two of that generation to enter the land.)

Up until that time, G-d had imparted specific directives to Moses and the people of Israel virtually every step of the way. The case of the Spies was the first instance in which G-d said, "I'm not telling you what to do—do as you see fit." Should this not have set off a warning light in the mind of Moses?

Indeed it did. Our sages tell us that Moses sent off Joshua with the blessing, "May G-d deliver you from the conspiracy of the Spies."¹³² So why did he send them? And if, for whatever reason, he thought it necessary to send them, why did he not at least bless them as he blessed Joshua? Even more amazing is the fact that a generation later, as the Jewish people finally stood ready (for the second time) to enter the land, Joshua himself dispatches spies(!) This time, there are no adverse results; but why did he again initiate a process which had ended so tragically in the past?

132 Rashi, Numbers 13:16.

Obviously, Moses was well aware of the risks involved when embarking on a course of "Do as you see fit." For man to strike out on his own, without precise instructions from On High and with only his finite and subjective judgment as his compass, is to enter a mine-field strewn with possibilities for error and failure. Yet Moses also knew that G-d was

opening a new arena of human potential.

Choice: A most crucial element of our mission in life is the element of choice. Were G-d to have created man as a creature who cannot do wrong, then He might as well have created a perfect world in the first place, or no world at all. The entire point of G-d's desire in creation is that there be a non-perfected world, and that we should choose to perfect it. It is precisely the possibility for error on our part that lends significance to our achievements.

The concept of choice exists on two levels. When G-d issues an explicit instruction to us, we still have the choice to defy His command. This, however, is choice in a more limited sense. For, in essence, our soul is "literally a part of G-d above"¹³³ and, deep down, has but a single desire: to fulfill the divine will. In the words of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi: "A Jew is neither willing, nor is he able, to tear himself away from G-d." When it comes down to it, each and every one of us desires only to do good, as defined by the will of G-d. The only "choice" we have is whether to suppress our innate will or to express it in our daily life.

¹³³ Tanya, ch. 2, after Job 31:2.

Up until the episode of the Spies, this was the only choice offered the Jewish people. G-d provided unequivocal guidelines for each and every issue that confronted their lives. They had the choice to disobey, but to do so would run contrary to their deepest instincts.

The second level of choice was introduced with G-d's reply to Moses regarding the Spies. When Moses heard G-d saying, "Do as you see fit," he understood that G-d was opening another, even deeper and truer, dimension of choice in the life of man. By creating an area in which He, the creator and absolute master of the world, states, "I am not telling you what to do," G-d

was imparting an even greater significance to human actions. Here, and only here, is the choice truly real; here, and only here, is there nothing to compel us in either direction. 134

When we enter this arena, the risks are greater: the possibility to err is greater, and the consequences of our error more devastating. But when we succeed in discovering, without instruction and empowerment from Above, the optimum manner in which to “enter the Holy Land” and actualize the divine will, our deed is infinitely more valuable and significant.

134 Exodus 33:11.

The Self of Joshua

This was why Moses dispatched the Spies, though fully aware of the hazards of their mission, without so much as a blessing that they be safeguarded from the pitfalls of human endeavor. Were he to have blessed them—to have imparted to them of his own spiritual prowess to succeed in their mission—he would have undermined the uniqueness of the opportunity that G-d had granted by consenting that their mission be “by your understanding.” The entire point was that both Moses (in deciding whether to send them) and the Spies (in executing their mission) would be entirely on their own, guided and empowered solely by their own understanding and humanity.

The only one to receive Moses’ blessing was Joshua, who was Moses’ faithful “servant... never budging from [Moses’] tent.”¹³⁵ The unique relationship between Moses and Joshua is described in the Talmud with the following metaphor: “Moses’ face was like the face of the sun; Joshua’s face was like the face of the moon.”¹⁶ On the most basic level, this expresses the superiority of Moses over Joshua, the latter being but a pale reflector of the former’s light; on a deeper level, this alludes to the depth of the bond between the greatest of

teachers and the most devoted of disciples. As the moon has no luminance of its own but receives all of its light from the sun, so had Joshua completely abnegated his self to his master, so that everything he was and had derived from Moses.

135 Ibid.

For Moses to bless Joshua was not to empower Joshua with something that was not himself: Joshua's entire self was Moses. Armed with Moses' blessing, Joshua was truly and fully "on his own"—this was his essence and self, rather than something imposed on him from without.¹³⁶

Thus it was Joshua, who had successfully negotiated the arena of true and independent choice, who led the people of Israel into the land of Canaan. For the conquest of Canaan and its transformation into a "Holy Land" represents man's entry into a place where there are no clear-cut divine directives to distinguish good from evil and right from wrong, and his independent discovery of how to sanctify this environment as a home for G-d.

The Doorway of Choice

And when Moses would enter the Sanctuary to speak with [G-d], he would hear the voice speaking to him from above the cover of the Ark of Testimony, from between the two kruvim; and it spoke to him [only]. Numbers 7:89

One might think that this (the fact that only Moses heard the voice of G-d) was because the voice was low. So the verse stresses that it was "the voice"—the same voice that spoke to him at Sinai. But when it reached the doorway it stopped, and did not extend outside of the Sanctuary. Rashi, *ibid.*

A basic tenet of the Jewish faith is that man has been granted the freedom to choose between good and evil, between adherence

to his divinely ordained mission in life and rebellion against, or even denial of, his Creator. 137

136 Talmud, Bava Batra 75a; Rashi on Numbers 27:20.

137 Sefer HaSichot 5749, vol. II, pp. 536-540.

As Maimonides writes, "Were G-d to decree that a person be righteous or wicked, or if there were to exist something in the essence of a person's nature which would compel him toward a specific path, a specific conviction, a specific character trait or a specific deed...how could G d command us through the prophets 'do this' and 'do not do this,' 'improve your ways' and 'do not follow your wickedness'...? What place would the entire Torah have? And by what measure of justice would G-D punish the wicked and reward the righteous...?"

