

HALACHIC AND HASHKAFIC ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

SERIES 2: 10 - MASHIACH & OLAM HABA

PART 3 - MASHIACH BEN YOSEF

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- In Part 1 we saw the position of the Rambam - that the Messianic Age will be entirely non-miraculous, without any change in the natural order. Similarly, there will be NO change in the mitzvot or the principles of the Torah. As such, Yemot HaMashiach will relate entirely to THIS world (Olam Haze) and must not be confused with 'Olam Haba'. Rambam's vision of Mashiach¹ is both restorative and to some degree utopian. For the Jewish people, the restorative element includes rebuilding the Temple, gathering in the exiles and returning the Jewish people to their prior state of redemption. For the wider world, the universal acceptance of God's presence will usher in an age of peace, reason, morality and mutual cooperation. The Rambam also plays down any apocalyptic element of the messianic age².
- In Part 2 we saw the position of the more mystical thinkers for whom Yemot HaMashiach is an entirely miraculous age which merges and morphs with Olam Haba. They see Yemot HaMashiach as a blend of physical and spiritual; the return to an Edenic state in which people will live eternally in a life free not only from sin, but from the urge to carry out that sin. In those times we will no longer need the system of Torah and mitzvot and we will receive a new Torah which is more suited to our redeemed world.
- However, the process of Mashiach is made more complex by the formulation of Chazal that Mashiach ben David will be preceded by another Messiah - Mashiach ben Yosef. What is the role and purpose of that pre-messianic Mashiach?

A] MYSTICISM AND MESSIANISM

- It is clear that there is a hashkafic connection between mysticism and messianism, although there are different perspectives on the causal relationship between the two.³
- Many of the students of the Arizal understood him to be Mashiach ben Yosef⁴, especially after his early death and many of the circle around the Arizal were intensely messianic.
- The disaster of the false messianic pretensions of Shabbtai Tzvi in the mid 17th Century caused massive reverberations around the Jewish world in the 200 years that followed. In some ways, this catastrophe shaped the development of Jewish movements of the 18th and 19th Centuries - Chassidut, Haskala, Reform, Socialism, Zionism and others.

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1. At least as represented in his Mishne Torah. His presentation in the Igeret Teiman takes a very different tone and is more focused on giving spiritual and emotional support to the Jews of Yemen who were dealing with a false Messiah.
 2. As we saw in Part 1, the Rambam mentions the possibility of a pre-messianic war of Gog and Magog but hedges this with the caveat that this, like most elements of Yemot HaMashiach, is based on a reading of the relevant verses in Tanach rather than a clear tradition, and that we do not know and should not speculate on such details.
 3. Gershom Scholem, the father of modern scholarship on Jewish mysticism, adopted a linear and historicist connection between mysticism and messianism. In his view, the early development of medieval kabbala from the 12th to the 15th centuries, including the Zohar, was far more focused on understanding and explaining the origins of Creation and their connection to the ontology and epistemology of God's emanated presence. He sees these earlier streams of kabbala as far less interested in the utopic end of days and much more focused on personal connection to God. In Scholem's thesis, the trauma of the Spanish Expulsion in 1492 moved the kabbalistic focus towards themes of national exile and redemption, resulting in the kabbalistic reframing by the Arizal. In Lurianic kabbala there is far more emphasis on the notion of *tikkun* - the redemptive elevation of the world. In particular, the Arizal taught that there are holy sparks - *nitzotzot hakedusha* - which are left over from the *shevirat hakelim* - the shattering of the vessels of the Sefirot which occurred in the spiritual world at the start of Creation. These sparks remain embedded in the *klippot* - the husks of negativity and impurity left over from the original cataclysmic shattering. One of the main focuses of *tikkun* is the rescue and redemption of these 'exiled' sparks. Scholem understands that the disaster of the Spanish Expulsion was framed by kabbalistic thought as part of the process of exile to pick up these 'exiled' sparks and effect global *tikkun*. In turn, Scholem argues that this mode of redemptive kabbala was taken to its logical next step in the mass following of Shabbtai Tzvi and the spiritual investment in his overtly messianic movement. One of the platforms of that movement took the concept of redemption of the sparks to a radical and antinomian state by seeking to 'redeem' the holiness inherent in sin itself and to commit sins for the sake of *tikkun* - aveira lishma. The apostasy of Tzvi resulted in the formation of underground Sabbatean movements (such as the Dönme in Turkey and the Frankists in Ukraine) which took the concept of redemption of the sparks to a new extreme - engaging in mass breach of sexual prohibitions and adopting a nihilist antinomianism. Finally, Scholem understood the growth of Chassidut as a way to channel the energy and trauma of the post-Sabbatean world into an authentic kabbalistic mysticism which refocused on the internal psycho-spiritual state of the individual and away from national messianic aspirations.
A number of Scholem's students - particularly Moshe Idel and Yehuda Liebes have challenged many aspects of this thesis. They have suggested the presence of greater messianism in early kabbala, questioned the link between the Expulsion and Lurianic thought, rejected the assertion of overt messianism in the Arizal's kabbala, and challenged the link between Lurianic kabbala and Shabbtai Tzvi, and between Tzvi and the growth of Chassidut. For more on this see *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, Gershom Scholem and *Messianic Mystics*, Moshe Idel.
 4. The Arizal's main student, R. Chaim Vital, understood himself to potentially be Mashiach ben David! There was also an expectation in that circle that the redemption would come in the year 1575.

