

Q AND A

DO YOU BELIEVE MOSHIACH IS COMING?

BY ARYEH GUREWITZ

Q At the end of the day, as much as we talk about the Geulah in our davening and learning, and as much as we know the Rebbeim spoke about the Geulah, some days it still just seems hard to really, truly believe that it's actually going to happen. Is there anything we can do to be free of all doubt?

A A question like this doesn't necessarily have one simple answer that works for everyone. As the Alter Rebbe discusses in the introduction to Likkutei Amarim, the emotional side of avodas Hashem has subtle differences for each individual. One person is inspired by one thing, and another is inspired by something else. It seems safe to say, then, that the journey to true emunah shleimah in the coming of Moshiach is likely to be subtly different for each of us. However, we can still try to identify some key elements that are helpful to all of us.

First of all, we have to confront an uncomfortable truth about the whole idea of doubts about the coming of Moshiach. This doubt is, at its core, a doubt about the truth of Torah as a whole. This is obvious, as the Torah testifies that there will be a time when Hashem will send Moshiach. Doubting the truth of 'ושב ה' אלוך את שבויך' ("Hashem, your G-d, will return your captives") is no different than doubting the truth of 'בראשית ברא אלוים את השמים ואת הארץ' ("In the beginning, G-d created the Heavens and the Earth."). On a deeper level, doubts about the coming of Moshiach also reflect a lack of certainty about the true nature of the mitzvos we do today and their power to transform the world into a place that can experience Hashem's revelation—one of the foundational concepts of Pnimiyus HaTorah and, indeed, the whole purpose of Matan Torah.

If so, then what we really need to understand is the perspective of Chassidus on sfeikos in emunah. At the end of Perek Chof-Tes of Tanya, the Alter Rebbe teaches us how to look at our doubts. The idea is that, in truth, all Yidden are maaminim b'nei maaminim, with perfect faith in the truth of every aspect of Torah.¹ Doubts arise only because Hashem has given power to the nefesh ha-bahamis to rise up and challenge the nefesh

Elohis, thereby concealing the emunah we all have inside. More than that, even the sitra achara itself does not share these doubts! It only fuels these thoughts because that is the task that Hashem created it for—to cause us confusion, only so that we may overcome it.²

In light of this, we can take a very strong stance against our doubts, refusing to give them any credibility at all. When you feel thoughts of doubt arising in your mind, instead of letting yourself entertain the possible validity of these thoughts, you can literally just tell yourself: "These thoughts are not true. Torah is true, the Rebbe is true, every word the Rebbe said about Moshiach is true, and my neshoma already knows and sees the truth. This doubt is just a challenge that Hashem wants me to deal with, like a bad middah, and getting it out of my system is just part of my shlichus in this world." This simple but vital shift in perspective—this recognition of your doubts for what they truly are, according to Torah—is a major step toward overcoming them completely.

From there, it's largely a matter of learning Chassidus and Inyonei Moshiach u'Geulah, as well as reflecting on that learning appropriately. This allows us to truly internalize the Chassidishe perspective on what the world really is and what it's really here for—that is, that it's all here only here as part of the kavannah of Dirah Betachtonim, which is completed through the coming of Moshiach. If we internalize this perspective, what doubt can there be that Moshiach will certainly come?

The Rebbe once said that even though Yidden are maaminim b'nei maaminim with regard to all of the Yud-Gimmel Ikarim—which include the coming of Moshiach (#12) and Tchiyas HaMeisim (#13)—it can happen that this faith is not internalized in a way that affects our daily life and brings us to prepare for Moshiach appropriately. The eitzah the Rebbe offered for this is to learn Chassidus. In that same sicha, the Rebbe acknowledged that it may seem that Chassidus doesn't always help, but he nevertheless maintained that without learning Chassidus, the task of properly internalizing our faith in Moshiach is impossible. With Chassidus, however, we can at least gradually achieve that goal.³

¹ Notice that the example the Alter Rebbe brings just before this statement is from the meraglim, whose doubts were not about the truth of Torah in general but rather about a specific aspect—namely, Hashem's ability to bring the Yidden into the land. (Incidentally, this also appears to be a form of lack of faith in that the Geulah of that time would really be completed.)

² See also Hisvadyuos 5748, Chelek Daled, pg. 32. (Printed in Shaarei Geulah, vol. 1, pg. 114.) There, the Rebbe says that one who claims not to long for Moshiach is simply fooling himself, based on the Rambam's psak din that every Jew really wants to do all the mitzvos. It is only that his yetzer hara is in a strong state. This is essentially the exact same concept as the end of Perek Chof-Tes, and here the Rebbe applies it directly to emunah in and tziyiyah for Moshiach.

³ Toras Menachem, Chelek Tes, pg. 65. Printed in Shaarei Geulah, vol. 1, pg. 109.

