



כלו כל הקיצין Moshiach Times

כלו כל הקיצין ואין הדבר תלוי אלא
בתשובה

“*Kolu kol hakitzin*—All the end times have passed, Moshaiach’s coming now depends entirely on *teshuva*.” This is an oft repeated phrase in the sichos of the Rebbe, sourced in Gemara Sanhedrin 97b.

A *ketz* is a date given by a *tzadik* by when Moshiach must arrive. And if a certain year is a *ketz*, then Moshiach will have to come by the end of that year. So stating that all the *kitzin* have passed means that we don’t need to wait a specific date for Moshiach to come, he can arrive at this very moment.

Interestingly, if the Gemara says that all the *kitzin* have already passed, it would seem unnecessary to establish another *ketz* in the future, after the time of the Gemara. And yet we find that many *tzadikim* over the course of time did not follow this rule, and did establish a *ketz*, an end time by when Moshiach has to come. Examples of this are found in Rashi¹, Rambam², Zohar, and many others.³

We also find that the Rabbeim set specific times as a *ketz*. The Alter Rebbe, in a *maamar* titled *Ve’ès Ha’elef Usheva Meois*⁴, establishes the year 5608 as a *ketz*. The Rebbe Rashab also mentioned that 5666 is a *ketz*.⁵

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So if all the *kitzin* ended by the time of the Gemara, why were more *kitzin* established at later times?

Even more perplexing is that the Gemara there proclaims “Let the bones of the *ketz* calculators blast.” And the Rambam quotes this as *halacha*⁶: “One should not try to determine the appointed time for Moshiach’s coming. Our *chachamim* declared: ‘May the spirits of those who attempt to determine the time of Moshiach’s coming expire!’ Rather, one should await and believe in the general conception of the matter, as explained.”

Essentially we have two questions, and by clarifying them we will unravel the mysteries of the *ketz*.

- What is the point of a *ketz*?
- Why do we still talk about *kitzin* after so many of them have passed?

We can understand this by the following story of the Rebbe Maharash and the Tzemach Tzedek. Once, at a *simcha*, the sons of the Tzemach Tzedek were sitting at his table. The Rebbe Maharash (obviously before he was Rebbe) asked his father, “Was there not a *ketz* in the year 5608? Moshiach did not come?!” The Tzemach Tzedek answered “The Lekutei Torah was printed that year!” The Rebbe Maharash then responded,

“But we want Moshiach in reality, *lemata measara tefachim*.”⁷

If in all stories of the Rabbeim every detail is important and can teach us a lesson, this story is an illustration of that principle. While on the surface this seems like a simple exchange, once we examine the details we will uncover new information.

The Rebbe⁸ explains that there are two stages, or two directions, in the coming of Moshiach—*lemaala* and *lemata*. A *ketz* means that *lemaala* the path is clear for Moshiach to come. Because Hashem may have connected the coming of Moshiach with a specific time, it is possible that we’ll have to wait until that time passes. Before coming out of Mitzrayim, Hashem “recalculated”—חשב את הקץ—to bring the *geula* closer.

The great pleasure that Hashem derives from our *avodah* during *golus* is another reason to have a *ketz*. Were it not for a deadline put in place by Hashem, there may *chas v’shalom* never be an end to the *golus*, because the enjoyment of our *avodah* is so powerful.⁹

כלו כל הקיצין means that as far as *lemaala* is concerned, the path is clear. All we need to do is the other half, *lemata*.

And this depends on our *teshuva*. If we are worthy for Moshiach’s arrival,

then he will come. But so far we are still waiting.

When the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash had the conversation, both understood that the *ketz* had come and gone and Moshiach had not yet been revealed. So what was the conversation?

The Rebbe Maharash was asking, why didn’t Moshiach come, if a *ketz* had happened?! So the Tzemach Tzedek replied, a *ketz* means that Moshiach was revealed; true, it was only *lemaala*, but he was revealed. And this revelation of Moshiach was actualized in the printing of the Lekutei Torah.

The Rebbe Rashab once said, that when he sits in a room and learns Lekutei Torah, he feels *Atzmus uMehus*¹⁰ ידעתיו הייתי. In the world of a *nosi*, who lives in the heavenly worlds just as he lives here in this world, Moshiach came with the arrival of the *ketz*! Where did he come? In the Lekutei Torah!

The Lekutei Torah was the fruit of thousands of hours of the Tzemach Tzedek learning and reviewing the *maamarim* of the Alter Rebbe; determining which *maamarim* that would go into Lekutei Torah. Publishing this *sefer* and making it available to the general public was a great advancement in the revelation of Chassidus. This is evident in the way

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that the the Frierdiker Rebbe records the Tzemach Tzedek's answer:¹¹ "You know what Moshiach is, Moshiach will reveal the depth of *penimiyus haTorah*, and everyone will appreciate its light. Now that the Lekutei Torah was revealed, the words of the Rebbe are the revealed inner light and are a *segula* for the revelation of the *nefesh*."

