

<http://www.bethsar.com/Isaiah%2053.htm>

24. Before his death on June 12, 1994, Lubavitcher Rabbi Menachem Schneerson was considered by many in his ultra-orthodox sect to be the Messiah (Moshioch in Hebrew). He was very ill during his last months. His followers placed an advertisement in the Manhattan Jewish Sentinel less than two months before his death. The advertisement stated:

MOSHIACH FACT #20

HOW CAN THE REBBE BE MOSHIOCH IF HE IS ILL?

Moshiach is described as one who is ill, “and he is wounded for our transgressions (Yeshayahu 53)”. When his time comes G-d says: I shall make him as a new creation. Thus the verse says, Today I have given birth to him, his moment of healing has come. (Yalkut Shimoni, Tehillim, Ch.2)

YECHI HAMELECH!

THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE HAS DECLARED THAT THE TIME OF THE REDEMPTION HAS ARRIVED

“Yeshayahu” is “Isaiah” in Hebrew. Here, as recently as April 1994, members of the Lubavitcher movement clearly and publicly applied Isaiah 53:5 to the Messiah.

Conclusion

This history of rabbinical thought concerning Isaiah 53 demonstrates that the traditional Jewish view of Isaiah 53 is that it speaks of the Messiah. Because of this, it is clear that the dominant Jewish view of the Messiah throughout the centuries has included the understanding that the Messiah would suffer and die as a sacrifice, bearing the sins of all people who would “believe the report” (verse 1). He would be the ultimate atonement for Jewish people and for others who would embrace him.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chabad_Lubavitch#Controversies

Controversy during the seventh Rebbe's life

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the seventh Chabad leader, took the reins of the movement shortly after World War II and became the Rebbe of the Chabad-Lubavitch dynasty following the death of his father-in-law in 1950. At the speech where he accepted leadership, he proclaimed the defining theme of his tenure. He stated that his purpose as the seventh Rebbe, and the Chasidim as the seventh generation, was to complete the work of bringing the Shechina back into this world, and bringing the Jewish Messiah. He further stated that the previous Rebbe had not finished this work, but because of the unusual character of his self-sacrifice was still present to lead the charge in bringing about the Messianic Age:

"Beyond this, the Rebbe will bind and unite us with the infinite Essence of God... When he redeems us from the exile with an uplifted hand and the dwelling places of all Jews shall be filled with light... May we be privileged to see and meet with the Rebbe here in this world, in a physical body, in this earthy domain - and he will redeem us" (Basi L'Gani 1951).

In the years preceding his own death, particularly after the end of the Persian Gulf War (1990–1991), Rabbi Schneerson announced that the world is on the threshold of redemption and the coming of the Jewish Messiah.

Rabbi Schneerson denounced the traditionally insular or assimilationist way of life espoused by many Jews in the United States. He encouraged growing untrimmed beards, that married women should cover their hair in public, and other overt signs of religiosity. His followers held public Hannukah celebrations, encouraged all Jewish men and boys over 13 to put on tefillin, and perform other observances in public, and made themselves highly visible in their Jewish observance and stretched their influence by actively courting politicians and powerful philanthropists. In some cases, Chabad zeal for religiosity in public caused a backlash from both liberal and traditional factions of the Jewish establishment, who, for example, sometimes questioned and challenged the need for public displays of the Hanukkah menorah.

Chabad teachings about the relationship between God, the Rebbe and his followers

Based on the teachings of Rabbi Isaac Luria, the Baal Shem Tov and the Ohr ha-Chaim, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi taught in the name of the Zohar that "He who breathed life into man,

breathed from Himself." Therefore a person's soul is "truly a part of God above." [7]

According to kabbalah, a tzadik ("saintly person") is someone who has completely nullified himself and his desires to God's will. His soul, which like every Jewish soul is part of God, is revealed within him more than it is in people who have not completely nullified themselves to God. However, Judaism does not believe in the tzadik being like God.

