



Moshiach will come Only when...

For generations we have hoped, prayed, and yearned for the coming of Moshiach. The Gemara in Sanhedrin sets forth various preconditions for the coming of Moshiach.

What are we to make of all these conditions? Are they to be taken literally? How are these teachings meant to help us in our *avodah* to bring Moshiach?

The Rebbe addressed this Gemara on various occasions, and explained the meaning of these enigmatic conditions.

“אין בן דוד בא עד שיתבקש דג לחולה ולא ימצא”
“[Moshiach] Ben-Dovid will not come until fish is sought out for an ill person, and yet none is found.”¹

The Gemara states that Moshiach will come in a generation that is either entirely righteous, or entirely transgressors. The Jewish nation will either be on an exalted spiritual level, and thus be deserving Moshiach, or on a very low spiritual level, and thus at a point where there is no choice but for Moshiach to come.

It thus follows that we can explain the precondition of “until there are no fish for the ill” to be referring to either one of these two situations.

In an undeserving generation, the Jewish nation as a whole is on a very low spiritual level. The “sickly” person is one who has transgressed, and is therefore spiritually ill. In order to recover from his spiritual illness he must do *teshuvah*, which is why fish is being sought out for him.

Why does he need a fish to do *teshuvah*?

The transgression, which is the source of spiritual illness, is only possible when one has lost sight of the fact that *Elokus* is his true life source. A fish lives within—and is totally surrounded by—its life source, and is thus the spiritual representation of constant awareness of one’s source. When the sick person eats the fish, it brings this spiritual awareness to him, and helps him attain *teshuvah*.

However, in this generation there is no fish to be found, meaning, there is no way to reach this level of *bittul* and connection to *Elokus*. This is an indication that the generation is indeed on the lowest possible spiritual level, and there is no choice but for Moshiach to come.

These circumstances can also refer to a much more positive situation in a generation that is deserving of Moshiach: The person who is ill is in truth on a very high spiritual level. He has attained the 49 *shaarei binah* (degrees of understanding G-dliness). His sickness is caused by his deep yearning for the 50th *shaar* (the deepest level of understanding).

לע"נ
הרה"ת ר' חיים ע"ה ניו
גלב"ע י"ב שבט ה'תשע"ו
נדפס ע"י משפחתו
בוקה ראטון, פלורידה

However in order to attain this level of understanding, he needs to reach a much deeper level of *bittul*. Fish must be sought out in order to heal him.

Why does he need the fish?

As we mentioned, the fish is a spiritual representation of awareness and *bittul* to one's source.

The meaning of the Gemara—"fish cannot be found"—is that the level of *bittul* of the fish is not deep enough for our sick person. He has reached as far as a creation possibly can.

A generation where the Jewish nation is on such an exalted spiritual level that they are ill because of their longing for divine revelation, is deserving that Moshiach should come.²

“אין בן דוד בא עד שתתהפך כל המלכות למינוח”

“[Moshiach] Ben-David will not come until all the nations have turned to heresy”³

The Gemara bases this teaching on a *halacha* regarding *tzaraas*: if *tzaraas* is limited to one area [i.e. some of the nations of the world are heretics] then it is a sign of impurity. However, if the *tzaraas* spreads to the entire body [i.e. all the nations of the world have turned to heresy], it is no longer a sign of impurity, and the person is pure.

This condition can be interpreted in one of two ways, corresponding to the aforementioned two possibilities with regard to the situation of the Yidden in the generation before Moshiach.

1. All the nations of the world are heretics, thus the situation is so grave that there is no choice but to bring Moshiach.

This corresponds to the situation in which the Jewish nation is entirely undeserving and thus there is no choice but for Moshiach must come.

2. The world has become refined to such a degree that the truth of the Torah is clear to all. Therefore it will

be obvious that any government whose mandate doesn't stem from Hashem's rulership, is considered heresy

This corresponds to the situation in which the Jewish nation is indeed on an exalted spiritual level and the generation is deserving of Moshiach.⁴

“אין בן דוד בא אלא בהיסח הדעת”

“[Moshiach] Ben-David will come only when we divert our minds from it [Moshiach]”⁵

Are we really supposed to stop thinking about Moshiach? We are told that we must await his coming every day; how then can we be expected to divert our minds from Moshiach?

Every Jew wants Moshiach to come. Every Jew yearns for Moshiach in order to experience true redemption. When one is in a very tough situation, be it physically or spiritually, he feels an acute desire and need for redemption, both for himself and for the entire Jewish nation.

When the Gemara tells us that for Moshiach to come we must divert our minds from it, the term “*hesech hadaas*” is used—literally meaning “removal of *daas*.” The word *daas* means “knowledge,” and also means connection. *Daas* thus refers specifically to knowledge as it relates to the person who knows it. *Daas* is knowledge as it pertains to “me.”

The Gemara is telling us that we need to want and yearn for Moshiach, but we need to want it for the right reasons. Our desire for Moshiach's coming should not be from a place of *daas*—for reasons that relate to ourselves. Rather, we should want Moshiach because we desire the fulfillment of Hashem's Will for a *dira b'tachtonim*.

“אין בן דוד בא אלא .. עד שתכלה פרוטה מן הכיס”

“[Moshiach] Ben-David will not come until there isn't a penny in the wallet”⁷

At first glance this Gemara seems to be describing a very negative

situation, in which the poverty is so great that there is no choice but for Moshiach to come.

The Rebbe explains that this is in fact referring to a positive situation in which the Jewish nation is fulfilling mitzvos (specifically *tzedakah*) joyfully and on a very lofty level, and is thus deserving of Moshiach's arrival.

There is the mitzvah of *tzedakah* according to *halacha* with various requirements, and then there are extra measures of generosity that go beyond the letter of the law. No one would imagine that one is required to give *tzedakah* until one has no more money.

What the Gemara is describing here is one who gives *tzedakah* until there isn't a penny left in his own pocket. He goes above and beyond logic in his performance of this important mitzvah.

This approach of giving *tzedakah*, although not required, will warrant the coming of Moshiach even if we are as of yet undeserving.⁸

While at face value these conditions seem to be describing very negative situations that will precede the coming of Moshiach, the Rebbe shows us that they can also be describing positive situations as well.

May we be *zoche* to the coming of Moshiach with the fulfillment of these conditions in the most positive way, *b'mheira b'yameinu mammosh!* **1**

1. Sanhedrin 98a
2. Adapted from Reshimos choveres 11 (for a more in depth look at this Reshima see “No fish for the ill,” Derher Cheshvan 5777).
3. Sanhedrin 97a
4. Adapted from Lekutei Sichos vol. 32 Tazria (1)
5. Sanhedrin 97a.
6. Adapted from the sicha of Shabbos parshas Eikev, 20 Av 5713
7. Sanhedrin 97a
8. Adapted from the sicha of Yud Shevat 5725