This is the deeper significance of the divine voice's "short stop" at the doorway of the Sanctuary. At Sinai, the words "I Am G-d your G-d" resounded throughout the universe, permeating every creature and creation. 138 At that moment, there was no possibility of doubt in G-d's reality or of nonconformity to His will.139 But then the world fell silent, and the voice retreated to hover about the "Ark of Testimony" that contains G-d's Torah and confine itself to the four walls of the Sanctuary that houses it.

138 Midrash Rabba, Shmot 5:9-10; see An Absorbant World, WIR vol. III no. 49

139 Indeed, for this reason our sages have said that we were, in effect, 'forced' to accept the Torah: what other option was there in face of a divine revelation of such magnitude? It is only when we reiterated our commitment under conditions of divine self-concealment that this potential 'contest' on our

covenant with G-d was refuted (Talmud, Shabbat 88a, as per Torah Ohr, Esther 98d; see The Thousand Year Difference, WIR vol. III no. 28).

The volume was not lowered—the voice is no less infinite and omnipotent than it was at Sinai. One who enters the Sanctuary hears a voice that penetrates and permeates all, a voice that knows no bounds or equivocations. But one can choose to remain outside of the domain of Torah, to deny himself the knowledge and the way of life in which G-d makes Himself heard. One can choose to remain outside, in the field of G-d's self-imposed silence. It is this choice that creates the challenge of life, making our every moral victory a true and significant achievement. 140

140 Likkutei Sichot, vol XIII p. 22-23. Based on an address by the Rebbe, Shabbat Naso 5725

1. I have been the... (text continues with a dense, repetitive pattern of words and phrases, appearing to be a corrupted or highly stylized document. The text is largely illegible due to the extreme density and repetition of characters and words.)

THE NUMEROLOGY OF REDEMPTION

And G-d called to him from the thornbush: "Moses! Moses!" And he said: "Here I am."

...And G-d said: "I have seen the suffering of My people... Go, now, I shall send you to Pharaoh, and you will take My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

And Moses said to G-d: "Who am I, that I might go to Pharaoh, and that I might take the children of Israel out of Egypt? ... Please, my Lord, send by the hand of he whom You will send."
Exodus 3:4-4:13

"Send by the hand of he whom You will send"—by the hand of Moshiach, who is destined to be revealed. Midrash Lekach Tov on Exodus 4:13

Our sages state that "the first redeemer, he is the final redeemer."¹⁶⁰ This is not to say that Moses, who delivered the Jewish people from their first exile, and Moshiach, who will bring about the final redemption, are the same person. Moses was from the tribe of Levi, while Moshiach is identified as a descendent of King David,¹⁶¹ from the tribe of Judah. Rather, it means that the redemption achieved by Moses is the source for the redemption by Moshiach.

The purpose of the Exodus, as G-d told Moses when He revealed Himself to him in the burning bush, was that "when you take this nation out of Egypt, you will serve G-d at this mountain"¹⁶²—that the Jewish people should receive the Torah at Mount Sinai. The final redemption represents the full and ultimate implementation of the Torah, G-d's "blueprint for creation," in the world. Thus, "the first redeemer, he is the final redeemer"—Moses' Torah is the essence of Moshiach's

perfect world.¹⁶³

160 Cf. Midrash Rabbah, Shemot 2:4; Zohar, part I, 253a; Shaar HaPesukim L'HaAriZal, Vayechi; Torah Or, Mishpatim 75b.

161 Isaiah 11:1; Mishneh Torah, Laws of Kings, 11:5; et al.

162 Exodus 3:12.

163 Midrash Rabbah, Bereishit 1:2.

Yet when Moses begged that G-d send Moshiach and make the Exodus the first and final redemption, G-d did not accept his plea. First the Jewish people must be taken out of Egypt and given the Torah—a task that only Moses can achieve. Then they can embark on their mission to “perfect the world as the kingdom of G-d” ¹⁶⁴ via the Torah, until its ultimate realization through Moshiach. Two Shades of One :

The relationship between Moses and Moshiach is reflected in the numerical value of their names. (In the Holy Tongue every letter is also a number, so that a word is also a string of numbers; the sum of these numbers is the word's numerical value, or gematria. The gematria of a word represents a deeper stratum of significance than its linguistic meaning, so the fact that two different words have the same numerical value indicates that they are variant expressions of the same truth.) The numerical value of “Moshe” (Moses) is 345, ¹⁶⁵ and that of “Moshiach,” 358 ¹⁶⁶ So the difference between Moses and Moshiach is represented by the number 13; otherwise stated, Moses plus 13 makes Moshiach. ¹⁶⁷

164 Siddur, Aleinu prayer.

165 Mem=40, shin=300, hei=5.

166 Mem=40, shin=300, yud=10, chet=8.

167 The same concept is also expressed in the verse "The scepter shall not depart from Judah ... until Shiloh will come." The gematria of "Shiloh," an appellation of Moshiach, is 345, expressing the idea that "the first redeemer, he is the final redeemer." The word yavo ("will come") has a numerical value of 13, so that the words yavo Shiloh ("Shiloh will come") equal 358, the gematria of "Moshiach."