The reply of the Tzemach Tzedek wasn't simply an easy way out of the question. It was the full truth—Moshiach came in the upper worlds and here is your proof.

Still, says the Rebbe Maharash, we need Moshiach למטה מעשרה טפחים. We need him in this world.

Why *asara tefachim*? In *hilchos Shabbos* we learn about a רשות הרבים and a רשות היחיד. One of the requirements for a רשות הרבים is that it only starts 10 *tefachim* off the ground; higher than that is a *mekom petur*. In Zohar the רשות הרבים is considered the place of *kelipa*. רשות היחיד is where the unity of Hashem is felt, where *Elokus* is revealed. But רשות הרבים is a place of discord, of evil.

This was the demand of the Rebbe Maharash: true, the revelation in the Lekutei Torah is a *giluy* of Moshiach, but we don't want Moshiach *lemaala*, we need Moshiach where we can see him, with our own eyes, in the רשות הרבים, lower than ten *tefachim*.

And this needed to come from the Rebbe Maharash who wasn't the *nosi hador* at the time; rather he was the intermediary¹² between his father, the Tzemach Tzedek, who was the *nosi hador*, and the regular *Yidden*. He had

to point out that while Moshiach had indeed come *lemaala*, for us regular people we need him down here.

Although the Tzemach Tzedek was aware of the level of his generation, he still wanted to hear this request for Moshiach articulated clearly. Like *davening*, this makes the request much more powerful.

We find this approach to *kitzin* in the Rebbe Rashab's *hemshech* of *Samach Vov*. תרס"ו was a *ketz* year and that's why the Rebbe Rashab said the *hemshech* then; as *Hemshech Samach Vov* is a another great advancement of the understanding and revelation of Chassidus, thereby making it a step closer to Moshiach.

This is also the reason that the *minhag* of drinking four cups of wine at *Seudas Moshiach* started that same year, 5666; because a *ketz* means that Moshiach has come closer *lemaala* and it is therefore a step nearer to Moshiach's revelation *lemata*, below 10 *tefachim*¹³.



From this story we have extracted three reasons for the existence of a *ketz*:

1. It tells us that Hashem is not bound to keep us in *golus* past that time. Also Hashem is setting a limit to how long He will allow His enjoyment of our *golus avodah* to last.

2. It indicates that *lemaala* the path is clear for Moshiach to come.

3. It is an actual revelation of Moshiach. When the path is clear for Moshiach, it means that in the upper world Moshiach has already come, to a certain extent. This affects our world as well, albeit not in the ideal form.

There is yet another explanation that can be found in Lekutei Sichos chelek 29 p. 9. There the Rebbe explains that the primary purpose of the *ketz* is to motivate *Yidden* to add in their *avodah* to bring Moshiach by the time the *ketz* comes.



The first time the Rebbe retold this story was a few weeks after the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

In the other sources that this story appears, the one asking the question is either Reb Levik, the Tzemach Tzedek's son-in-law, or the Maharil. But the Rebbe told the story with the Rebbe Maharash. Additionally, the last part of the exchange, the answer of the Rebbe Maharash, was only told to us by the Rebbe.

In the *sichos* of the Rebbe this story is usually used to illustrate the meaning of "*lemata measara tefachim*".¹⁴ It seems that the Rebbe was taking this concept to the next level, saying that although after the *histalkus* we still have a Rebbe, it is nevertheless somewhat *beruchniyus*, in the abstract. But we really want—and need—to have our Rebbe here with us, *lemata measara tefachim*. ①

For more about the Ketz see Lekutei Sichos Chelek 20 p. 228 and Chelek 29 p. 9

1. Daniel 8:14
2. Igeres Teman Chapter 3
3. See *Shu"t Min Hashomayim* Siman 72, in the footnotes, for a comprehensive list.
4. Printed in Maamarim of the Alter Rebbe, Parshiyos Vol. 1 p. 419
5. See Reshimas Hayoman p. 331, Lekutei Sichos in f.n. 13 Other years that had a *ketz* are 5701 and 5704.
6. Hilchos Melachim Chapter 12 Halacha 2
7. Lekutei Sichos Vol. 6 p. 80 n. 70, Toras Menachem vol. 1 p.18 see there.
8. Yud Shvat 5737
9. Acharon Shel Pesach 5734 end of farbrengen. Sefer Hamamarim of the Frierdiker Rebbe 5708, p. 151
10. Shabbos Naso 5742; Hisvaaduyos 5742 vol. 3 p. 1652
11. Igras Kodesh of the Frierdiker Rebbe Vol. 1 p.485
12. Hisvaaduyos, Shabbos Vaeschanan 5745 page 2691
13. Lekutei Sichos Chelek 7, page 209 and note 28 there.
14. See sicha in f.n. 8