Israel’s Housing Market and The Mashiach (Part 4)

I received many questions from Halakha of the Day readers on the subject of Mashiach. Today I am going to address two of these questions, and in a future article on this topic B”H we will address the others.

1. Are we close to the times of the Mashiach?

INTRODUCTION

I confess that until I read Maimonides many years ago, I had many doubts and was very confused about the Mashiach and the messianic times. I think I also got a somewhat magical or childish vision on the subject. It was thanks to Maimonides and his intelligent Judaism that I was able to clarify many of those doubts. I also realized that I was suffering from a psychological problem that may be affecting other jews as well: The description of the messianic times, according to Maimonides, is so close to our own reality that it is challenging for us to appreciate it. It seems to be an inexplicable resistance to acknowledging that we are living in privileged times. This is a mental phenomenon that was already identified by our Sages: “An individual who experiences a miracle does not perceive it” □□□□ □□□□ □□□ □□□ □□□.

Maimonides’ Mashiach is based on two very important characters in Jewish history: King David and Shimon Bar Kokhba. King David represents the ideal model of a Jewish ruler, whose mission is that we Jews follow the Divine Law. 1200 years later, a descendant of King David, Bar Kokhba, wanted to restore” Jewish sovereignty in the land of Israel, so that the Tora would once again become the Law of the Jewish people, but he failed. The most characteristic thing about the Mashiach,

which Maimonides suggests when mentioning these two historical figures, –and the point that the average Jew ignores the most– is the «historical» and «national» and not mythological character of the Jewish Messiah, who is completely different from the Messiah represented by non-Jews. We must overcome the psychological barrier to hope for an "imaginary magical future" and be able to be infinitely grateful to Bore Olam "shehecheyanu, vekiyemanu vehigiaynu lazeman **haze**" for the opportunity to live **in this present time**, that is so close to messianic times, as we will explain below.

Let's see what we have accomplished and what we lack, regarding the Mashiach

SHIABUD MALKHUIYOT

We already have a sovereign Jewish State: Medinat Israel. Let us not forget that according to Maimonides, the great difference between the messianic days and our days is that we Jews are not going to be under the yoke of the Goyim, as was the case, for example, in the Bar Kokhba times and in during the following 1800 years.

SHALOM

After 75 years of wars against our enemies, thanks to the recent "Abraham accords", almost miraculously, we have peace treaties with countries that were our fiercest enemies. And it seems that there are going to be other peace agreements soon (Qatar? Saudi Arabia?). In the times of the Mashiach we would reach peace even with countries like Iran and other nations that today hate Israel. How will this happen? According to the Sages (see text below), in the days of Mashiach the nations will recognize and serve HaShem, and will see Israel as the people of God. This will bring about an era of peace and freedom, with no corruption. We are not there yet, but it would seem that we are closer than five years ago.

TORA AND OR LAGOYIM

At the present time, the State of Israel does not have a written constitution. And part of our messianic aspirations is that the Jewish State will embrace once again the Tora as its Constitution. We are not that far away from that point! In modern Israel there are legal areas, such as marriages and divorces, that are already governed by Tora Law. And in many areas of civil law, one may opt for a legal process carried by a rabbinical court or Bet Din. In addition, the demographics of the Jewish state are changing, and I think that there are more and more observant people. With the help of HaShem the Tora will become slowly as the only Law of Israel. Once this happens, the Jewish people will be OR LAGOYIM, the light of the peoples, the model of observance of God's will to be followed by the other nations of the world, who will recognize the God of Israel and serve him.

BET HAMIQDASH

In 1967, at the end of the Six Day War, we had the opportunity to recover the Temple, and we missed ti…. This, in my opinion, was one of the worst national sins and mishaps we witnessed in our long history. When the Imams of the Waqf handed us the keys to Har HaBayit and unbelievably, a well-known Israeli general returned them to the Waqf! See here https://jcpa.org/al-aksa-is-in-danger-libel/al-aksa-is-in-danger-libel-temple-mount/ I believe that since the time of Jerobam ben Nebat we have never made such a tragic and tremendously consequential historical mistake. May God forgive us! In any case, we are still close to the possibility of rebuilding the Temple. Why? Because we already have Yerushalayim; it is our beloved and beautiful capital, and in theory, we have sovereignty over the Har HaBayit, the Temple Mount, which is where B"H we should build the Bet HaMiqdash.

