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# Reflections of Redemption

Essays on the Weekly Torah Reading and Moshiach,  
Based on the talks of the  
Lubavitcher Rebbe,  
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Shemot, 5785

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# *Reflections of Redemption*

Essays on the Weekly Torah Reading and Moshiach,  
Based on the talks of the  
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Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson



by  
Rabbi Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann, Ph.D

# Shmos

## MOSES AND MOSHIACH

*There are many points of comparison between Moses and Moshiach. Both are redeemers and teachers of the Jewish people. But why was it necessary to have a two-stage process, a redemption through Moses and one through Moshiach?*

When Moses encounters G-d at the burning bush, an extended conversation ensues. G-d wants Moses to redeem the Jewish people, to take them out of Egypt. Moses demurs, finding several excuses why he should not be the Redeemer. At one point, he tells G-d, "Please send the one You will send." Moses was asking G-d to send someone else, namely, Moshiach. Since G-d was going to send Moshiach in the future anyway, Moses asked G-d to send Moshiach immediately. Moses wanted the first redemption to also be the last.

Of course, Moses's request was not granted. G-d wanted Moses to be the one who took the Jewish people out of Egypt. Moses was to be the first redeemer. Still, the request, "Please send the one You will send" indicates there is an essential connection between Moses and Moshiach. Therefore, Moses could ask that Moshiach be the one to redeem the people from Egypt.

The connection seems rather obvious: both Moses and Moshiach redeem the Jewish people from exile. This task so unites the two that the Sages declare, "Moses is the first redeemer and he is the last redeemer." Obviously this doesn't mean that Moses himself will be the final redeemer, since Moses was from the tribe of Levi while Moshiach will be from the tribe of Judah. It means that through the strength of Moses, Moshiach will come.

already exists "a king from the House of Dovid, expert in the Torah and involved in mitzvos like Dovid his father... and he will compel all Israel to walk in [the ways of Torah], strengthen its breeches and fight the wars of G-d" - who is the "presumed Moshiach" [b'chezkas Moshiach] - there will already be immediately the "confirmed Moshiach" [Moshiach vadai], who "does all the above and succeeds, builds the Temple in its place and gathers the dispersed of Israel... He will then improve the whole world so that it serves G-d in unity..."

*(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Shmos, 21 Teves 5752)*

And from "the days of your life" at this time and in this place, without any interruption whatsoever, G-d Forbid, (even if he is already older than seventy years, etc.) every Jew will go immediately - totally and completely, "Reuven and Shimon descended, Reuven and Shimon arose,"<sup>4</sup> - into the continuation of "all the days of your life.," into the days of Moshiach and the eternal life that then will be.

Practically, this means that the Divine service of the Jewish people now must be "to bring about the days of Moshiach." We must reveal that the situation of "coming to Egypt" in exile is in truth a situation of the "Redemption of Israel." [This is achieved] through his preparation of himself and others for the situation of "the days of Moshiach."

The above includes (particularly in conjunction with the day of passing of the Rambam<sup>5</sup>) strengthening and increasing the study of the Rambam's *Mishneh Torah*, especially the Laws of King Moshiach,<sup>6</sup> in the last two chapters of the "Laws of Kings" which conclude the *Mishneh Torah*.

In addition to one's own study of this, one should also influence other Jews around him (men, women and children) in a manner of "raising many disciples,"<sup>7</sup> and many more will see and emulate them.

May it be G-d's Will, that through the resolution itself will come imminently and immediately the reward, the actual fulfillment of the Rambam's words at the conclusion of his work,<sup>8</sup> that after there

How so? The first, and therefore primary, qualification of Moshiach is to be uniquely expert in Torah. This means his ability to redeem the Jewish people comes through Torah, the Torah of Moses. Also, the Jewish people bring Moshiach and the Redemption through their study and fulfillment of the Torah, given to them by Moses.

The parallel runs deeper. Both Moses and Moshiach removed impurity and imperfection from the world. At creation, the world was perfect and unblemished. Through the sin of the tree of knowledge, impurity and imperfection came into the world. When the Torah was given – through Moses – the impurity was removed. The world was elevated to its original state -and beyond – by the Jewish people at Sinai. The sin of the Golden Calf caused the world to once again descend into impurity, a situation that will last until Moshiach, when the world will be purified and refined forever.