B] TWO MESSIAHS

1.	אָרְאֵנוּ וְלֹא עֵתָה דָּרָךְ כּוֹכֵב מֵעֵקֵב וּמְחַץ פְּאֵתֵי מוֹאָב וְהָיָה אֲדוֹם יְרֻשָּׁה	אֲשׁוּרְנוּ וְלֹא קְרוֹב, וְקָם שִׁבְט מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל, וְקָרַקַר כָּל בְּנֵי שֵׁת. וְהָיָה יְרֻשָּׁה שְׁעִיר אֲבִיבוּ
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במדבר כד:יז,יח

One of the central prophecies in the Torah concerning Mashiach is that of Bilaam. He sees the redemption of Israel, but far off in the future. Interestingly, the poetry of the prophecy is clearly present in a dual format. Is this a reference to two Messiahs?

2.	וְאֵלוֹ הַדְּבָרִים הַמְּפֹרָשִׁים בְּתוֹרָה הֵם כּוֹלְלִים כָּל הַדְּבָרִים שֶׁנֶּאֱמָרוּ עַל יְדֵי כָּל הַנְּבִיאִים. אִף בְּפָרֶשֶׁת בְּלָעַם נֶאֱמַר וְשָׁם נִבְּא בְּשֵׁנֵי הַמְּשִׁיחִים. בְּמִשְׁיַח הָרִאשׁוֹן שֶׁהוּא דָּוִד שֶׁהוֹשִׁיעַ אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּד צָרִיהֶם. וּבְמִשְׁיַח הָאַחֲרוֹן שֶׁעוֹמֵד מִבְּנֵי שְׁמוֹשֵׁי אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאַחֲרוֹנָה. וְשָׁם הוּא אוֹמֵר (במדבר כד:יז) אָרְאֵנוּ וְלֹא עֵתָה - זֶה דָּוִד. (במדבר כד:יח) אֲשׁוּרְנוּ וְלֹא קְרוֹב - זֶה מְלֶכֶד הַמְּשִׁיחִית. דָּרָךְ כּוֹכֵב מֵעֵקֵב - זֶה דָּוִד. וְקָם שִׁבְט מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל - זֶה מְלֶכֶד הַמְּשִׁיחִית. וּמְחַץ פְּאֵתֵי מוֹאָב - זֶה דָּוִד וְקָרַקַר כָּל בְּנֵי שֵׁת - זֶה הַמְּלֶכֶד הַמְּשִׁיחִית וְהָיָה אֲדוֹם יְרֻשָּׁה - זֶה דָּוִד. וְהָיָה יְרֻשָּׁה וְגו' - זֶה הַמְּלֶכֶד הַמְּשִׁיחִית
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רמב"ם הלכות מלכים פרק יא הלכה א

The Rambam cites this passage as a reference to two Messiahs but he identifies them as King David and Mashiach!

