



APPROACHING MOSHIACH

By **Rabbi Pinchas Taylor**

LESSON 3

G L O S S A R Y



PROFILE

A brief biographical account of the author noted in the body text



EXORDIUM

A brief characterization of the noted book



The 63 tractates of the Talmud are arranged in six sections, or “Orders,” wherein each tractate deals with a subset of laws pertaining to a common theme.

Tractate Sanhedrin belongs to the Order of Nezikin (lit., Damages), the section of the Talmud that discusses Jewish civil and criminal law. Tractate Sanhedrin details the laws applicable to the hierarchal Jewish judicial system, as well as the various penalties—monetary, corporal and capital—at its disposal. The last chapter discusses the world to come, i.e., the messianic era.

TEXT 1

He greeted [Moshiach], saying, “Peace upon you, Master and Teacher.”

“Peace upon you, son of Levi,” he replied. “When will you come, Master?” he asked. “Today,” was his answer.

On [Rabbi Joshua’s] returning to Elijah [the prophet], the latter enquired, “What did he say to you?”

“Peace upon you, son of Levi,” he answered. Thereupon [Elijah] observed, “He thereby assured you and your father of [a portion in] the world to come.”

“He spoke falsely to me,” he rejoined, “stating that he would come today, but has not.” [Elijah] answered him, “This is what he said to you, ‘Today, if you will listen to His voice.’”

Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin 98a

אמר ליה שלום עליך רבי ומורי אמר ליה שלום
עליך בר ליואי א"ל לאימת אתי מר א"ל היום
אתא לגבי אליהו א"ל מאי אמר לך א"ל שלום
עליך בר ליואי א"ל אבטחך לך ולאבוך לעלמא
דאתי א"ל שקורי קא שקר בי דאמר לי היום
אתינא ולא אתא א"ל הכי אמר לך (תהלים צה, ז)
היום אם בקולו תשמעו
גמרא, מסכת סנהדרין דף צח.



Tractate Pesachim belongs to the Order of Moed (lit., Holidays), the section of the Talmud that contains the laws relevant to the Sabbath, the festivals, fast days and other significant holidays.

Pesachim is the Talmudic tractate that deals chiefly with the festival of Pesach (Passover), its rituals and sacrificial service, and the leavened substances that are forbidden during the festival.

TEXT 2

Our rabbis taught: Seven things are hidden from man... and when the Davidic dynasty will return.

Talmud, Tractate Pesachim 54b

ת"ר שבעה דברים מוכוסים מבני אדם... ומלכות
בית דוד מתי תחזור
גמרא, מסכת פסחים, דף נד:



Rabbi Bachya ben Asher (1255–1340), known commonly as Rabbeinu Bachya, was a Spanish rabbi, scholar and Torah commentator. He authored multiple works, but he is best known for his brilliant commentary on the Five Books of Moses. In his commentary he draws on four main approaches to understanding the text: the simple reading of the verse, the hints and allegories that are found within the text, its deeper philosophical meaning, and its esoteric/mystical meaning.

TEXT 3

You must appreciate that the seven days (including the Sabbath) of creation are intended to acquaint us with what happened once and with what will happen again. They are symbolic of the 6000 years that the universe will endure in its present form, and the 1000 years during which it will undergo a total transformation.

Rabbeinu Bachya, Bereishit 2:3

ודע והבן כי שבעת ימי בראשית אלה מבארים לנו
מה שעבר ורומזים לנו על העתיד והנה הם כנגד
שיתא אלפי שני וחד חריב
רבינו בחיי, בראשית ב:ג

6000-YEAR ROADMAP

The Jewish sages teach that the descriptions of the seven days in which the world was created are also descriptions of the way world history will unravel from the creation of Adam until the end of time. They correspond to the six millennia of history that humanity will experience.

The seventh day—when G-d rested from creating, commemorated by celebrating Shabbat—corresponds to the seventh millennium, during which the world will experience an eternal and cosmic Shabbat, the coming of Moshiach.

However, it is certainly possible for Moshiach to come earlier. The sages are merely saying that by the year 6000 (on the Jewish calendar) Moshiach will certainly have come, whether humanity is appropriately prepared or not. If the world community has fully prepared for Moshiach earlier, Moshiach will come earlier. The Lubavitcher Rebbe often emphasized that we can hasten the redemption through our own acts of goodness and kindness.



This tractate discusses the laws of a sotah—a married woman suspected by her husband, with strong circumstantial evidence, of infidelity. She is brought to the Temple and given to drink from the “bitter waters,” and if she was indeed unfaithful, she miraculously dies.

TEXT 4

In the footsteps of Moshiach, insolence will increase... the government will turn to heresy and there will be no one [to offer them] reproof... the wisdom of the learned will degenerate... youths will put old men to shame.

Talmud, Tractate Sotah 49b

בעקבות משיחא חוצפא יסגא... ומלכות תהפך
למינות ואין תוכחת... וחכמת סופרים תסרח...
נערים פני זקנים ילבינו...
גמרא, מסכת סוטה, דף מט:



The Zohar is the classic text of the Kabbalah, compiled by the second-century Mishnaic sage Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. Rabbi Shimon (known by the acronym “Rashbi”) lived in tumultuous times, when the Roman government was executing all the great Torah teachers. Rashbi had to flee Roman persecution, and hid in a cave for 13 years. During this time he received Divine inspiration, merited the revelation of Elijah the prophet, and composed the sacred Zohar.

TEXT 5

Rabbi Yossi said: [regarding the redemption] it is written: “I, G-d, will accelerate it in its time [בְּעֵתָהּ].” The word בְּעֵתָהּ [“in its time”] can read בְּעֵת הַחֲמִישִׁית [“at the time of five,” alluding that G-d will accelerate the redemption after the fifth millennium.]

In the 600th year of the sixth millennium [5600 in the Jewish calendar, corresponding to 1840 C.E.], the gates of wisdom above, together will the wellsprings of wisdom below, will open up, and the world will prepare to usher in the seventh millennium. Like one who begins preparations for ushering in the Sabbath on the afternoon of the sixth day, so too here. The hint for this is, “In the 600th year of Noah’s life... all the wellsprings of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened.”

Mishneh Torah, Laws of Kings, chapter 11

אמר רבי יוסי כְּנֻוְנָא דָא כְּתִיב (ישעיה ס)
אני ה' בְּעֵתָהּ אֲחִישְׁנָהּ. מהו בְּעֵתָהּ. בְּעֵת ה'.
דְּתִקּוּם מִעֲפָרָא כְּדִין אֲחִישְׁנָהּ...
ובשית מאה שנין לְשִׁתִּתְּאָהּ יתפתחון תְּרַעֵי
דְּחִמְתָּא לְעִילָא ומבויעי דְּחִמְתָּא לְתַתָּא,
וְיִתְתְּקוּן עֲלֵמָא לְאֵעֲלָא בְּשִׁבְעָאָהּ. כְּבַר נָשׁ
דְּמִתְתְּקוּן בְּיוֹמָא שְׁתִּיתְּאָהּ מְכִי עֲרַב שְׁמִשָּׁא
לְאֵעֲלָא בְּשִׁבְעָאָהּ. אוּף הֵכִי נִמְי. וְסִימְנִיד
(בראשית ז) בְּשֵׁנַת שָׁשׁ מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה לְחַיֵּי נֹחַ
וְגו' נִבְקְעוּ כָּל מַעְיָנוֹת תְּהוֹם רַבָּה.
וזהו בראשית, דפים קט"ז-ק"ח.