Thirteen is the numerical value of echad,¹⁶⁸ a word that is the keystone of the Jewish faith. Every morning and evening of his life, the Jew recites the verse Shema Yisrael, Ado-nai Elo-hei-nu, Ado-nai echad—"Hear O Israel, the L-rd is our G-d, the L-rd is echad."¹⁶⁹

The Jewish people are called "an echad nation on earth" because they reveal the echad of G-d in the world.¹⁷⁰ And the era of Moshiach is described as "the day that G-d will be echad, and His name echad."¹⁷¹

Echad means "one." The Shema proclaims the oneness and unity of G-d, which the people of Israel are charged to reveal in the world, and which will be fully manifest in the era of Moshiach. But is echad the ideal word to express the divine unity? Like its English equivalent, the word does not preclude the existence of other objects (as in the sequence "one, two, three..."), nor does it preclude its object being composed of parts (we speak of "one nation," "one forest," "one person" and "one tree," despite the fact that each of these consists of many units or components). It would seem that the term yachid, which means "singular" and "only one," more clearly expresses the "perfect simplicity"¹⁴ of G-d and the axiom that "there is none else beside Him."

168 Alef=1, chet=8, daled=4.

169 Deuteronomy 6:4.

170 Siddur, Amidah for Shabbat afternoon; Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, ch. 9.

171 Zechariah 14:9.

Chassidic teaching explains that, on the contrary, echad represents a deeper unity than yachid.¹⁷² Yachid is a oneness that cannot tolerate plurality—if another being or element is introduced into the equation, the yachid is no longer yachid. Echad, on the other hand, represents the fusion of diverse elements into an harmonious whole. The oneness of echad is not undermined by plurality; indeed, it employs plurality as the ingredients of unity.

As one Chassidic thinker once put it, G-d did not have to create a world to be yachid. He was singularly and exclusively one before the world was created, and remains so after the fact.¹⁷³ It was to express His echad-ness that He created the world, created man, granted him freedom of choice, and commanded him the Torah. He created existences that, at least in their own perception, are distinct of Him, and gave them the tools to bring their lives into utter harmony with His will. When a diverse and plural world chooses, by its own initiative, to unite with Him, the divine oneness assumes a new, deeper expression—G-d is echad.¹⁷⁴

171 I.e., the fact that there are no parts, components or aspects to His being (The Second Principle, Maimonides' introduction to Perek Chelek; Mishneh Torah, Laws of the Fundamentals of Torah, 1:7).

172 Deuteronomy 4:35

173 "Prior to the world's creation, He was one alone, singular and unique, filling all the 'space' in which He created the

world. Now, too, this remains the true reality... The change is only from the perspective of those who receive the life and light emanating from Him, which they receive via many 'garments' which conceal and obscure His light"—Tanya, ch. 36.

174 This is expressed in the three letters/numbers that comprise the word *Echad*—*alef, chet, daled*, or 1, 8, 4: that the oneness of G-d be made to pervade the “seven heavens and the earth” (8) and the four points of the compass.

The Limits of Revelation

Moses plus echad equals Moshiach.

Moses revealed the divine wisdom and will to man. But this was a revelation, a burst of light from Above. It was not something the world understood or agreed with, but something imposed upon it by the force of a higher truth. It was a display of the divine *yachid*, of the exclusive, all-obliterating reality of G-d.

Moses wanted that G-d should send Moshiach to take the Jewish people out of Egypt—that the Exodus should lead to the inculcation of the divine echad in the world. But an echad-oneness, by definition, must come from below, when a diverse world chooses, by its own initiative, to merge into an integral whole. Moses could provide the key, the formula—but the process had to unfold in the course of the thirty-three centuries in which the world absorbed the divine truth and implemented the divine will.

In the words of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi: “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’ 175.

“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”¹⁷⁶ ... [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...’¹⁷⁷ 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.”¹⁷⁸

Based on an address by the Rebbe, Passover 5729 (1969) 179

175 Isaiah 30:20.

176 Deuteronomy 4:35.

177 Talmud, Shabbat 88b.

178 Tanya, loc. cit.

179 Likkutei Sichot, vol. XI, pp. 8-13.

THREE SOURCES OF MOSHIACH

And Bilaam said to Balak: “...Come, let me advise you what this people shall do to your people in the end of days... I see it, but not now; I behold it, but it is not near. A star shall go forth from Jacob, and a scepter shall arise from Israel; he will conquer the ends of Moab, and rule all the children of Seth... And Israel shall be valiant... Numbers 24:12-17

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 describes it, "In those days there will be no hunger or war, no jealousy or rivalry; for... the sole occupation of the entire world will be to know G-d."1

The coming of Moshiach is also referred to, though less explicitly, in the Torah proper-the Five Books of Moses. Thus Maimonides writes: "Whoever does not believe in him, or does not anticipate his coming, not only denies the other prophets – he also denies the Torah and Moses our Teacher."2 Maimonides goes on to cite three instances in which the Torah itself speaks of the Messianic Redemption:

1. a) Deuteronomy 30:1-10: "And the L-rd your G-d ... will return and gather you from all the nations amongst whom [He] has scattered you. If you are dispersed to the ends of the heavens, from there will the L-rd your G-d gather you, from there He will take you. [He] will bring you into the Land which your fathers have possessed and you will possess it, and he will do you good and multiply you, more than your fathers. [He] will circumcise your heart and the heart of your children, to love the L-rd your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul... G-d will again rejoice over you as He rejoiced over your fathers, for you shall hearken to the voice of the L-rd your G-d, to keep His commandments and statutes which are written in this book of the Torah."
2. b) Mishneh Torah, Laws of Kings, 12:5.
3. b) Numbers 24:17-19: "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but he is not near. A star shall come forth from Jacob, and a ruler shall arise from Israel; he will conquer the ends of Moab, and rule all the children of Seth... And Israel shall be valiant..."
4. c) In Deuteronomy 19, the Torah commands to set aside "cities of refuge" to serve as a place of exile for "one who shall unintentionally kill his fellow." Then the Torah adds: "And when G-d shall broaden your borders ...

and give you the entire land that He promised to give to your forefathers -for you shall keep all these commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the L-rd your G-d and walk in His ways forever-then you shall add another three cities..." Maimonides notes that, "This never yet came to pass, and G-d did not command it in vain" – so that here we have a further reference in the Torah to the Messianic Era, when "the entire land that He promised to give to your forefathers" shall be given to the Jewish people. 180

These three "proofs" are all necessary, for they establish three principles that are fundamental to the Jewish concept of Moshiach: the redemption of Israel, the person of Moshiach, and the integrity of Torah.