In 1951 Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson said a similar statement about the role of a tzadik -- (Lekutei Sichos Vol 2 pg 510-511) regarding the practice by Hasidim to have a Rebbe act as an intermediary with God on their behalf, by explaining that:

"the Rebbe is completely connected with his Hasidim, not like two separate things that connect, rather they become completely one. And the Rebbe is not an intermediary which separates rather he is one that connects. Therefore by a Hasid, he with the Rebbe with God are all one... Therefore one can not ask a question about an intermediary since this is the essence of God Himself, as He has clothed Himself in a human body".

In recent years some critics, notably Rabbi Dr. David Berger, Rabbi Chaim Dov Keller and others, expressed their concern that this is a Chabad innovation that "deifies" the Rebbe, which would be contrary to accepted Judaism. Chabad writers counter that these reactions are based on misunderstandings of Kabbalistic terminology used by Rabbi Schneerson, and that similar expressions can be found throughout non-Chabad Hasidic and Kabbalistic literature.

Messianism

During the later years of his life Rabbi Schneerson's teachings were interpreted by many to mean that he was claiming to be the Messiah. The development of this messianism and its impact on Chabad in specific — and Orthodox Judaism in general — has been the subject of much discussion in the Jewish press, as well as within the pages of peer-reviewed journals.

There are various expressions of the Messianic message:

- * Some express the belief that Rabbi Schneerson was the best candidate for the Messiah in his generation, but now say that people were mistaken to believe that he was the Messiah. Rather, he could have been the messiah if God willed it to be so, but it was not to be. As such, the Messiah will come nonetheless in the person of some other great leader.

- * Some emphasize the belief that the classic meaning of death does not apply to a truly righteous person such as Rabbi Schneerson. [8] In this view Rabbi Schneerson never "died", and is still alive in some way that ordinary humans cannot perceive. He will reveal himself in a more obvious way to proclaim his messiahship (see e.g. Rabbi Levi Yitzchack Ginsberg, of Kfar Chabad Yeshiva, in his book *Mashiah Akhshav*, volume IV, 1996). Many Chabad Hasidim refuse to put the typical honorifics for the dead (e.g. *zt"l* or *zecher tzaddik livrocho*, "may the memory of the righteous be for a blessing") after Rabbi Schneerson's name. They rely upon the Rebbe's statement that the world has entered new period in its history and that, contrary to what has happened in the past, the leader of the generation will not be hidden "even through burial," but that he would remain alive until the revelation of the

Messiah. (See Dvar Malchut, Parashat Shoftim, 5751).

* Rabbi Dr. David Berger, a Modern Orthodox academic, claims that there are people who argue that Rabbi Schneerson will literally return from the dead amidst a general bodily resurrection of the dead, and will be proclaimed as the Jewish Messiah. According to Dr. Berger, Chabad Hasidim have developed an extensive literature of prooftexts attempting to show that this is what previous rabbinic literature actually meant. Dr. Berger also asserts that a few Chabad followers hold Schneerson to be "God incarnate", and that they "worship" him as such. This belief runs contrary to Judaism and has been universally condemned.

Vociferous opponents of Chabad were some of the prominent roshei yeshiva (deans of Talmud colleges), such as Rabbi Elazar Shach, dean of the Ponovezh yeshiva in Israel.

The most vocal critic in the Modern Orthodox camp has been the voice of Rabbi Dr. David Berger. He urges the Orthodox community to distance itself from Chabad, but has received little support. At the request of Dr. Berger, the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) resolved through a majority vote that:

"In light of disturbing developments which have recently arisen in the Jewish community, the Rabbinical Council of America in convention assembled declares that there is not and has never been a place in Judaism for the belief that Mashiach ben David (Messiah son of David) will begin his Messianic Mission only to experience death, burial and resurrection before completing it."

Additionally, the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva University, and major leader in the Modern Orthodox community, Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm, has gone on record criticising the messianic tendencies within Chabad.

Longtime critics Allan Nadler (2001) and Rabbi Chaim Dov Keller (1998) warned that Chabad had moved its focus from God to Schneerson to the point that they "worship him", but their criticism did not have the impact that Berger's work and subsequent campaign.