- However, a far more apocalyptic stream in Jewish messianic thought saw this as a reference to Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben David!

C] MASHIACH BEN YOSEF AND APOCALYPTIC MESSIANISM

- Throughout the Second Temple period, and in the centuries after, there was a rich literature of Apocalyptic messianism⁵. This focused on the End of Days and the cataclysm which must precede the advent of a new messianic era. In Rabbinic literature, Mashiach ben Yosef is the vehicle for this apocalypticism.
- There are thousands of references to Mashiach ben Yosef in classic commentaries on Tanach, Talmud and machshava. Most focus on a few key sources in Chazal.

3.	וַיְרַאֲנִי ה' אֶרְבַּעַת תְּרַשִׁים (זכריה ב:ג). מֵאֵן נִינְהוּ אַרְבַּעַת חֲרָשִׁים? אָמַר רַב חֲנַנְיָ בֶר בִּיזְנָא אָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן חֲסִידָא: מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד וּמְשִׁיחַ בֶּן יוֹסֵף, וְאֵלֵיהוּ, וְכֵהֵן צַדִּיק.
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סוכה נב.

4.	חֲרָשִׁים - אוֹמְנִים. מְשִׁיחִים שְׂנִיחִים חֲרָשִׁים לְבָנִין צִית כְּמִקְדָּשׁ. אֵלֵיכוּ חֲרָשׁ אֲבָן, שְׂצֻנָּה מִזְבַּח צֶבֶר כְּרַמְלֵל, וּמְלִינוּ שְׂכוּא עֵתִיד לְכַשְׁתַּלְתֵּל. וְכֵהֵן צַדִּיק - הוּא שֵׁס בֶּן נֹחַ.
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רש"י שם

Chazal discuss TWO Meshichim - Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben David. Both are called 'craftsmen' as they will be involved in building the Beit Mikdash .

5.	כְּתִיב וַיְרַאֲנִי ה' אֶרְבַּעַת תְּרַשִׁים (זכריה ב:ג) - אֵילוֹ הֵן אֵלֵיהוּ, וּמִלְךְ הַמְּשִׁיחִית, וּמִלְכֵי צַדִּיק, וּמְשׁוֹחַ מִלְחָמָה.
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פסיקתא רבתי (איש שלום) פיסקא טו - החודש

In the Pesikta the Midrash replaces the reference to Mashiach ben Yosef with 'Mashuch Milchama' - the War Messiah⁶.

6.	וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם וְהִצַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם וְגֵאלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם וּלְקַחְתִּי אֶתְכֶם ... כַּגֵּד אַרְבַּע גְּאוּלוֹת עֵתִיד הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְהַעֲמִיד לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אַרְבַּעַת גּוֹאֲלִין. וְאֵלוֹ הֵן - אֵלֵיהוּ, וּמְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד, וּמְשִׁיחַ בֶּן יוֹסֵף, וְכֵהֵן גְּדוּל. וְעֵלֵיהֶם הוּא אוֹמֵר וַיְרַאֲנִי ה' אֶרְבַּעַת תְּרַשִׁים (זכריה ב:ג).
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מדרש הגדול שמות ו:ז

Some Midrashim see Mashiach ben Yosef as an integral part of the redemptive process.

5. This spans from the Book of Daniel in the Tanach through the Apocrypha and Pseudepigraphic works of the Second Temple period (such as the Books of Enoch, Maccabees, Ezra 4 and others), the Dead Sea Scrolls literature and the early Christian writings. See the Appendix for a brief discussion of possible links between Mashiach ben Yosef and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

6. The expression Mashuach Milchama is normally used to describe the Cohen who goes into battle and gives encouragement to the soldiers.