180 In the covenant He made with Abraham, G-d promised: "To your descendants I shall give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates." These borders include lands never conquered or settled by the people of Israel throughout their history.

The first citation, from the 30th chapter of Deuteronomy, contains the most explicit reference to the final Redemption in the Five Books of Moses. However, there is no mention there of the person of Moshiach as the divine agent of its realization. From these verses alone we can only infer that there will be a redemption (Israel's return to G-d, their restoration to their homeland, etc.), but not that a human leader will bring it about.

Yet the Jew's belief in Moshiach is not in some abstract "historical process" by which the world progresses to perfection, but that "There will arise a king from the house of David, who studies the Torah and fulfills its precepts as David his ancestor ... and he will prevail upon all of

Israel to follow it and repair its breaches, wage the battle of G-d ... build the Holy Temple on its site, gather the dispersed of Israel ... [and] rectify the entire world to serve G-d together.”⁴ While many of the prophets speak explicitly of the person of Moshiach, Maimonides wishes to show that this principle is also contained in the Torah itself. It is for this purpose that he cites his second proof, from Numbers 181.

Moshiach and the Mitzvot

Moshiach achieves many great things: he liberates the people of Israel and restores their true independence and sovereignty; he teaches the divine wisdom of Torah, illuminating the intricacies of the human soul and the divine essence of all reality; he is a prophet of the highest order, communicating the word of G-d to man. But the most important thing that Moshiach does is to bring about the perfect and absolute implementation of the entire body of mitzvot, the divine commandments of the Torah, in the world.

⁴181 Mishneh Torah, *ibid.*, 11:4.

Today, we are capable of achieving only a very limited actualization of the divine program for life. More than half of the Torah's commandments (343 out of a total of 613) can be observed only when the Holy Temple is standing in Jerusalem and/or when the entire community of Israel resides in the Holy Land. And even the Mitzvot that we can observe in our current state of galut (exile) are but pale “models” of the real thing, for the divine commandments can be optimally fulfilled only in a post-redemption of Israel.¹⁸²

Furthermore, while we might do everything in our power to fulfill the Mitzvot that are available to us today, we are daily confronted with a world that is still at odds with the will of its Creator. The Torah commands, “Do not kill,” yet people are killing each other all over the world; the Torah

commands, "Love your fellow as yourself" "Honor your father and your mother," "Remember the day of Shabbat to sanctify it," and "Do not cook a kid in its mother's milk," yet a great portion of those to whom these commands are addressed are indifferent to, or even ignorant of them.

In our present-day reality, the Torah seems more like a "religion" or an "ideal," than the cardinal law of reality. So the coming of Moshiach, the man who brings about the universal commitment to the divine law, is not just another event predicted by the Torah or another of its concepts and principles; it is the validation of the very essence of Torah as the divine blueprint for life – as the ultimate description of what the world can, ought to, and inevitably will, be.

182 The Midrash goes so far as to consider the mitzvot observed in galut as mere "reminders" for the true mitzvot, those observed in the Holy Land. Quoting the prophet Jeremiah, "Set for yourself markers" (Jeremiah 31:20), it says: "

This is the significance of Maimonides' third source for Moshiach in the Torah. When the Torah commands us to add three "cities of refuge" upon establishing Jewish sovereignty over the entirety of the Promised Land, it is not only predicting the future Redemption, but also stating that the advent of Moshiach is required for the implementation of a divine command. Here is an example of a mitzvah, commanded by G-d at Sinai, whose conditions for fulfillment have never existed, and will exist only upon the arrival of Moshiach.

These verses establish the third principle that is fundamental to the Jew's belief in Moshiach: that the Torah's commandments are the ultimate blueprint for life on earth, and that there will come a day when the divine plan for creation will be fully realized in our world. For certainly, as Maimonides puts it, "G-d did not command it in vain."

Based on talks by the Rebbe in the summers of 5738 (1978) and 5746 (1986) and on Shavuot of 5751. 183

183 Likkutei Sichot, vol. 34, Shoftim (5749); Sefer HaSichot 5751, pp. 574-576.

THE MOSHIACH ERA

“ It should be proclaimed and publicized that we are living in a special time, when only one solitary thing remains to be done “Stand ready, every one of you,” for the forthcoming rebuilding of the Beis HaMirdash with the coming of David, the King Moshiach” From a talk of the Rebbe Shabbos Parshas Vayigash, 5747 , 1987.

Moses' uncompromising identification with his people, no matter to what depths they might have fallen, that ensured that each and every Jew, regardless of his spiritual station and moral circumstances, possesses, and can readily access, the “Moses” within him—his quintessential source of faith and oneness with his Creator. And his self-sacrifice for the

children of Israel remains legendary as discussed.

The sequential similarity of the first redemption from Egypt and the last redemption in our days is as explicit as the similarities between Moses and Moshiach and between the miracles of the exodus and the wonders of the final geulah (redemption). These two redemptions are one, for the redemption from Egypt was the beginning of a process, and our redemption is the end. Therefore, the prophet connects them, pledging the "Like the days of your coming out of the land of Egypt will I show the nation marvelous things" (Michah 7:15). Similarly, "The first redeemer is the final redeemer" (Shemos Rabbah 2:4). So too, When G-D promised, "I will surely bring you up again (from Egypt)" (Gen 46:4). By repeating the verb bring up, once for the redemption from Egypt and once for the future redemption. Conversely, Even in the messianic era, we will recall the liberation from Egypt. 184

184 Talmud Berachos 12b

the Arizal is of the opinion the generation of the footsteps of Mashiah (Ikvesa Dimeshicha) a reincarnation of the generation of the wilderness. 185

The Chasam Sofer writes; Just as Moses our Teacher, the first redeemer, reached eighty but still did not know or sense that he would redeem Israel... so will it be with the final redeemer... And when the time comes, G-D will reveal Himself to him, and the spirit of Moshiach, which has been hidden in the higher worlds until his coming, will light upon him. The Tzaddik himself does not realize. However, when, please G-D, the time comes, G-D will reveal Himself to him as he did to Moses in the bush. 186

The eminent Rabbi Yisreal Salanter once explained "The face of the generation will be like the face of a dog" as follows.