In contrast, Dr. Berger's claims have been attacked as false and misleading by several books written in response to his claims.

* David Singer, Director of Research for the American Jewish Committee, wrote a lengthy criticism of Dr. Berger at OrthodoxyToday.org, stating, among other things, that Berger has "emerged as a would-be Torquemada on the Orthodox scene, demanding a policy of 'intolerance' and 'exclusion' toward those he deems to be heretical to Orthodoxy." [9]

* Rabbi Ahron Soloveitchik expressed concern for voices attacking Chabad. He urged that there not be unnecessary controversy, demanded respect for Chabad, and expressed praise for its work and stated that its beliefs are not outside the realm of Orthodox Judaism.

* Rav Eliyahu Shmerler, Tzanzer Rosh Yeshiva, signed a document saying that he believes that the Lubavitcher Rebbe is Moshiach even now. (Dalfin, Chaim, "Attack on Lubavitch")

* Rav Yaakov Yosef, Rav Ovadia Yosef's son, signed a document saying that he believes that the Lubavitcher Rebbe is Moshiach. (Dalfin, Chaim, "Attack on Lubavitch")

* Rav Hirshprung, Av Beth Din of Montreal has said that the belief that the Lubavitcher Rebbe is Moshiach is totally valid. (In a signed letter dated 13th of Iyar 5757 (1997) Printed in the "Algemeiner Journal". (Dalfin, Chaim, "Attack on Lubavitch"))

* AdMo"R Aaron Leifer, Grand Rabbi of Nadvorna-Safed, signed a halachic decree along with over a hundred others declaring the Lubavitcher Rebbe to be the Messiah, and urging Jews to recite "Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L'Olam Va'ed. (www.psakdin.net, linked below)

* Moshe Idel, the Max Cooper Professor of Jewish Thought at Hebrew University, considered the world's foremost academic authority on Kabbalah [10], or Jewish mysticism, disagrees with Berger's key point, that Judaism abhors the idea of a messiah who rises from the dead, arguing that the late King David is considered in Jewish literature as a leading candidate for the post of Messiah (Yanover).

* Likewise, Professor Aviezer Ravitzky, chairman of the department of Jewish philosophy at Hebrew University, strongly disputes Berger's claims that new Chabad teachings amount to heresy; however he does not believe that such beliefs are correct. In regards to those who wait for Schneerson to return from the dead as a messiah, Ravitzky stated "Torah does not prohibit a person from being stupid."

<http://beismoshiach.org/Moshiach/Moshiach295/moshiach295.htm>

A Day In The Life Of Melech HaMoshiach

By Prof. Shimon Silman, RYAL Institute and Touro College

“The world was created only for Moshiach.”[1] (Talmud)

Rosh HaShana is the day of the coronation of G-d as our king. Rav Saadia Gaon says that it is for this reason that we blow the shofar on Rosh HaShana, because it was the custom at the coronations of kings. Many times throughout the prayers of Rosh HaShana we pray for Moshiach who will bring the kingdom of G-d to its full revelation and glory.

In this paper we provide a glimpse into who and what Moshiach is. It would certainly be impossible to describe the full greatness of Moshiach. The Midrash[2] says that Moshiach will be greater than both Avrohom Avinu and Moshe Rabbeinu. . We would first have to have a full understanding of the greatness of Avrohom and Moshe before we could start to understand the greatness of Moshiach!

As another illustration of the unprecedented greatness of Moshiach, consider the following prophecy of Zechariah (14, 4) about Moshiach: “On that day his feet will stand on the Mountain of Olives.” In addition to its literal meaning, this is an allegory for the wisdom of Moshiach. Oil represents deep wisdom. Olives, the source of oil, represent an even greater wisdom. Olives on top of a mountain represent a greater wisdom yet. On this mountain of wisdom stand the feet of Moshiach, the wisdom of the head being that much greater.[3]

It is our intention then to present some of the fundamental characteristics of Moshiach so that the reader can formulate an image of Moshiach.