In general, we may say that the spirituality, the revelation of G-dliness, that Moses introduced into the world, Moshiach will establish permanently. According to the well-known principal that a descent is for the sake of an ascent, we can understand the connection between the sin of the tree of knowledge and the giving of the Torah. The Torah, G-d's Wisdom, enabled the world to reach a higher spiritual state than it experienced before the sin. At Sinai, the revelation of G-dliness was visible to the physical eye. Still, this was only a temporary state, and therefore only an example of the revelation that will occur at the final Redemption.

We know that Moshiach will teach Torah, and on a higher level than Moses. This is because the revelation of G-dliness that Moshiach will bring will be much higher than that experienced at Sinai and the giving of the Torah.

The difference between Moses and Moshiach may thus be said to be the difference between the temporary and the permanent. The

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4. *Vayikra Rabba*, chapter 32:5. See there for cross references.

5. [The Rambam passed away on 20 Teves. Translator's note.]

6. This is how it is titled in the Venice edition of 5284 and 5310.

7. *Avos*, chapter 1, Mishneh 1.

8. *Laws of Kings*, end of chapter 11.

giving of the Torah temporarily interrupted the state of impurity of the Jewish people (and therefore that of the rest of the world). But this revelation of G-dliness from Above did not penetrate and purify the world. So when that revelation was removed, so was the purification, and it became possible for the impurity – and death – to return. However, the Torah set in motion, so to speak, the process of purification. With the coming of Moshiach, the world will be completely refined, death will be swallowed up forever and the purification will permanently penetrate the world.

The “descent for the sake of ascent” parallel between the situations of Moses and Moshiach goes even further: before Redemption, both the first of Moses and the last of Moshiach, there is the process of exile, oppression and Divine service. Before Moses, the Jewish people went into the Egyptian exile. There, despite the slavery and persecution, they maintained their Jewishness and performed the Divine service required of them. The iron cauldron of Egypt prepared them for the Torah, the revelation at Sinai. Similarly, through their Torah study and observance of mitzvos throughout this long exile, the Jewish people have refined themselves and purified the world, preparing both to experience the imminent future Redemption.

Let us ask: Why is the permanent revelation of G-dliness a two-stage process, first the revelation through Moses and then, over thirty-three hundred years later, the revelation through Moshiach? Why not a one-stage process as Moses requested?

The purpose of creation is to create a “dwelling place below,” to transform the world so that G-dliness may be revealed within it. This requires two things: the world must be capable of being transformed, and there must be the means of transforming it. The Jewish people, the agents of that transformation, were given the Torah and its mitzvos at Sinai. Also at Sinai, the world received the

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We have already mentioned many times the words of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, that aside from the fact that already "all the appointed times have passed,"<sup>1</sup> the Jewish people have already done teshuvah and already everything is completed, even including "polishing the buttons." We only need G-d to open the eyes of the Jewish people so that they should see that the true and complete Redemption already exists, and we are sitting already by the prepared table at the festive meal of Livyosan, Shor HaBor,<sup>2</sup> etc.

Therefore it's understood... in this generation and at this time, after every requirement has been accomplished (as mentioned above), one has the complete assurance in the Torah that there will certainly be "(You will remember the day of your exodus from the land of Egypt) all the days of your life... to bring about the days of Moshiach."<sup>3</sup>

There is no need for any interruption, G-d Forbid, between "all the days of your life" and "the days of Moshiach" (which has been the situation for the Jewish people in all the generations **before** our generation). Rather, "all the days of your life" for every Jew, living physically as a soul in a body, includes in the simple sense (also) "the days of Moshiach." This is without an interruption, since the Redemption is actually coming imminently and immediately at this instant and in this place (even if the condition is one of night, "coming to Egypt"). Thus the last moment of exile and the very last instant of exile become the first moment and the very first instant of Redemption.

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1. *Sanhedrin* 97b.

2. See *Bava Basra* 74b ff. *Pesachim* 119b and in other places.

3. *Brochos* 12b.



that we have already concluded all matters of Divine service and are presently standing ready to greet our righteous Redeemer [Moshiach]. This is particularly true now that we have reached the milestone of forty years<sup>8</sup> concerning which the Torah says, "G-d gave you a heart to know and eyes to see and ears to hear."<sup>9</sup> Additionally, we are now situated in the fifty first year [5751], which in Hebrew forms the acrostic (It shall be a year of) wonders which I will show him [נפלאות אראנו - Niflaos Avenu].

The Jewish people should, therefore, be encouraged and their spirits uplifted by declaring that G-d says daily, and literally, anew, that, **"I have indeed remembered you,"** and that your righteous Moshiach "stands behind the wall"<sup>10</sup> and that "this one is coming."<sup>11</sup> Accordingly we should prepare ourselves to greet him by increasing our observance of Torah and Mitzvos, **in consonance with the ruling of the Rambam**<sup>12</sup> (whose anniversary of passing is the 20th of Teves, the night after this Sabbath), that through "one Mitzvah, one can favorably alter the balance for oneself and for the entire world, causing oneself and them salvation and deliverance."