A dog by nature runs ahead of its master, always turning around to see where he heading, whatever that direction may be, the dog arrives there first. Now in common Hebrew and Yiddish parlance, the phrase Pnei Hador " the face of the generation" signifies those who are supposed to be the leaders of the generation. In our time, however, on the eve of the Redemption, these ostensible leaders merely look around to see where their congregates would like to head, and they run there first... This statement is addresses the ordinary Rabbi. 187

185 Menachem M Brod. Days of Moshiach (Chabad Youyh Org. 1993) p 122

186 Likkutm, responsa Choshen Mishpat, ch. 98

187 Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe Rayatz, Vol. VII, p59

The Rebbes Rabbi M. M. Schneerson legendary leadership has inspired Jews from every corner of the world from Yemen to the physical devastation of Europe to the spiritual devastation of Russia in every walk of life from the intellectual to the simple Jew, all continue look to the Rebbe to their guidance and inspiration.

The Jewish people have been challenged over that last 1900 years in many ways just as Moses realized the hardship that the Jewish nation will have to go thou and pleaded with G-D to allow him to enter the land of Israel as there will be no more exiles if he was permitted to enter the land of Israel. The Rebbe has taken the Jewish people out of our apathy and indifference and has said " we must welcome Moshiach with acts of goodness and kindness". The Rebbes pioneering vision from Israel policy not to trade land for peace, to his prophetic regarding the former USSR and everyday matters over the last century can provide us with a taste as to what it will be like when Moshiach will fill the world with the divine light.

The day the Rebbe became head of Chabad Lubavitch 10 day of Shevat 5711 1951 he presented his first Chassidic Discourse " behold, this is what is demanded of every one of us, the seventh generation... For although we are not the seventh generation by choice, and it has not resulted from our efforts- and in certain aspects, it is perhaps are beloved. We find ourselves at the end of Ikvesa Dimeshicha, (Footsteps of Moshiach) and we must finish drawing down the Shechinah (divine light)- and not just the Shechinah but the essence of the Shechinah- into the lower worlds." Sefer HaMa'amarim, Basi LeGani 5711.

In these few lines, the Rebbe summarizes the objective of our generation. We did not choose to be in this generation., and had we been asked, perhaps we would not even have wanted to be here, but it is a fact we are living through the conclusion of Ikvesa Dimeshicha, (Footsteps of Moshiach) and we must complete the dwelling of the Shechinah in this world and bring Geulah (redemption).

All the Rebbe's actions in the last fifty-two years have served this purpose. He has turned to every Jew the world over, lest anyone be unprepared for redemption. The Rebbe emphasizes repeatedly, "It depends on us" The more we prepare, and the more we expedite the dissemination of the light of Torah and Mitzvos, the faster and easier redemption will be.

As far back as in the times of the Talmud our Sages taught the "all the appointed times have passed" How much more of must this be today, after all the divine service of our people throughout this long and bitter exile, for over 1900 years. Moshiach must most certainly come immediately" The rebbe Shaboss Vayechi, 5751 (1990)

Over the years, the Rebbe's proclamations have become more explicit, slowly raising expectations and awareness of Moshiach and redemption. The Rebbe leaves no room for doubt he

speaks about redemption as a concrete reality that has already begun.

What is the core of the Rebbe's message, that Moshiach coming should not be regarded as a dream of the future, but as a cogent factor that influences the way we live our lives today: moreover, that living one's life in this manner will actually bring about the fulfillment of these promises?

Our sages point to Moshiach and redemption as the ultimate purpose for the creation of the world. For G-D created the world in order that he have "a dwelling place among mortals" and this goal will be realized in the Era of redemption. 188

However, G-D desired that mortals themselves should fashion this dwelling, for man has a natural tendency to appreciate the fruits of his own labors. If instead this dwelling were to be granted as gift from above. For centuries the Jewish people have been consciously or unconsciously constructing G-D's dwelling, and now it is emerging before our very eyes.

To explain by means of an analogy, a builder is hired to build a complex mansion, from the moment he designs it, and throughout the building process, a clear picture of the final structure remain intact before his minds eye. His workers may monetarily lose sight of the goal, yet ultimately, as it takes shape they begin to envisage the edifice that their own hands are transforming from a blueprint into a reality. And as it progresses, the building itself shows its builders the goal of their endeavors

188 Touger Eliyahu, Sound the Great Shofer (Kehot Publication NY USA 1992)p12

In our generation, at last the Jewish people can begin to see the edifice, G-D's dwelling, which has been constructed by our actions and divine service throughout the period of exile, and

which will be consummated by the coming of Moshiach.

Our Sages 189 describe Moshiach as waiting anxiously to come. In previous generations, however his coming was prevented by the fact that the Jews had not completed the tasks expected of them. At present, however those tasks have been accomplished, there is nothing lacking. All we have to do is accept Moshiach.

This is the challenge facing our generation. To make the world conscious so Moshiach, and create an environment that will allow his mission to be fulfilled. Every element of our study of the Torah and our observance of its Mitzvots should be permeated by this objective, and directed towards it.