* * *

The peace and perfection of the Era of Moshiach is the climax of creation. We find this goal stated at the outset, right at the beginning of the Torah. The second verse of Bereishis says, “The spirit of G-d hovered above the waters,” on which the Midrash[4] comments, “This is the spirit of Melech HaMoshiach.”

Throughout the Torah – and especially in the books of the prophets – there are countless prophecies about the Era of Moshiach, some explicit and some allegorical. Explanation of and elaboration on these prophecies as well as further information is found in the Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, and books on Kabbala, Chassidus, and halacha throughout the generations.

Rambam, the great Jewish philosopher and codifier of Jewish law, concludes his major work on Jewish law, Mishneh Torah, with two chapters discussing the laws of Moshiach, i.e., the basic definitions of Moshiach himself and the Messianic Era. Elsewhere, in his famous list of the “13 Principles of Jewish Faith,” the belief in the coming of Moshiach and the belief in the revival of the dead are the 12th and 13th on the list.

We begin with a prophecy of Yeshayahu which describes first Moshiach himself and then what the world will be like in the Era of Moshiach. This will be followed by selections from the last two chapters of Mishneh Torah which follow the same pattern – first describing Melech HaMoshiach (Ch. 11), then the Era of Moshiach (Ch. 12).[5] Finally, we will draw on these sources as well as selections from the Talmud, Midrash, Kabbala, and Chassidus to sketch certain prominent characteristics of Moshiach.

Yeshayahu Ch. 11

And a staff shall come forth from the stump of Yishai and a branch shall sprout from his roots.

And the spirit of G-d will rest upon him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and power, a spirit of knowledge and fear of G-d.

And he will judge [with ease] as with his sense of smell because of his fear of G-d; neither with the sight of his eyes shall he judge, nor with the hearing of his ears shall he prove.

And he will judge the poor with justice and he will admonish with fairness the humble of the earth; and he will strike [the evil ones of] the earth with the rod of his mouth and with the speech of his lips he will put the wicked to death.

And righteousness shall be the belt of his waist and faith the belt of his loins.

And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie with the young goat; and a calf and a lion and a fat ox shall lie down together and a small child shall lead them.

And the cow and even the bear shall graze, together their children will lie down; and the lion as the cattle will eat straw.

And the nursing child will amuse himself over the hole of a poisonous snake; and into the hole of a venomous snake shall a weaned child stretch his hand.

They shall do no evil nor shall they destroy throughout My holy mountain, for the land will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the ocean bed.

And the one who comes forth from the root of Yishai [Moshiach] who will stand on that day shall be for the nations as a banner carrier – the nations shall seek him; and his peace shall be an honor.

And it shall be on that day that G-d will continue to apply His hand a second time to acquire the rest of his people who will remain from Assyria and from Egypt and from Pasros and from Cush and from Elam and from Shinar and from Hamas and from the islands of the sea.

And He shall raise a banner to the nations to gather the exiles of Israel; and the dispersed of Judah He shall gather from the four corners of the earth.

And the envy of Ephraim will depart and the oppressors of Judah will no longer be; Ephraim will not envy Judah and Judah will not oppress Ephraim.

And [Judah and Ephraim] shall swoop down upon the Philistines on the west side [of the land of Israel], together they shall plunder the people of the East; upon Edom and Moav they will stretch forth their hand and the children of Amon will obey them.

And G-d will cut off the gulf of the sea of Egypt and He shall wave His hand on the river with the strength of His spirit; and He shall beat it into seven streams and He shall cause [the exiles] to walk with their shoes [on the dry land].

And there shall be a road from Assyria for the rest of his people who will remain, just as there was for Israel on the day they went up from the land of Egypt.[6]

Rambam – Hilchos Melachim U'Melech HaMoshiach

Melech HaMoshiach will arise and restore the ancient dynasty of King David to its original sovereignty. He will build the Beis HaMikdash and gather the dispersed of Israel [to the Land of Israel]. In his time all the laws of the Torah will be restored as they were in days of old: We will bring sacrifices and observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years in accordance with all the mitzvos stated in the Torah.

