

Then Hashem, your G-d, will bring back your captivity and have mercy upon you, and He will gather you in. (30:3)

Once *Klal Yisrael* repents, they are assured of the ingathering of the exiles, regardless of where they are located among the nations of the world. The *Rambam* infers from this *pasuk* that one must believe in the coming of *Moshiach*. Indeed, the *Rambam* writes, “And he who does not believe in him (*Moshiach*), or he who does not await his coming, does not only repudiate the (prophecies of) *Nevi'im*, but also denies the *Torah* and Moshe *Rabbeinu*.” The **Brisker Rav, zl**, inferred from the *Rambam* that he who denies the *Geulah*, Redemption, is a *kofer*, non-believer. Even he who does not anticipate and wait for *Moshiach* is also included in this title. The *Rav* cited the *Rambam*’s text, “*Ani Ma’amin*,” in which it is stated, “I believe with complete faith in the coming of *Moshiach*. Though he may tarry, nonetheless, I await him every day that he will come.” Why is this principle written in a question and answer format? It should have said simply, “I believe in the coming of *Moshiach*,” without adding, “though he may tarry, etc.” The *Rav* explained that in truth, there is no question and answer. Rather, this is the essence of our belief. It is not sufficient to believe in the concept of *Moshiach*, but we are obligated to look forward to his coming every day. This is consistent with the prayer we say every day, “For we hope for Your salvation every day.”

We wait for *Moshiach* every day, as we have waited for thousands of years. As **Horav Shimon Schwab, zl**, writes, however, we have become impatient. We do not want to wait. We want him right now! We forget that we cannot bring *Moshiach* down to our level. We must raise ourselves up to his. *Moshiach* will come when *Klal Yisrael* performs *teshuvah* and is worthy of his coming.

We are faced with an inconsistency in the words of *Chazal*. We are taught that when a person passes on from this world, one of the first questions he is asked by the Heavenly Tribunal is: “*Tzipisah l’Yeshuah*,” “Did you hope for the *Yeshuah*/Redemption?” This implies that every day, every moment, we are expected to hope for the coming of *Moshiach*. *Chazal* note another statement which appears to present a contradiction. We are taught that, “*Ben David*,” which is a reference to *Moshiach*, will not come until the Jewish People have given up hope for the *Geulah*, Redemption. If we are to hope for the *Yeshuah*, to the point that we will have to account for whatever time we relinquished that hope, how is it that *Moshiach* will not come unless everybody gives up hope? How are we to reconcile these two statements of *Chazal*?

Horav Schwab cites an answer that he heard from **Horav Yosef Leib Bloch, zl**, who says that “giving up hope” for *Geulah* means that one gives up hope of bringing the *Geulah* by himself. From the time of Bar Kochba, through Shabsai Tzvi, there have been attempts to bring about the *Geulah*, to bring *Moshiach* through various manipulations. When we give up hope of effecting the advent of *Moshiach* through our own machinations, then we will merit his coming. Hoping for *Moshiach* is a foundation of Jewish belief; turning this hope into an obsession that takes precedence over the rest of the *Torah* does not represent *Torah* perspective.

What does it mean to wait for *Moshiach*, to hope every day that he will come? When we wait for *Moshiach*, something exciting transpires. We become elevated spiritually. We prepare ourselves for his sudden arrival. Is that true? If we really anticipate his coming, would we build luxury homes and live extravagant lifestyles? After all, why bother? *Moshiach* is coming! Every moment of our lives should be infused with this feeling. *Moshiach* is coming!

Horav Nachum Zev Ziv, zl, makes an analogy which gives us some idea of the attitude we should cultivate in waiting for *Moshiach*. Imagine a house in which a member of the family is critically ill. He must receive medical care soon, or he will succumb to his illness. Everybody sits and waits for that moment when the doctor will arrive and treat the patient. Suddenly, there is a knock at the door. Everybody races to open the door for the doctor. They open it, and, alas, it is only the next-door-neighbor. They sit down once again, anticipating the doctor's imminent arrival. When another knock is heard at the door, they all get up again and run to greet the doctor. Alas, it is only the mailman with a letter. While they return to their places, disappointed, they cannot give up hope, for their father lies ill. His only hope of getting off the sickbed is the medical treatment he will receive from the doctor. Regardless of the number of false alarms that they endure, their hope does not dissipate.

This is the type of hope with which we must await the advent of *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*. *Klal Yisrael* is likened to a critically ill person awaiting medical relief. The doctor--*Moshiach*--will be sent by the *Ribbono Shel Olam* at the proper time. Indeed, one who does not anticipate *Moshiach*'s arrival, probably does not realize or care about the dangerous illness confronting *Klal Yisrael*. How can one hope for Redemption if he has no idea that he is in exile?

Waiting for *Moshiach* is an exercise in *avodas Hashem*. It is the height of *emunah* to continue believing in his coming, despite the many disappointments and setbacks. We never give up--we live it, we become it, and we act it. We should never, however, become obsessed with it.