189 Friedman Alter .Eliyahu, from Exile to redemption (Brooklyn, New York, Kehot Publication Society. 1992) p1

Chapter Five and Summary

Chapter Five

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

SUMMARY

In that Era there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition. Maimonides Laws of Kings 12: 5

The Jewish people and indeed, the world at large will join together in bonds of love and unity. An awareness of G-Ds transcendental oneness will pervade all existence and this will produce a higher and more inclusive conception of unity than is possible at present.

In our present era, unity involves people of differing natures

joining together, as the diverse limbs of the body function together as part of a single unit, so too, unity can be established between different individuals 190. Nevertheless, such bind does not raise a person above his individual identity entirely. On the contrary, his very awareness of self has to be employed in his efforts to unite with others.

In contrast, the transcendent unity of the Era of the Redemption will raise every individual above the limited horizons of his personal identity, "for the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-Ds as the waters cover the ocean bed". 191

190 Likkutei Torah, Paeshas Nitzavim 87a.

191 Rambam Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Melachhim 12:5

The verse employs this simile to express the following concept. A vast multitude of creatures inhabit the ocean, nevertheless what we see is the ocean as a whole and not the particular entities which it contains.

Similarly, in the Era of redemption, individual created beings will lose consciousness of their separate identities, for they will be suffused with an awe inspiring knowledge of G-d. The unity that will be established between individual entities will thus be of a higher and more consummate nature. We should anticipate these concepts in our own present conduct. Since we are on the threshold of the redemption, it is now possible to appreciate a foretaste of the spiritual awareness to be achieved in the era, and to apply it in our daily lives.

We are at the pinnacle of Jewish history, just as Moses was when he redeemed the Jewish people from Egypt, we should take inspiration from the rabbi's that lead and the Rebbe that has guided us to believe that Moshiach and G-d are reality.

The very next moment can be the last moment of exile, and the moment, which follows, the first moment of redemption. Our energies must be directed to “ opening our eyes” appreciating the redemption and living our live in its spirit.

Our sages describe every person as an entire world, and the world as a personality in macrocosm. Conceiving of ourselves as a world. i.e., multifaceted and multi dimensional, enables us to develop harmony between and within the different aspects of our beings.

Conversely, viewing the world as a macrocosm of man also provides us with constructive insights. Just as an inner sense of spiritual purpose is the key to an individual’s success and happiness, so too the world at large will thrive from gaining awareness of its spiritual purpose.

The world was created solely for Moshiach, our sages tell us, more specifically, that G-D created the world because He desired a dwelling among mortals. Living with the redemption on a conceptual level, learning about the ideals which G-D envisions for our world, and integrating these principles in our lives, can serve as a trim tab for every individual, channeling the direction of global change. By anticipating the redemption in our minds and lives, we can precipitate its coming.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

At some point in our lives, many of us have shared a relationship with a parent, teacher, or employer, which deeply affected us. That person had high standards, he stood for something and invited others to stand with him.

He was demanding, he never gave in and never accepted mediocre performance. But he also never gave up, and constantly communicated high expectations and the trust that we could

meet them, trust and confidence empowered us.

When we look up to someone with well earned respect and feel that he genuinely knows us and believes in us, it is natural to want to live up to his expectations, with a pride that goes much deeper than self, we apply ourselves to the tasks before us, for our goal is not merely to earn reward, but to give shape and form to the ideal we share.

The scarcity of genuine leadership is a source of concern in politics, business and culture. Many have complained that America is over managed and under led. They indict the individuals at the heads of our organizations for being far too concerned with the bottom line, for trying to maintain a structure that produces a favorable annual report, instead of desiring to inspire creative change.

True leadership requires vision. People can be forced into following, but even while that control is enforced, negative feelings will be aroused, for humans have a natural tendency to resist coercion.

Genuine leadership must inspire people with a long-term vision that gives meaning to their efforts. It must point them in a new direction, endow them with deeper understanding and higher aspirations, and show how their actions form an indispensable part of a purposeful whole. It is important to emphasize the difference between inspiration and demagoguery. A demagogue can get people excited, but he speaks about unrealistic expectations, the vision with which a genuine leader inspires others, by contrast rings true. Like an idea, which makes a listener, say: "Aha I always understood that, but never had words for it" a leader's vision touches a chord within the inner self of others.

We must live with that ideal in our times, finding a person that will inspire us, when a leader can not be found we must become leader our self, meaning to emulate great leader's of

the past like Moses and Maimonides. Moshiach teachings will inspire a series of real changes in our approach to life. As people throughout the world become aware of his message, they will desire to take part in spreading the atmosphere of spiritual purpose, knowledge and peace. This will create a bridge between the ideal and the actual, allowing mankind to create an environment appropriate for a world that is G-D's dwelling.

There is no alternative. There is no way that we can develop a perfect society without perfecting people, we must refine our characters. Leaders whose personal example and leadership will inspire others to make such changes within themselves, and within their environment. Each and every one of us possesses an ability to lead in our daily life.

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Public Law 102-14, H.J. Res 104

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Public Law 102-14, H.J. Res 104

EDUCATION DAY U.S.A

Public Law 102-14, H.J. Res 104

**102nd Congress of the United States of
America**

March 5, 1991

Whereas Congress recognizes the historical tradition of ethical values and principles which are the basis of civilized society and upon which our great Nation was founded;

Whereas these ethical values and principles have been the bedrock of society from the dawn of civilization, when they were known as the Seven Noahide Laws;

Whereas without these ethical values and principles the edifice of civilization stands in serious peril of returning

to chaos;

Whereas society is profoundly concerned with the recent weakening of these principles that has resulted in crises that beleaguer and threaten the fabric of civilized society;

Whereas the justified preoccupation with these crises must not let the citizens of this Nation lose sight of their responsibility to transmit these historical ethical values from our distinguished past to the generations of the future;

Whereas the Lubavitch movement has fostered and promoted these ethical values and principles throughout the world;

Whereas Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, leader of the Lubavitch movement, is universally respected and revered and his eighty-ninth birthday falls on March 26, 1991;

Whereas in tribute to this great spiritual leader, "the Rebbe," this, his ninetieth year will be seen as one of "education and giving," the year in which we turn to education and charity to return the world to the moral and ethical values contained in the Seven Noahide Laws; and

Whereas this will be reflected in an international scroll of honor signed by the President of the United States and other heads of state: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That March 26, 1991, the start of the ninetieth year of Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, leader of the worldwide Lubavitch movement, is designated as Education Day U.S.A The President is requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Approved March 20, 1991.