Anyone who doesn't believe in him or does not await his coming denies not only the prophets but also the Torah and Moshe Rabbeinu since the Torah itself gives testimony regarding Moshiach. It says, "G-d will return your exiles and will have mercy on you and gather you in... even if your exiles are at the end of the heavens... and G-d will bring you [to the Land of Israel]." These explicit words of the Torah contain within them all the things that all the prophets said on the matter.

Also in the parsha of Balaam there is a prophecy about the two Moshiachs – the first Moshiach which was King David who saved the Jews from their enemies, and the later Moshiach who arises from David's descendants who saves the Jews from the hands of the sons of Esau. In that prophecy it says, "I see him but not now" – this refers to David; "I see him but it is not close" – this refers to Melech HaMoshiach. "A star will shoot forth from Yaakov" – this is David; "And a staff will rise from Israel" – this is Melech HaMoshiach....

Also, regarding the cities of refuge the Torah says, “If G-d will expand your borders you will add on three more cities.” This has not yet happened. But G-d doesn’t give an instruction for nothing. [Thus it will happen in the future – in the time of Moshiach.]

We do not, however, have to bring proofs from the prophets [about Moshiach] since all their books are filled with this matter.

Do not think that Melech HaMoshiach is required to perform signs or wonders, bring new things into the world or revive the dead or similar things....

If a king will arise from the House of David who teaches Torah and is occupied in the mitzvos like David his ancestor in accordance with both the Written Torah and the Oral Torah, compels all the Jews to follow the Torah and to strengthen it where it has been broken, and who fights the battles of G-d, he has the assumed status of being Moshiach. If he succeeds further and is victorious over the nations around him, builds the Beis HaMikdash in its place and gathers the dispersed of Israel – then he is Moshiach with a certainty and he will direct the entire world to serve G-d together.

Do not think that in the time of Moshiach anything of the way of the world will be cancelled or that there will be innovations in the order of nature. But rather the world will follow its natural order.... Some chachomim say that before Moshiach comes, Eliyahu HaNavi will come. [But] regarding all these matters and similar matters no one knows how they will be until they happen....[The main thing is] to await it and to believe in the matter in general as we explained above.

The scholars and the prophets desired the Era of Moshiach...only so that they would be free to pursue the study of the Torah and its wisdom without anyone oppressing or distracting them so that they will merit the “World to Come”....At that time there will be no famine or war, no jealousy or rivalry since there will be abundant good and all the delicacies will be as plentiful as the dust of the earth. The only occupation of the entire world will be to know G-d. Thus, the Jewish people will be great scholars and will know the hidden secrets and will attain knowledge of the Creator to the full capacity of man as the prophet says, “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the ocean bed.”[7]

While Rambam writes that Moshiach is not required to perform wonders, this is only a halachic requirement, i.e., the halachic definition of Moshiach does not require him to perform wonders but as we will see later from many sources Moshiach will in fact have a miraculous nature. Rambam is only stating the minimum halachic requirements of Moshiach. Similarly, his statement that the world will maintain its natural order applies only to the initial period of Moshiach’s coming, described as the First Era. Later on, however, in the Second Era, the order of nature will certainly change as the revival of the dead will occur – a very great change in the order of nature indeed.[8] The belief in the coming of Moshiach and the belief in the revival of the dead are the 12th and 13th principles of faith on Rambam’s famous list of the Thirteen Principles of Faith. Similar to Rambam’s statement here that one who does not believe in Moshiach denies the whole Torah, is his statement elsewhere that one who does not believe in the revival of the dead has not part in Judaism.[9]

“The innovation of Moshiach is that through him the two concepts of ‘above’ and ‘below’ will be united.”[10]

We will use this concept of the union of opposites as the framework for our presentation of the characteristics of Moshiach stated in the works of the Talmud, Kabbala, and Chassidus.