7. אֲשֶׁרֵיכֶם זָרְעֵי עַל־כָּל־מַיִם מִשְׁלַחֵי רֶגֶל־הַשּׁוֹר וְהַחֲמוֹר.

ישעיהו לב:ב

8. משלחי רגל השור - זה משיח בן יוסף שנמשל לשור. וחמור - זה משיח בן דוד שנא' (זכריה ט:ט) עֲנִי וְרִכְבֵּי עַל־חֲמוֹר

מדרש תנחומא (ורשא) פרשת בראשית סימן א

Mashiach ben Yosef is compared to an ox and Mashiach ben Yosef to a donkey.

9. השור פי' בר"מ זה רמו על משיח בן יוסף שיכלה האומות שנקראו [כְּלַחֲךָ הַשּׁוֹר אֶת] יִרְקַת הַשָּׂדֶה (במדבר כב:ד) וכמ"ש כְּבוֹר שׁוֹרוֹ קִדְרָ לֹו (דברים לג:ה) וכמ"ש פ' וישלח (בראשית לב:ו) וְהָיָה לִי שׁוֹר וְחֲמוֹר.

אדרת אליהו במדבר פרק כב - מהזורא רביעאה פסוק ד

The Zohar (here quoted by the Vilna Gaon) includes scores of references to Mashiach ben Yosef and develops the theme of the ox licking up the grass as Mashiach ben Yosef overpowering the nations of the world.

10. וְלִקְחֹתָ אֶת־שֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וּמִשְׁחָתָ אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ וְקִדְשֹׁתָ אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו וְהָיָה קֹדֶשׁ. וּמִשְׁחָתָ אֶת־מִזְבֵּחַ הַעֹלָה וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו וְקִדְשֹׁתָ אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְהָיָה הַמִּזְבֵּחַ קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים. וּמִשְׁחָתָ אֶת־הַכִּיֹּר וְאֶת־כַּנּוֹ וְקִדְשֹׁתָ אֹתוֹ

שמות מ:ט-יא

The verses dealing with the creation of the Mishkan refer to the anointing of the holy vessels.

11. (ט) וְתִסַּב יַת מִשְׁחָה דְרַבּוּתָא וְתַרְבִּי יַת מִשְׁפָּנָא וְיַת כָּל דְּבִיָּה וְתַקְדֵּשׁ יַתְּהָּ מְטוּל כְּלִיל דְּמַלְכוּתָא דְּבֵית יְהוּדָה וּמַלְכָּא מְשִׁיחָא דְּעֵתִיד לְמַפְרָק יַת יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּסוּף יוֹמֵיָא: (ו) וְתַרְבִּי יַת מִדְּבָחָא דְּעֵלְתָא וְיַת כָּל מְנוֹי וְתַקְדֵּשׁ יַת מִדְּבָחָא וְיַהֲיִי מִדְּבָחָא קוֹדֶשׁ קוֹדְשֵׁין מְטוּל כְּלִילָא דְּכַהוֹנֵתָא דְּאַהֲרֹן וּבְנוֹי וְאַלְהוֹ כַּהֲנָן רַבָּא דְּעֵתִיד לְמִשְׁתַּלְחָא בְּסוּף גְּלוּתָא: (יא) וְתַרְבִּי יַת כִּיֹּרָא וְיַת בְּסִיסִיָּה וְתַקְדֵּשׁ יַתְּהָּ מְטוּל הַוְשַׁע מְשׁוּמְשָׁנָא רַבָּא דְּסַנְהֶדְרִין דְּעַמִּיָּה דְּעַל דְּוִי עֵתִידָא אַרְעָא דְּיִשְׂרָאֵל לְאַיְתַּפְלְגָא וּמִשְׁחָא בַר אֶפְרַיִם דְּנַפִּיק מִיָּהֵ דְּעַל דְּוִי עֵתִידִין בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמַנְצָחָא לְגוּג וּלְסִיעֵתִיָּה בְּסוּף יוֹמֵיָא

תרגום המיוחס ליונתן - תורה שמות פרק מ פסוק יא

Targum Yonatan sees in these verses references to Eliyahu, Mashiach from Yehuda and 'Mashiach ben Efraim' who would one day rise to fight the wars of the Jews.