*(From the talks of Shabbos Parshas Shemos, 19 Teves 5751)*

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8. [I.e., forty years since the passing of the Previous Rebbe, a milestone which enables us to fully realize the intention and depth of the teachings that were said forty years earlier. - Translator's note.]

9. Tavo 29:3 [Moses said this to the Jewish people who were about to enter into the Promised Land, explaining that they were now capable of realizing that which they were taught by G-d forty years earlier. Translator's note.]

10. Shir HaShirim 2:9.

11. Ibid 8. See Shir HaShirim Rabbah on this verse (ch. 2:8(b)).

12. Hilchos Teshuvah 3:4.

ability to be affected by the Torah and mitzvos of the Jewish people. When the Torah was given, the world's existence was temporarily nullified. This temporary nullification from Above imprinted into the nature of the world the capacity to recognize the G-dliness inherent within it. The Torah and mitzvos actualize that ability, so that recognition of the G-dliness within creation occurs even on the physical level.

Moses started the process. By bringing to the Jewish people the ability to refine the world, and the world the capacity to recognize the Oneness of G-d within itself, Moses laid the groundwork for the future Redemption, when the world as a dwelling place for G-dliness would become a physical reality. Making that happen is the task of Moshiach. But the strength to achieve this, and the very possibility, comes through Moses.

This explains the two-part process: The primary purpose of the servitude and exile in Egypt, and the subsequent redemption, was for the Jewish people to receive the Torah, and thus the ability and potential to refine the world. This was the task of Moses. After the Torah was given, the primary purpose of the oppression and exile of the Jewish people was to actually fulfill their potential, to refine the world through their Torah and mitzvos. The coming of Moshiach completes that process, leading to the primary Divine service of the world, after it has already been purified and refined.

Man is a microcosm. The same order that applies to the world at large applies to each individual. As the Torah of Moses leads to the redemption of Moshiach in a general sense, each individual, through his or her mitzvos, can make it real in the here and now. The day begins with prayer and Torah study, which gives the person the strength to work and perform his Divine service. Prayer enables a person's Divine soul to control his inclinations and influence his part of the world. His conduct, in accordance with Torah, affects

and transforms his environment and those around him. It becomes obvious to all who observe him that he is wise, ruling over his "small city," his body and inclinations, for, acting as the Torah dictates, he brings Moshiach.

*(Based on Likkutei Sichos 11, pp. 8-13)*

## The Announcement Of The Redemption

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All of the signs mentioned by our sages indicate that we are currently situated **at the very end of the period of exile**. We have "passed all the deadlines."<sup>1</sup> We have also performed Teshuvah [repentance, return, a prerequisite for Redemption]. Indeed, my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, declared (several decades ago) that we have already concluded all the service [necessary for Redemption], including the "polishing of the buttons,"<sup>2</sup> and we now stand ready ("All of you stand ready") to greet our righteous Moshiach.<sup>3</sup>

\* \* \*

Despite the difficult and protracted final exile, which has lasted more than 1,900 years (in stark contrast to the duration of the Egyptian bondage which lasted 210 years), the nature of "the Children of **Israel**" has essentially **transcended exile**. Thus, every additional moment we remain in exile is a form "having **now come** into Egypt,"<sup>4</sup> "as if they had that very day entered into Egypt."<sup>5</sup>

The Jewish people, therefore, stand with firm faith and conviction that G-d will immediately fulfill his promise that "I have indeed remembered you"<sup>6</sup> by bringing the genuine and complete Redemption, especially when hearing from the Moses of our generation,<sup>7</sup> my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation,

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1. *Sanhedrin* 97b.

2. Talk of Simchas Torah, 5689.

3. Cf. *Hayom Yom*, among others, 15 Teves.

4. *Shemos* 1:1.

5. *Shemos Rabbah*, beginning of our Parsha (8:14), *Tanchuma*, loc. cit. 3.

6. *Shemos* 3:16.

7. See *Bereishis Rabbah* 56:7: "There is no generation in which there is none like Moses." See also *Zohar* 3:273a. *Tikkunei Zohar* 69 (112, beginning of side a. 114, beginning of side a). *Tanya* chapter 44. Ibid. *Iggeres HaKodesh*, elucidation of sec. 27, end.