Majesty and Modesty

Regarding Moshiach, the prophet Yeshayahu says,[11] “Behold, my servant shall have great wisdom. He will be elevated, exalted and of very high stature.” In various sources this high exaltation is explained to mean that Moshiach will be greater than Adam, Avrohom Avinu and even Moshe Rabbeinu.[12]

Melech HaMoshiach will be exalted, greater and more honored and more glorious than all kings who preceded him.[13] His reign will extend over the entire world and will last forever.[14] His wisdom will surpass that of Shlomo HaMelech and he will be a prophet of the caliber of Moshe.[15] He will reveal the deepest level of the Torah – both its halachic content and its mystical secrets. [16] What we know of the wisdom of the Torah now is nothing compared to what he will reveal.[17]

At the same time he will be of the greatest humility concerned with the common man,[18] bringing this new wisdom and knowledge down to the level where anyone can understand it. He will show that the sincere faith of the simple Jew, who is totally dedicated to Judaism, is greater even than the deep understanding of the scholars.[19]

The Midrash tells a story about Moshe from the time that he was a shepherd. One of the sheep ran away from the flock and Moshe left the entire flock to care for this sheep and bring it back to the flock. This trait qualified him to be the leader of the Jewish people as he would be concerned about every individual Jew.[20] Similarly Moshiach will cherish every single Jew – even one who has run away from the flock.[21]

These two extremes of majesty and modesty are symbolized by two prophecies, one which says that Moshiach will appear on a cloud and one which says that he will appear as a poor man riding on a donkey.[22]

Wisdom and Prophecy

The chacham – man of wisdom – and the prophet are two distinct personalities with different characteristics and abilities. Each has an advantage over the other. Moshiach will attain the highest levels of perfection in both of these areas. As Isaiah says in the prophecy quoted above, “And the spirit of G-d will rest upon him, [i.e. prophecy] a spirit of wisdom and understanding...a spirit of knowledge.” Rambam writes,[23] Moshiach will be a chacham greater than Shlomo HaMelech, who was called “the wisest of all men,” and will attain a level of prophecy close to that of Moshe Rabbeinu of whom the Torah says, “There arose none like Moshe who knew G-d face to face.” There is a Midrash that goes even further and indicates that Moshiach will be a greater prophet than Moshe.[24]

In fact, there is a close connection between these two characteristics of being greater than Shlomo HaMelech and similar to Moshe, as we see from the continuation of Rambam’s statement: “...therefore he will teach Torah to all Jews.” This refers to a deep level of the Torah which will be revealed by Moshiach. Now we know that the Torah has great depth. The greatest rabbis and scholars – starting with Moshe Rabbeinu himself – have been studying it, analyzing it and delving into its depths for thousands of years. But the Torah being the wisdom of G-d has infinite depth so even the deepest analysis by the greatest Rabbis for the longest time cannot reveal its full depth. Thus, Moshiach will reveal in it a new dimension previously unattainable. So new will this revelation be that the prophet Yeshayahu calls it “Torah chadasha” – a new Torah. Shlomo HaMelech refers to it at the beginning of Song of Songs and symbolizes it with a kiss from G-d.

To be able to accomplish this task, Moshiach needs two qualities. Firstly, he needs to have the highest level of prophecy – similar to Moshe – to be able to receive this revelation from G-d, just as Moshe received the original revelation of the Torah from G-d at Mt. Sinai. But that is not yet enough. To be able to teach this new dimension of Torah to all Jews he must be able to bring it down to their level. To do this one would have to have the wisdom of Shlomo HaMelech – literally. The greatness of the wisdom of Shlomo consisted of his ability to take the greatest abstract concepts and by giving one example after another to bring it down one level after another until even the common man could understand it. Moshiach, who will reveal a wisdom greater than Shlomo’s, must, therefore, have this ability to a greater degree than even Shlomo.[25]