12. [בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִגְדַל הַמִּסְפָּד בִּירוּשָׁלַם כְּמִסְפַּד הַדָּד־רַמּוֹן בְּבִקְעַת מְגִדוֹן:] וְסַפְדָּה הָאֲרָץ מִשְׁפָּחוֹת מִשְׁפָּחוֹת לְבַד מִשְׁפָּחוֹת בֵּית־דָּוִד לְבַד וְיִנְשִׂיהֶם לְבַד (זכריה יב-יא) ... הָא הַסְפִּידָא מְאִי עֵבִידְתִּיָּה! פְּלִיגִי בַּה רַבִּי דוּסָא וּרְבִנָן. חַד אָמַר: עַל מִשִּׁיחַ בֶּן יוֹסֵף שְׁנֵהֲרַג וְחַד אָמַר: עַל יִצְרָהֵרַע שְׁנֵהֲרַג. בְּשִׁלְמָא לְמֵאֵן דְּאָמַר עַל מִשִּׁיחַ בֶּן יוֹסֵף שְׁנֵהֲרַג - הֵינּוּ דְכַתִּיב (זכריה יב:י) וְהִבִּיטוּ אֵלַי אֶת אֲשֶׁר־דִּקְרוּ וְסַפְדּוּ עֲלָיו כְּמִסְפַּד עַל־הַיְאִיד. אֵלָּא לְמֵאֵן דְּאָמַר עַל יִצְרָהֵרַע שְׁנֵהֲרַג - הָאִי הַסְפִּידָא בְּעִי לְמַעַבְד? שְׂמַחָה בְּעִי לְמַעַבְד! אֲמַאי בְּכוּ? כַּדְרֵשׁ רַבִּי יְהוּדָה: לְעֵתִיד לְבָא מְבִיאוּ הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לִיצְרָהֵרַע וְשׁוּחַטוּ בְּפָנֵי הַצְּדִיקִים וּבְפָנֵי הַרְשָׁעִים. צְדִיקִים נְדָמָה לְהֵם כְּהַר גְּבוּהָ, וְרְשָׁעִים נְדָמָה לְהֵם כְּחוֹט הַשְּׁעָרָה. הַלְלוּ בּוֹכִין, וְהַלְלוּ בּוֹכִין. צְדִיקִים בּוֹכִין וְאוֹמְרִים: הַיֵּאֵךְ יִכְלוּנוּ לְכַבּוֹשׁ הַר גְּבוּהָ כֹּהֵ! וְרְשָׁעִים בּוֹכִין וְאוֹמְרִים: הַיֵּאֵךְ לֹא יִכְלוּנוּ לְכַבּוֹשׁ אֶת חוֹט הַשְּׁעָרָה הַזֶּה!

סוכה נב.

