APPROACHING MOSHIACH

By Rabbi Pinchas Taylor
GLOSSARY

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

EXORDIUM
A brief characterization of the noted book
G-diness Concealed

G-d created the world because He desired to be found in the world and for the world to be a dwelling place for Him. To prevent the world and its inhabitants from being lost in the presence of G-d’s omnipotent energy, G-d condensed and concealed His force, which is masked and remains undetectable within creation.

Through the created beings choosing to do what is right according to the Torah, the world is prepared to openly receive G-d’s life force and vitality. This will materialize in messianic era.

Text 1

We must remember in connection with this subject, and indeed with all others, that our religion is based on the following thirteen principles:

The 12th Principle: The Messianic Era

We are to believe as fact that the Messiah will come and not expect him to tarry. If he delays, wait for him, without setting a time limit for his coming. One must not make conjectures based on Scripture to conclude when he will come. One must believe that Messiah will have more stature and honor than all the kings who ever lived, as all the prophets from Moses to Malachi prophesied. Whoever doubts this or trivializes it denies the Torah, which has foretold his coming in the portions of Bilam and Nitzavim.

A corollary of this principle is that a king of Israel must come only from the House of David through the seed of Solomon. Anyone who rejects this family, denies G-d and the words of His prophets.

Maimonides introduction to chapter “Chelek” of Tractate Sanhedrin

Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (1135-1205) was a medieval Talmudist, halachic codifier, physician, philosopher and communal leader. One of the foremost Jewish scholars in history, Rabbi Moshe is known in the world of Jewish scholarship by the acronym RAbbi Moshe Ben Maimon), and to the world at large as “Maimonides.” Rabbi Moshe was born in Spain, but was forced to flee because of religious persecution. He eventually settled in Egypt, where he rose to fame as a Jewish leader and also became the personal physician of the Sultan.
TEXT 2

In the future, the Messianic king will arise and renew the Davidic dynasty, restoring it to its initial sovereignty. He will build the Temple and gather the dispersed of Israel. Then, in his days, the observance of all the statutes will return to their previous state. We will offer sacrifices, observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years according to all their particulars as described by the Torah.

Maimonides Laws of Kings chapter 11:1

CITIES OF REFUGE

In biblical Israel, there were “cities of refuge.” A person who accidentally killed someone found safe haven there from vengeful relatives of the victim.

The Torah says that when the opportunity arises, “You should add three more cities of refuge to these three (Deuteronomy 19:9).” This has never happened in history and is a reference to the Messianic Era, when the Land of Israel will be larger, and more cities of refuge will be needed.

TEXT 3

The belief in the coming of the Moshiach is the principle of all principles. At that time, G-d will reign as king over the earth, and all will recognize His kingship. Although he may tarry, we are obligated to await, look forward, and pray for the day that “You will rule in Zion.”

Chofetz Chaim al HaTorah, Noach

TEXT 4

Rava said: When a person is brought before the Heavenly court, they say to him: Did you deal honestly in business? Did you have set times for learning Torah? Did you engage in producing children? Did you anticipate the salvation (coming of the Moshiach)?

Talmud, Tractate Shabbat 31a
EXILE

Nearly 2,000 years ago, the Jewish nation was driven out of its homeland and sent into exile which last to this very day. This exile is often described as a punishment for our failures. But this is only part of the story. As mentioned above, creation was a result of G-d’s desire to have a dwelling place in our reality. The world will be a dwelling place for G-d when the spiritual essence of every creation (which is currently concealed within them) comes to the fore, and every creation will realize that they are G-d’s creations. This necessitated the exile, which scattered the Jewish nation over the four corners of the world, so we can utilize objects (and their embedded spiritual essence) for the service of G-d.

TEXT 5

Speedily cause the scion of David your servant to sprout forth. Raise his standard high with your deliverance, for we hope for Your deliverance every day. Blessed are You G-d who causes the standard of deliverance to flourish.

Shemoneh Esreh Prayer, 15th Blessing

TEXT 6

May His great name be magnified and sanctified in the world that He created according to His will. May He establish his sovereignty, and cause His redemption to flourish and hasten the coming of His Moshiach.

Kaddish Prayer

GARDEN OF EDEN

In the beginning, G-d placed Adam and Eve into the Garden of Eden (pleasure). The garden was the best part of the entire globe, where they did not have to exert themselves to get food. There was an abundance of everything. Adam and Eve lived happily and peacefully until the Serpent, who was envious of Adam and Eve, devised a plan by which to make them fall. G-d gave permission to Adam and Eve to eat all the fruits of the trees apart from the fruits of the Etz Hadaat Tov VaRa (Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil). The fruit of the Tree of Knowledge had the power to fill a person with the desire for both good and evil. The Serpent successfully enticed Eve to eat from the fruit. She, in turn, enticed Adam to do the same. As a result, G-d drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden. They now had to work hard, working the soil to subside.