There is another aspect of Shlomo HaMelech’s wisdom which is also essential to the wisdom of Moshiach. The prevalence of peace in the time of Shlomo (for which he was named, as the prophet said, “His name will be Shlomo, and I shall bring shalom – peace – and tranquility to Israel in his days”[26]) was a sample of the peace that will prevail in the time of Moshiach. The power of his monarchy was due to the power of his wisdom by which all the nations were awed. It was a great light which dispelled the darkness of war and brought about unity just as Yeshayahu says in the Messianic prophecy quoted above, “They will not cause destruction...because the earth will be filled with the knowledge of G-d.”[27]

Regarding wisdom, Shlomo HaMelech says, “I saw that there is an advantage to wisdom over nonsense similar to the advantage of light over darkness.” The Zohar asks a powerful question on this: “Does it take Shlomo HaMelech, the wisest of all men, to see that wisdom is better than nonsense and light is

better than darkness? Doesn't everybody know this?" The Zohar and Chassidus explain that "wisdom" and "nonsense" here actually refer to two types of wisdom, one which is termed "light" and the other which is called darkness. The light derives directly from the Torah – the search from above – while the darkness is the view of reality resulting from the groping search from below, the attempt to understand the world in its own terms, for example, scientific research. The difference between these two types of wisdom is so great that the latter is called "nonsense" relative to the former. The point that Shlomo was making was that when the sciences are used to explain a matter in Torah – for example, when astronomy and mathematics are used to explain the laws of the new moon – this scientific knowledge ceases to be secular. It becomes part of Torah. The darkness is transformed into light, a greater light than that derived directly from the Torah. This is the "advantage" that Shlomo is talking about. The light resulting from transformed darkness has an advantage over the light derived directly from the Torah.

The greatness of Shlomo's wisdom was due in part to his having transformed the sciences. This transformation of "nonsense" into wisdom is a major part of the refinement of the physical world that prepares it for and actually brings about the highest revelations in the Torah to be revealed by Moshiach. It is a process which actually began with Yosef, who was the master over ancient Egypt and its wisdom, reached a very high level with Shlomo HaMelech, and will be completed by Moshiach himself.[28]

Natural and Miraculous

Moshiach is a human being with human parents whose ancestry goes back to King David. Yet his soul is from the loftiest heights, from the essence of G-d Himself. "Moshiach, as a messenger of G-d, combines two extremes. On the one hand he is a being in and for himself, a soul in a physical body. But at the same time, being a messenger of Adam HaElyon (G-dliness), he is literally like Him." [29] The essence of Moshiach is the same as the essence of G-d.

This essential fact about the life of Moshiach is connected with another essential fact – that he lives forever, an uninterrupted everlasting life. This fact is stated in the Talmud based on the verse in Psalms, "Life he [Moshiach] asked from You and You granted it to him, length of days forever," and is discussed extensively in the writings of Kabbala and Chassidus. The Mittlerer Rebbe in his explanation of this, compares Moshiach to other tzaddikim. He says that all other tzaddikim require some refinement of their bodies and, therefore, there has to be some sort of "passing away." Even Eliyahu HaNavi whose body ascended to the Heavens and became like an angel, required a transformation of his body from its physical condition on earth to its totally spiritual state in Heaven. Moshiach, however, is on a much higher level. "No change or refinement takes place in his body at all. He will have a physical body similar to the bodies of all Jews of that time" and will eat, drink, wear clothes, and sit on a chair, but "Moshiach will remain alive in his body together with the essence of his soul – down here just as it is above, literally. Concerning Moshe Rabbeinu "there was no difference at all between his body and his soul...and this will hold true of Moshiach in a much higher way. Therefore...he will not need to ascend Above." [30] There is, however, a period of concealment between the time he attains the "assumed status of Moshiach" and when he attains the status of "Moshiach with a certainty." [31]

In addition to the comparison to Moshe Rabbeinu, there is also a comparison to King David. While King David also lives an everlasting life, his life comes only from the world of Atzilus, whereas the life of Moshiach comes from the essence of G-d Himself.[32] Furthermore, the souls of both Moshe Rabbeinu and King David will “enter into” the soul of Moshiach.[33]