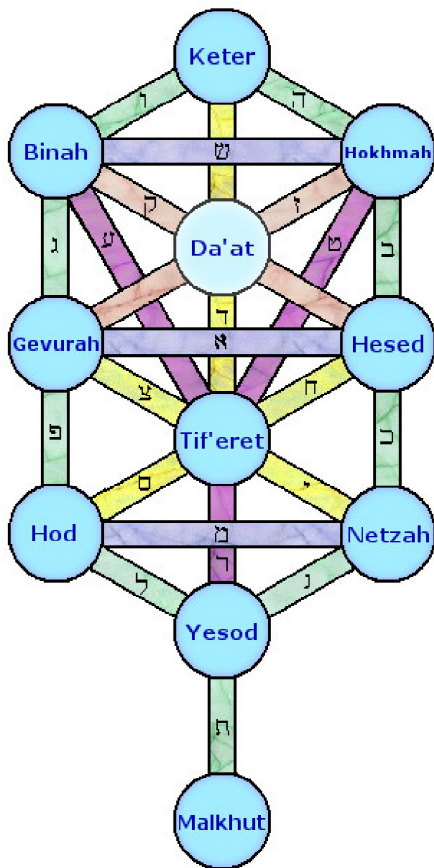
Chazal state that Mashiach ben Yosef will be killed in these pre-messianic battles.

13. וְסִרְהָ קִנְיַת אֶפְרַיִם וְצַרְרֵי יְהוּדָה יִכְרְתוּ אֶפְרַיִם לֹא־יִקְנָא אֶת־יְהוּדָה וְיַהֲוִדָה לֹא־יִצְרָ אֶת־אֶפְרַיִם: (רש"י - משיח בן יוסף ומשיח בן דוד לא יקנאו זה בזה)

ישעיהו יא:יג

However, another critical theme in the concept of the two Messiah's is the ultimate union between Yehuda and Yosef (Efraim) in Yemot HaMashiach.

- The Rambam, who rejects an apocalyptic view of Yemot HaMashiach, was clearly aware of the sources concerning Mashiach ben Yosef, yet he never mentions him or the concept!
- We will see below that other medieval rationalist thinker DO reference Mashiach ben Yosef, but tend to de-emphasize his role and focus on the contingent nature of his coming.
- Nevertheless for the kabbalistic and mystical thinkers, Mashiach ben Yosef, and particularly his ultimate union with Mashiach ben David, became a critical element of the *tikun* - the mystical union of cosmic spiritual forces; left and right, masculine and feminine etc.

D] MASHIACH BEN YOSEF IN KABBALISTIC THOUGHT**Kabbalistic Connections**

- Yesod is the Sefira linked with Mashiach Ben Yosef.
- Malchut is the Sefira linked with Mashiach ben David.
- Yosef is the 9th Sefira leading into Malchut.
- So too, Mashiach ben Yosef leads into Mashiach ben David.
- Note the kabbalistic order of the Ushpizin: Yosef - David.
- Yosef precedes Yehuda in Egypt.
- Yehoshua/Shaul leads to David; Mordechai is meant to lead to Zerubavel.

14. בתרין משיחין, דאינון חד מימינא, משיח בן דוד. וחד משמאלא, משיח בן יוסף.

וזה מהדורת הסולם - במדבר פרשת פנחס מאמר כשלהבת קשורה בגחלת אור תרנא
The kabbala sees Mashiach ben Yosef and ben David as respectively representing 'left' and 'right' (female and male) emanations.

E] THE CONTINGENT ROLES OF MASHIACH BEN YOSEF

15. The essential task of Mashiach ben Yossef is to act as precursor to Mashiach ben David: he will prepare the world for the coming of the final redeemer. Different sources attribute to him different functions, some even charging him with tasks traditionally associated with Mashiach ben David (such as the ingathering of the exiles, the rebuilding of the Bet Hamikdash, and so forth).
- The principal and final function ascribed to Mashiach ben Yossef is of political and military nature. He shall wage war against the forces of evil that oppress Israel. More specifically, he will do battle against Edom, the descendants of Esau. Edom is the comprehensive designation of the enemies of Israel⁷, and it will be crushed through the progeny of Joseph.
- The immediate results of this war will be disastrous: Mashiach ben Yossef will be killed. This is described in the prophecy of Zechariah, who says of this tragedy that 'they shall mourn him as one mourns for an only child.'¹ (Zechariah 12:10). His death will be followed by a period of great calamities. These new tribulations shall be the final test for Israel, and shortly thereafter Mashiach ben David shall come, avenge his death, resurrect him, and inaugurate the Messianic era of everlasting peace and bliss.