Signed by George Bush,

A Moral Code to Unite Mankind

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A Moral Code to Unite All Mankind

From a 1990 Address by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

By the Grace of G-d

We find ourselves now at a turning point in history. Changes have swept the world as dissolving repressive regimes have given way to a climate of increased moral consciousness. It is thus an appropriate time to reflect upon the dynamics of these changes and thereby draw encouragement and guidance to affect them fully. In explaining the purpose of Creation, our sages say that G-d, the Essence of all good, created the world as a result of His desire to do good. As it says in Psalms 145, "The L-rd is good to all, and His mercies are over all his works." For as it is the nature of good to do good unto others, the creation of the universe was a Divine expression of goodness. In this way, the universe and all life are recipients and objects of Divine goodness.

Hence, everything that occurs in the world, even the apparent bad, such as natural disasters, must ultimately have redeeming

good. Similarly, the negative inclination within human beings, who essentially desire to do good, is but a “mechanism” by G-d’s design, to establish free choice. For had G-d created a world that is totally and exclusively good, without any efforts on the part of mankind to achieve it, there would be no or little appreciation of goodness. In light of this, it is important to realize that in the individual’s struggle with evil, within the world at large or within one’s self; the approach should not be one of confrontation. Rather, by emphasizing that which is good in people and in the world, and by bringing the positive to the fore, the evil is superseded by the good, until it eventually disappears.

Although G-d created the world giving people free choice, He nevertheless has given us the tools and the guidance we need to encourage us to choose the good: a Divine moral code, one that predates all human codes, and the only one that has timeless and universal application for a good, moral civilization. This Divine code, known as the Seven Laws of Noah, establishes an objective definition of “good” – one that applies to all people. For as recent history has proven, a morality that is based on human ideas of good, is relative, subjective and essentially not persuasive. Furthermore, as is abundantly clear to educators and law-enforcement agents, neither intimidation nor threat of punishment can foster a deep sense of moral obligation. This can only come from the knowledge – through education, that there is an “Eye that sees and an Ear that hears” to Whom we are all accountable.

The Noahide Code of seven basic Divine laws was given to Noah and his children after the deluge. These laws would assure Noah and his children, the forebears of the new human race, that humanity would not degenerate into a jungle again. The laws, which command the establishment of courts of justice and prohibit idolatry, blasphemy, homicide, incest, robbery, and eating the limb of a live animal (cruelty to animals), are the foundation of all morality. And they extend, by laws derived

from these, into all aspects of moral behavior.

A particular task [is] to educate and to encourage the observance of the Seven Laws among all people. The religious tolerance of today, and the trend towards greater freedom, gives us the unique opportunity to enhance widespread observance of these laws. For it is by adherence to these laws, which are in and of themselves an expression of Divine goodness, that all humankind is united and bound by a common moral responsibility to our Creator. This unity promotes peace and harmony among all people, thereby achieving the ultimate good. As the Psalmist said: "How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity."

Quoted in full as printed in Lubavitch International, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Summer 1990), p. 3.

The Rebbe speaks on Noahide

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The Rebbe speaks on Noahide

11 Nissan 5743 -1983

Every Jew has the obligation to ensure that all the peoples of the world observe the Seven Noahide Laws. Although this task seems awesomely difficult, especially in this troubled time of exile, a true story concerning a Jewish yacht owner teaches that a Jew's actions have far-reaching influence, and the effect of even a single deed is immeasurable.

The mission and purpose in life of the Jew is to make this world a dwelling place for G-d. The world, which seems to run according to its own natural laws, is not independent. It has a Creator, Who has not left it unattended. G-d is on earth as He is in heaven.

The Jew, through his service to G-d, demonstrates that the spiritual and the physical can be brought together. The mundane can be sanctified, and everyday life can become holy. G-d dwells in the world.

The Seven Noahide Laws

An integral component of the Jew's task is to see to it that all peoples, not just Jews, acknowledge G-d as Creator and ruler of the world. The world, we are told, "was not created for chaos, but that it be inhabited." A chaotic world results when there are no absolute criteria by which man lives, when morals and ethics are based solely on man's understanding. Man is swayed by interests other than reason and justice; and we have only too recently seen the destruction which results when laws and philosophy are perverted to serve personal ends.

G-d, the Creator of the world, has not abandoned His handiwork, but has given clear guidance how the world can be made "inhabited," settled and productive, decent and enduring. The nations of the world have been given a Divine code of conduct, the Seven Noachide Laws, which consist of six prohibitions against murder, robbery, idolatry, adultery, blasphemy, cruelty to animals – and one positive command, to establish a judicial system. These Seven Noachide Laws are general statements, which, with their ramifications and extensions, encompass countless details.

The reason these Seven Laws are to be observed is also important. The Rambam rules (Code, Kings 8:11) that the Sons of Noach (i.e. all humanity) must observe these Laws because "G-d commanded them in the Torah and informed us through Moshe that the Sons of Noach had already been so commanded." A non-Jew conducts himself in consonance with the Seven Laws not

because human logic compels him to do so, but because they are G-d's commands transmitted through Moshe. This ensures that self-interest will never be allowed to pervert the Divine criteria of conduct.