In sum, and focusing on the first question, **the ground is more ready than ever for the arrival of the Mashiach**. But to appreciate this, it is necessary to first know what to expect from messianic times. And furthermore, and this is really

important, we should understand that for Maimonides the messianic events will unfold naturally and gradually, as we say in the Berakha in which we pray every day for the Mashiach: □□□□□ □□□ □□□□□, the redemption of the Jewish people "will sprout and flourish", that is to say, it will happen thru a development of historical events, part of which we are B"H already witnessing with our own eyes.

2. What differences will there be between our times and the days of Mashiach?

I left for the end this important event that should happen in messianic times: KIBUTS GALUYIOT, that is, the return of the Jews to the land of Israel. But how will this return to Israel be implemented? Sometimes I ask myself if the Mashiach is going to take us to Israel "by force" or we will leave to Israel by choice. Why do I say this? Because I think (but I could be wrong) that the process of our future redemption, GEULA, might be similar to Yetsiat Mitsrayim: the redemption from Egypt. We Jews had the opportunity to leave Egypt, but HaShem, or Moshe, did not "force us" to leave. In fact, one of our Sages said something that sounds shameful for the Jewish people: that 80% of the Jews chose to stay back in Egypt! This makes me think that perhaps also at the time of Mashiach some Jews will voluntarily miss the opportunity to return to Israel….

Following Maimonides' opinion as seriously as possible, I believe that one of the greatest differences between our days and the days of Mashiach is going to be noticed in housing prices. While in all the cities of the world where Jews live, properties prices will fall precipitously, in Israel, housing – that is already very expensive– will go up at least 5, 10 times more! I always say, a little jokingly, a little seriously, that if a Jew proclaims right and left that he or she believes the Mashiach is coming NOW, he should put his

money where his words are, and invest everything he has in buying a property in Israel! And if he doesn’t, he shouldn’t be taken too seriously when he talks about it .

Be a true believer: invest in Israel today.

MAIMONIDES

Mishne Tora Hilkhot MT Melakhim, chapter 12

א אל יעלה על הלב שבימות המשיח , ייבטל דבר ממנהגו של עולם , או
יהיה שם חידוש במעשה בראשית ; אלא עולם כמנהגו הולך . וזה שנאמר
בישעיה וגר זאב עם כבש , ונמר עם גדי ירבץ , משל וחידה . עניין
הדבר—שיהיו ישראל יושבין לבטח עם רשעי העולם , המשולים בזאב ונמר :
שנאמר זאב ערבות ישודדם —נמר שוקד על עריהם ויחזרו כולם לדת האמת ,
ולא יגזולו ולא ישחיתו , אלא יאכלו דבר המותר בנחת כישראל , שנאמר
ואריה כבקר יאכל תבן אמרו חכמים , אין בין העולם הזה לימות המשיח ,
אלא שיעבוד מלכיות בלבד.

Let it not occur to one to think that in the days of the Messiah something will change in the physical and natural laws established since the time of Creation: in reality, the world will follow its natural order. And what is said in Isaiah “And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the tiger will lie down by the goat” (Isaiah 11:6), [which apparently suggests that carnivorous animals will become herbivorous and stop chasing their prey] is a parable and a metaphor. And what it means is that Israel [the lamb that the predators wish to devour] will live in peace with the nations of the world, which [because of their permanent aggression and threats towards Israel] were compared to wolves and tigers [regarding the lamb: Israel]…. all nations will return to the true religion, and there will be no robbery or corruption…

…. The sages said, that there will be no difference between this world and the days of the Messiah, except the yoke of the nations [the oppression of Israel; that in messianic times it will end].