from an article by R' Immanuel Schochet (d. 2013)⁸

16. ואומר אחרי זה, כי על שני הענינים יחד, ר"ל אם לא נחזור בתשובה ויהיו המאורעים של בן יוסף, ואם נחזור בתשובה ולא יהיו, יראה לנו משיח בן דוד פתאום. ואם יהיה משיח בן יוסף קודם לו, יהיה כשליח לו וכמתקן האומה וכמסקל הדרך

ספר האמונות והדעות מאמר ח

Rav Saadia Gaon writes that Mashiach ben Yosef is tasked with preparing the way for Mashiach ben David. However, the events of his days are contingent and not decreed. If the Jewish people do teshuva there is no inevitability to the death of Mashiach ben Yosef!

7. In the uncensored versions of Pirkei deRebbi Eliezer Ch. 28, the Yishmaelim are named as the final empire to be defeated by Mashiach. See R' Schochet's footnotes for more sources.

8. Available at http://www.chabad.org/library/moshiach/article_cdo/aid/101747/jewish/Appendix-II

17. [דָרַךְ כּוֹכַב מִיַּעֲקֹב וְקָם שֵׁבֶט מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל] (במדבר כד:יז) והכוונה בזכר כי אם ישראל יהיו צגדר שיהיו נקראים 'יעקב' לא יאיר להם אלא משיח בן דוד. אצל משיח בן דוד, אצל משיח בן אפרים ימות צמלחמה ראשונה, שיברגו רומילוס, כאומרם ז"ל. אצל אם ישראל יהיו כולן לדיקים שצטט 'ישראל' יתכנו, אז אפילו אותו שצטט שהוא משיח הבא מאפרים 'וקם' - פירוש תהיה לו תקומה לפני אויביו ולא יברגו רומילוס.

אור החיים על במדבר כד:יז

The Orach Chaim sees the same ideas in the prophecies of Bilaam.

18. אולם בקצת המדרשים יראה בוא משיח בן יוסף קדם משיח בן דוד וקצת הגאונים דברו בו. ולפי שלא התבאר באמתתו, לא ראינו להאריך בו

אור ה' (ר' חסדאי קרשקש) מאמר ג' כלל ח' סוף פרק א'

Ultimately, references to Mashiach ben Yosef are few, fragmented and unclear and most mefarshim have not felt it worthwhile to comment on them!

19. כי משיח בן יוסף הוא בסוד השמאל, והוא בסוד החיצוניות הצריך לכל התקונים האלה. ומשיח בן דוד הוא בסוד הימין, הצריך שיהיה מתחבר אליו, והגאולה שלמה

ספר קנאת ה' צבאות של הרמחל חלק שני

The Ramchal describes Mashiach ben Yosef as representing a 'chitzoniut' which requires 'tikun' before Mashiach ben David can come.

F] RAV KOOK, ZIONISM AND MASHIACH BEN YOSEF

- Rav Kook arrived in Jaffa on Friday May 13 (28 Iyar) 1904 as the new Chief Rabbi of the city. Just a few weeks later, on July 3, Theodor Herzl died tragically at the young age of forty-four and Rav Kook was asked to participate in a memorial service to honor the departed leader.
- Rav Kook was placed in a difficult situation. On the one hand, the halacha prohibits the eulogizing of those who throw off the yoke of mitzvot and reject the core beliefs of Judaism. Rather, their relatives wear are enjoined to wear white (festive) clothes and eat and drink, and make merry⁹ at their death. Herzl was an assimilated Jew far from observance of traditional Judaism. On the other hand, Rav Kook knew that Herzl was seen by many in his community as nothing less than a modern-day 'prophet'. Furthermore, Rav Kook had been engaged not only as rabbi of Jaffa, but also of the recently established, and largely secular, moshavot too.
- His solution was to speak at the memorial gathering, but at no time would he pay specific tribute to the deceased Dr. Herzl. Instead, he would speak in generalities. As it turned out, Rav Kook's 'non-eulogy' for Herzl is one of the most inspired and profound hespedim ever, operating on many levels simultaneously – Biblical, Talmudic, kabbalistic – as well as responding to the contemporary maelstrom of Jewish life.¹⁰

