

להביא לימות המשיח

TIMELESS AGES

Immortality after Moshiach's arrival

Nothing can bring one to tears quite like the passing of a loved one; a relative, a friend, or even an acquaintance. The *novi* Yeshaya prophesized about the days of Moshiach, saying, “And Hashem will erase all crying from upon your faces.” The reason we will cease to cry in that era is, as he explains in the beginning of the *possuk*: “בלע המות לנצח—He will swallow the death forever.”

The end of death is something not completely understood. Of course death, whenever it happens, is a terrible thing, but it is completely natural. People need to eat to live, and without food they will die; so life is not inherent in a person, it must be constantly maintained. It is inconceivable that a physical body, which is composed of many complex components, will not slow and eventually stop over the course of centuries, and even millennia.¹

The only thing that is forever is Hashem. If something was created, then it can just as easily be destroyed. And yet, here the *novi* is promising that a physical body, with all that it entails, will live forever.

IT'S BEEN DONE BEFORE

The truth is, the notion of a person living forever shouldn't come as such a surprise. A person is, after all, not just a body. There is a *neshamah*, which provides life to the body. Without it, one wouldn't live for even a moment. The *neshamah* is a *'chelek Eloka,*' and it was created in a way that it lasts forever.² So the *neshamah* should be able to give the body, which it inhabits, the ability to live forever as well.

However, if in fact this is the case, why then do people die in the first place? What causes the *neshamah* to ordinarily separate from the body?

The Torah tells us that this was actually the original plan. Adam Harishon was originally destined to live forever. So being a creation of Hashem, and always connected to Hashem with a *neshamah*, which is everlasting, how could he have died?

There was only one thing which could have severed Adam's connection to Hashem, and caused him to die; violating the one mitzvah he was given—and eating from the *עץ הדעת*. Once that happened, he separated himself from the source of life, from Hashem, and was cursed with *אל עפר תשוב*, to dust you shall return.

The *novi* tells us that when Moshiach comes the evil that entered the system by *עץ הדעת* will be removed. We will return to the connection with Hashem that Adam Harishon had lost. And so we surely won't die, just like he wouldn't have had he not sinned.

DEATH AFTER LIFE?

The unfortunate effects of *עץ הדעת* were already reversed at one point. When *klal Yisroel* stood at *Mattan Torah*, Chazal tell us that *פסקה זוהמתן*, their taint was removed.³ They were freed of the curse that had been placed upon mankind; and indeed, until they sinned with the golden calf, there was *חרות ממלאך המות*, liberation from the angel of death.⁴

However, once we've already experienced a reversal of *עץ הדעת*, and we once

again failed, what is the guarantee that it won't happen again? Moshiach can come, remove death—just like it was taken away at *Mattan Torah*, and we are liable to again return to death.

The solution, the Rebbe explains,⁵ lies in the *possuk* itself. By *Mattan Torah*, externally nothing changed. It was only the great revelation that caused the *עץ הדעת* to be reversed. Since the negative was still there, just inactive, there was always a possibility that it should reawaken, ; which is exactly what happened when they began worshipping an idol and reconnected with the evil, with death.

The changes of the future, on the other hand, won't be just a result of a revelation. The world on its own will come to an understanding of Hashem. “The world will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem as the water covers the sea.”⁶ Humanity will have refined itself, unlike at *Mattan Torah*, when the Yidden were changed by Hashem.

By the same token, the physical changes which will occur, will also take place naturally, without relying on the supernatural. Quite the contrary; by harnessing the powers of nature, we will merit the ultimate fulfillment of the prophecies.

For this reason, the changes will not be reversible, as they were by *Mattan Torah*. Knowledge and fear of Hashem will become part of our nature. And similarly, the physical changes will also never revert to their original state, because they will have come about from an increased understanding of nature.

OUTSMARTING THE SNAKE

If Adam Harishon would not have sinned, he would have lived forever. So is the removal of the sin just returning to what should have been, or is there something different, a type of immortality that never existed?

The answer is, that the latter is true. The fact that Adam Harishon actually ate from the tree, and eventually died, proves that although he was theoretically capable of living forever, death was still an option. It did not enter him until he sinned, but it was there, waiting to trap him.⁷

The absence of death in the future will be much more significant. It will be complete, with no chance of a reversal, because it will have been naturally uprooted.⁵

LIFE FOR ALL

If man is destined to live forever, than what will happen if we fall ill? Are we destined to get old and sick, and remain that way forever? Or perhaps we will spend all of eternity hopping from one doctor to another?

The answer should come as no surprise. Illness only exists now as a prelude to death. Once people become immortal and begin living forever, illness will serve no purpose, and it will become a distant memory.⁸

There is an argument in the Midrash,⁹ whether or not non-Jews will also live forever. Since we have established that we will naturally discover the key to immortality, how can there be an opinion that this will only apply to Yidden? The

same doctors or scientists that will make the Yidden live, should be able to do the same for non-Jews.

In light of the above, the Rebbe concludes

...It doesn't mean physical death, it will be accomplished through *bitul to Nessi Doreinu*.

that non-Jews will indeed also live forever, as death does not mean only physical death, but spiritual death. Like the Zohar says: One who is dropped from his position is considered dead.¹⁰ The non-Jews will discover that everything that they held dear, the coarse materiality and physical pleasures of the world, are all worthless; and for them that is considered death.¹¹

And what of the Midrash that says that everyone will die just before *techias hameisim*?¹² There too the Rebbe says that it doesn't mean physical death, and it will be accomplished through *bitul to Nessi Doreinu*.¹³

LIFE TODAY

The Rebbe proclaimed on a number of occasions that we are in the days of Moshiach. Today we see this more than ever, as the average life expectancy continues to rise, and many diseases that had once plagued humankind are rendered extinct by scientific innovation.

As we have already discovered, when Moshiach comes there will be no illness.

So today, the longer we live, and the less sickness there is in the world, the more we can say that the presence of Moshiach is already being felt.

Doctors today are even speaking openly about the possibility of living forever, and some of them have promised that we will live to see immortality—by scientific means—in our lifetime.

Based on this, it is no stretch to say that the talk of longer—and even endless—life expectancy in the scientific and medical field, is yet another sign that Moshiach is at our doorstep, and has already begun affecting the physical world.¹⁴ **D**

1. Ramban, Bereishis, 2, 17.
2. Rambam Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah, Perek 4, Halacha 16.
3. Shabbos 146, 1.
4. Tanchuma, Ki Sisa, 16.
5. Lekutei Sichos, chelek 11, p. 10.
6. Yeshaya, 11, 9.
7. Lekutei Sichos, chelek 24, p. 133.
8. Toras Menachem – Menachem Tzion, p. 611.
9. Bereishis Rabbah, 26, 2.
10. Zohar Chelek 3, 135, 2.
11. Sefer Hamamorim Melukat vol. 2, p. 277.
12. Yalkut Shimoni, Yechezkel, Siman 376.
13. Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 1, p. 227.
14. In this regard, we share the following story: Reb Shea Korf used to have a yechidus with the Rebbe every year. The period after the histalkus of the Rebbetzin, when the Rebbe spent time at home, was no exception. Afterwards, Reb Shea shared that when he requested a bracha for his wife, the Rebbe said that what was once curable through brachos, is accomplished today with modern medicine. (As told by Reb Shea's grandson, Rabbi Leibel Korf of Los Feliz, CA.)