It is through the observance of the Seven Noachide Laws that the entire world becomes a decent, productive place, a fitting receptacle for the Divine. Then, promises Scripture, "the glory of the L-rd will be revealed and all flesh together will see that the mouth of the L-rd has spoken." The culmination of this will be the Messianic epoch, when, through the agency of Mashiach, "all will call in the Name of the L-rd and serve Him with a common consent."

Jew's Role in World

The Jew has a crucial role to play in this. He cannot be a bystander, remaining aloof from the world's conduct. The Rambam explicitly rules (Code, Kings 8:10): "Moshe Rabbeinu commanded from the mouth of G-d to convince all the inhabitants of the world to observe the commandments given to the children of Noach." It is the Jew's duty to see to it that all peoples lead the righteous and decent life which comes from compliance with the Seven Noahide Laws.

Not only is it a Jew's duty because he has been so commanded by G-d, but it is also to his own benefit. A world full of "chaos," where nations and individuals live by no law except that dictated by self-interest, must inevitably affect the Jew. And, as noted above, the universal observance of the Seven Noahide Laws is the prelude to the Messianic era when all will serve G-d together.

Yet the task seems immense, beyond a Jew's capabilities. All Jews together are but a tiny minority among the nations of the world. How can Jews influence non-Jews to acknowledge G-d and observe the Seven Noahide Laws?

But it can be done. Even one action can have far-reaching consequences, ever widening ripples, until the cumulative

effect of many such individual actions produces a mighty storm.

Lesson from a Story

A story. A true story which happened only recently, which illustrates just such a ripple effect. A story of a Jew, who unknowingly started a chain of events of which he could not even dream.

A Jew blessed by G-d with great wealth, who likes to take an occasional vacation on his yacht. He employs a captain, a non-Jew, to sail the yacht.

The time for prayer arrives. He knows that Jews face towards the holy city of Yerushalayim during Shemoneh Esreh, towards the east. He is not a nautical man. He does not know where east is on the ocean. He asks the captain.

Prayer time again. Again the same problem, where is east. Again he asks the captain. And so with the third prayer time, and the fourth.

The first time he asks, the captain pays no special attention. When the owner keeps on asking the same question from time to time, the captain becomes curious. His employer is not the navigator. Why is he always interested in knowing where east is? He asks him.

The Jew is not ashamed of his religion. "I am a Jew," he answers, "and I want to pray to G-d. Prayers pass through the site of the Beis HaMikdash in Yerushalayim. I must therefore face in that direction, which in this part of the world is east. Every time I pray I thus need to know where east is."

The captain is greatly impressed. This is a successful man, he thinks, wealthy enough to own his own yacht and hire a captain to sail it. Yet he considers it proper and right to interrupt his affairs to pray to G-d – and to even bother to face the correct direction. "I too," exclaims the captain to the owner, "shall begin to think of G-d, begin to pray to Him."

The story has a sequel. Some time later the captain told the Jewish yacht owner that ever since he decided to pray to the Creator of the world, he has, at every opportunity, also told his family and friends of the necessity to pray to G-d. "If all the people of the world would think about their Creator," concluded the captain, "the world would not be the jungle it is!"

The lesson from this story is clear: A Jew can influence non-Jews to acknowledge the Creator and ruler of the world, and to therefore conduct themselves accordingly by observing the Seven Noachide Laws. Moreover, as seen from the story, such influence is effective just by a Jew being proud and firm in his religion. The yacht owner did not consciously intend to fulfill the Rambam's ruling. Because he conducted himself properly, his influence was automatically felt. He could not know of the ripple effect he would cause merely by asking where was east. And because of him, a non-Jew began to think about G-d, conduct himself more righteously – and in turn, lead others in the same path. All because of one Jew's actions.

A Parable

We can go further. Nothing in this world happens by chance. All is through Divine Providence. The above episode of the yacht serves as a timely parable to a Jew's function and place in the world.

The Jew's task, we have explained above, is, through Torah, to reveal the G-dliness in the world. The "natural" laws of the world are but a mask, veils which conceal its true existence. Torah is the instrument wherewith Jews strip away these veils – and bring the world closer to G-d.

But a Jew can easily become despondent. The state of the world is not heartening. Nations do not seem to hearken to the voice of Torah, and governments, not Jews, seem to be the arbiters of the world's conduct.

The truth is different: The Jew and Torah can have influence on the world. It is only because of the darkness of the exile that it seems the governments of the world are its true arbiters.

The world in this troubled time of exile is like a ship sailing in stormy seas, steered by the governments of the world. But appearances are misleading. It is not they, with their plans and strategies, who truly determine its course and destination. What is truly important in the world, what has a permanent effect, is the Torah and mitzvos performed by the Jew. Before this all else is insignificant, unimportant. Whether the world will be in better or worse shape is in the hands of the Jew. One mitzvah, one act of bonding with G-d, has incredible repercussions – whether we are aware of it or not.

Beyond the obvious, beneath the surface, lies much, much more. The course of the world is not determined by the physical. The spiritual is what counts. The governments who actually conduct the world's affairs are not more than the captain who steers the ship on behalf of the owner. Jews are engaged in loftier things, the things which are really important, Torah and mitzvos. But it is these things which are the true determinants. The governments of the world steer the ship, the Jew charts the course.

And this is what the above story of the yacht teaches. Outwardly it seems the non-Jewish captain is the master, for it is he who controls the rudder which steers the ship. Yet it is the Jewish owner who is truly master, and it is the owner who directs the yacht's destination.

The owner of the yacht is wealthy – and “there is no wealthy person except in knowledge,” knowledge of Torah. Through Torah, the Jew can influence the world, can chart the course. Just as the yacht owner, through acting according to the dictates of Torah, influenced the captain to come closer to G-

d, so too Jews in general, through standing firm in matters of Torah and mitzvos – including the command to convince non-Jews to observe the Seven Noahide Laws – can influence the nations of the world to acknowledge the Creator and Master of the world.