This concept of a soul entering into another soul or one soul containing another soul, is a deep topic in Kabbala. But one of the most important facts about Moshiach is that his soul is a neshama klalis, a general soul that contains all the souls of all Jews. This means that the soul of every Jew is a part of Moshiach and thus there is a part of Moshiach in every Jew. This fact has wide ranging practical implications. Since the soul of every Jew corresponds to a unique part of the soul of Moshiach, each Jew has a unique role to play in preparing the world for Moshiach.[34]

The life of Moshiach is certainly a supernatural life. As the Maharal of Prague writes, “Moshiach will be...beyond nature and the way of the world.”[35] The Midrash says that G-d conceived of Moshiach even before He created the world because Moshiach is higher than the order of creation.[36] Yet at the same time, as we emphasized above, he lives within nature and the physical world. Because he contains these two opposites within himself, he will eventually bring the entire world to a new world order which will be characterized by the full revelation of G-d’s infinite essence within the finite physical world,[37] a world order in which the natural and the miraculous combine and function simultaneously – “As in the days of your exodus from Egypt, I will show you wonders.”[38]

[1] Sanhedrin 98a

2 Midrash Tanchuma, Toldos 14

[3] Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, p.103

[4] Bereishis Rabba 2, 4

[5] In this connection it is interesting to note the following anecdote in which the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach himself followed the same pattern: When he was presented with a painting of himself – Melech HaMoshiach – by the Chassidic artist Michel, he said, “And now, Michel, I would like you to make a painting of what the world will be like in the time of Moshiach.”

[6] Isaiah Ch. 11, translated by the author of this paper based on Metzudas Dovid and Metzudas Tzion with reference also to the translations of Rabbi Nissan Mangel (Kehot Publications) and the Judaica Press.

[7] Hilchos Melachim U'Melech HaMoshiach Ch. 11 – 12, free translation by the author.

[8] Dvar Malchus on Hilchos Melachim, Sicha no. 3

[9] Rambam's commentary to the first Mishneh in Sanhedrin, Perek Chelek.

[10] Seifer HaMaamarim Meluket vol. 2, p.297

[11] Isaiah 52, 13

[12] Midrash Tanchuma, Toldos 14

[13] Likkutei Sichos vol. 6, p. 254

[14] BaMidbar Rabba 13, 14

[15] Rambam – Hilchos Teshuva 9, 2

[16] Seifer HaSichos 5751, p. 566

[17] Koheles Rabbah 11, 8

[18] HaYom Yom p. 75

[19] HaYom Yom p. 9, p. 56

[20] Sh'mos Rabbah 2, 2

[21] Sicha of Acharon Shel Pesach 5743. Hisvaaduyos 5743, vol. 3, p. 1314

[22] Seifer HaSichos 5749, p. 109

[23] Rambam – Hilchos Teshuva 9, 2

[24] See Seifer HaSichos 5751, p. 789

[25] See Seifer HaSichos 5751, pp. 566-582

[26] Divrei HaYamim I, 22, 9

[27] See Seifer HaSichos 5751, pp. 527-529

[28] Seifer HaMaamarim Meluket vol. 3, pp. 58-60. Maamarei Admur HaEmtza'i, Dvarim vol. 1, p. 9-10

[29] Seifer HaSichos 5752, pp. 107

[30] Maamarei Admur HaEmtza'i, Drushei Chasuna, pp. 131, 155

[31] BaMidbar Rabbah 11, 2. Likkutei Sichos vol. 9, p. 381

[32] Maamarei Admur HaEmtza'i, Dvarim vol. 1, p. 214-215

[33] Likkutei Sichos, vol. 35, p. 206, footnote 6

[34] Likkutei Sichos vol. 20, p. 522; Seifer HaSichos 5751, p. 590

[35] Quoted in Shaarei Geula, vol. 2, p. 69, note 29

[36] Bereishis Rabba 1, 4; Or HaTorah, Mikeitz, p. 2202

[37] Seifer HaMaamarim Meluket vol. 3, pp. 297-298

[38] Micha 7, 15. See Seifer HaMaamarim Meluket vol. 4, pp 225-234

