

SELECTED WRITINGS

**A Collection of Addresses and Essays
on Hashkafah, Jewish History
and Contemporary Issues**

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31 ■ The Coming of Moshiach

All of a sudden everybody is talking about Moshiach. Remember, not so long ago when the cynics used to sneer at those of us who were still waiting for a “personal Messiah”? Remember also, that even to us who were convinced of the assertion that *בכל יום אהבה לו שיבא* that his coming is to be expected any day, that conviction — let us be honest — was often mere lip service? “Any day” used to be very, very far away, indeed...

To be sure, there were great Tzadikim in all generations who were simply homesick for Moshiach, waiting daily for his arrival, longing for it with all the pious impatience of their saintly hearts. But to most of us Moshiach used to be outside of all immediate reality. His arrival was confined to the remote future -- in G-d's own time, which used to be an enormous distance away from us.

Something must have happened to our collective minds that “Moshiach” all of a sudden has emerged as a household word within our rank and file, a familiar term, part and parcel of our here and now.

Only a short time ago a lecture on the “Coming of Moshiach” might have scarcely attracted an audience. But just a few weeks ago precisely this topic resulted in a record crowd of eager listeners.

We ask ourselves: Is this a healthy sign of a spiritual awakening, or might a word of caution be in order at this juncture? For history has taught us many a lesson of high-pitched pseudo-messianic hopes which were cruelly thwarted, resulting in bruised souls plunging into an abyss of disillusionment and dangerous despair.

For all we know, the stage has been set for the advent of the ultimate Promise for quite a while and the signs predicted by our Sages for the period of *משיח הבלי* the birth pangs of the *גאולה* seem to have all but materialized.

All the nations of the world are in an uproar. All the haters of Zion, all the G-dless governments, the atheists as well as the sacrosanct hypocrites have banded together to converge on the remnant of our people, upon the fugitives of the holocaust who have found a haven of hope in our ancient homeland.

The stage is set, but the curtain has not been raised. The labor pains are here, but the birth has not begun. And there is no true prophet yet who has brought us a divine message as to the duration of the pre-messianic turbulence and turmoil, and when and how it will come to its conclusion.

When shall it come to pass? Within days, years, decades? Nobody knows. Nobody is supposed to know. It is all part of the Divine plan. We have already been warned by the Rambam not to delve into the profundities of the Midrashic passages which describe the how and when of Moshiach's coming. Looking forever to the ultimate salvation, “*צפית לישועה*” is of the essence, for the very process of hoping is able to bring out the very best within us. Hope purifies our heart, it cleanses our soul, it ennobles our actions and it kindles the lamp of Teshuvo which is a prerequisite to the new world order. What kind of Moshiach do we expect? Do you dream of another Bar

Kochba who will succeed where the old one failed? Is our preoccupation with Moshiach merely a result of our frustrations in a crisis-ridden world? Is this messianic syndrome a psychological reaction to the feelings of helplessness and hopelessness which has gripped so many of our brethren? Or is it the legitimate upsurge of our innermost yearnings to seek peace with G-d, truth, righteousness, love and sanctity? Do we look out merely for the miraculous superman who will avenge the blood of our martyrs and mete out punishment to our foes and persecutors? Or is it the authentic stirring of our Jewish souls towards משיח צדקנו who will eventually bring back all of G-d's children to their Heavenly Father?

If this is indeed our ultimate hope then why don't we flock daily to our מדרשות ובתי כנסיות? Why don't we finally make peace with our fellows? Why don't we insist more stubbornly on more truthfulness in our dealings with others? Why don't we more urgently propagate Tznius and self-sanctification? In short, why don't we get ready and prepare ourselves to be worthy of the ultimate coming of G-d's anointed?

We who have become witnesses to a bewildered generation fast drowning in the quicksand of G-dlessness, violence and lasciviousness, in order to be worthy to welcome the messenger of our salvation, must first purify the pollution of our souls which is the only cause why Moshiach is so slow in arriving.

Therefore, let's quit talking so much about it. Let us rather be on the alert -- wide awake and ready -- for the break of dawn which is bound to come -- speedily in our days -- any day now!