20. **The Lamentation in Jerusalem** on the death of Dr. Theodor Herzl
On that day the lamentation will be great in Jerusalem, like the lamentation of Hadad-rimmon in the valley of Megiddon. (Zecharia 12:11)

So it came about that throughout the Exile there is a see-saw effect of these two opposing forces. At times, there is exhibited a drive toward material, worldly success that flows primarily from the foundation of Joseph and Ephraim; other times there is a stirring of the spiritual drive for observance of Torah and spiritual development, for awe and love of God.

Since it is impossible for our nation to attain its lofty destiny other than by actualizing these two components - the universal symbolized by Joseph, and the distinctive symbolized by Judah - there arise in the nation proponents of each aspect. Those who would enhance spirituality prepare the way for Messiah son of David, whose focus is the final destiny. Truly the focus of life is spiritual attainment, except that the spiritual can only develop properly if it is accompanied by all the material acquisitions of which a full-bodied nation is in need. Those who redress the material, general aspects of life prepare the way for Messiah son of Joseph.

9. Shulchan Aruch YD 345:5

10. For a full introduction and translation of the Lamentation in Jerusalem by R. Bezalel Naor, see <https://www.machonso.org/uploads/images/13-D-10-lamentation.pdf>

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When these two forces work at cross purposes as a result of the calamity of exile, shortsightedness and disarray, these are the 'birthpangs of Messiah', or to be more exact, the 'birthpangs of Messiahs' (plural). The Psalmist (89:52) writes: 'That Your enemies have defied, O Lord; that they have defied the footsteps of Your Messiahs' עֲקָבוֹת מְשִׁיחָהּ
Two footsteps of two Messiahs.

Now since the major achievement of Messiah son of Joseph, which is the general advancement of mankind, is accomplished by de-emphasis of the unique Jewish form, Messiah son of Joseph cannot endure, so he is destined to be killed.

When this happens, all will recognize the perversity of the situation. They will realize that it was wrong not to subjugate the universal dimension to the spiritual aspect which is Israel's destiny, to the kingdom of David. 'They will lament him as one laments an only son, and grieve for him as one grieves for the firstborn son.' (Zecharia 12:10) The lamentation for an only child is bereft of hope for future children. Elderly parents who have lost their only son, are totally forlorn. If the verse were to end on that note, it would spell utter doom, but the bitterness is mitigated by intellect. Intellect perceives that the nation has produced the soul of the Messiahs. The nation is not as elderly parents who have lost their only child, but rather as young parents who have lost their firstborn child. Being inexperienced at raising children, they did not attend properly to the child in its state of illness, so the child succumbed.

By the same token, the nation comes to the realization that it did not know how to make proper use of this universalist dimension, did not understand how it could contribute to Israel's unique destiny. In that way, it could have survived. The nation labored under the illusion brought on by the divisiveness of exile that these two forces are truly at odds. The result is that whoever holds up the universal side of the nation becomes unfortunately an enemy of Torah and *mitzvot* (commandments). Contrariwise, whoever focuses on the uniquely Jewish, becomes an adversary of material wellbeing. In the first scenario, the fence of Torah is broken down; in the second, the result is weakness and morosity.

After this latest experience of Messiah son of Joseph's impermanence, let us deduce that truly the two forces are not mutually antagonistic. It is time to bring it all together and to organize the nation's ways. Let every universal perfection serve as a basis for perfecting the uniquely Israelite. Let both parties - those disposed to the material and universal, and those disposed to the spiritual and particularistic - come to the same conclusion.

Then the lamentation will be on both sides; both will recognize their mistake. These two forces were created to be united; once rent asunder, they were mutually injurious.

.....

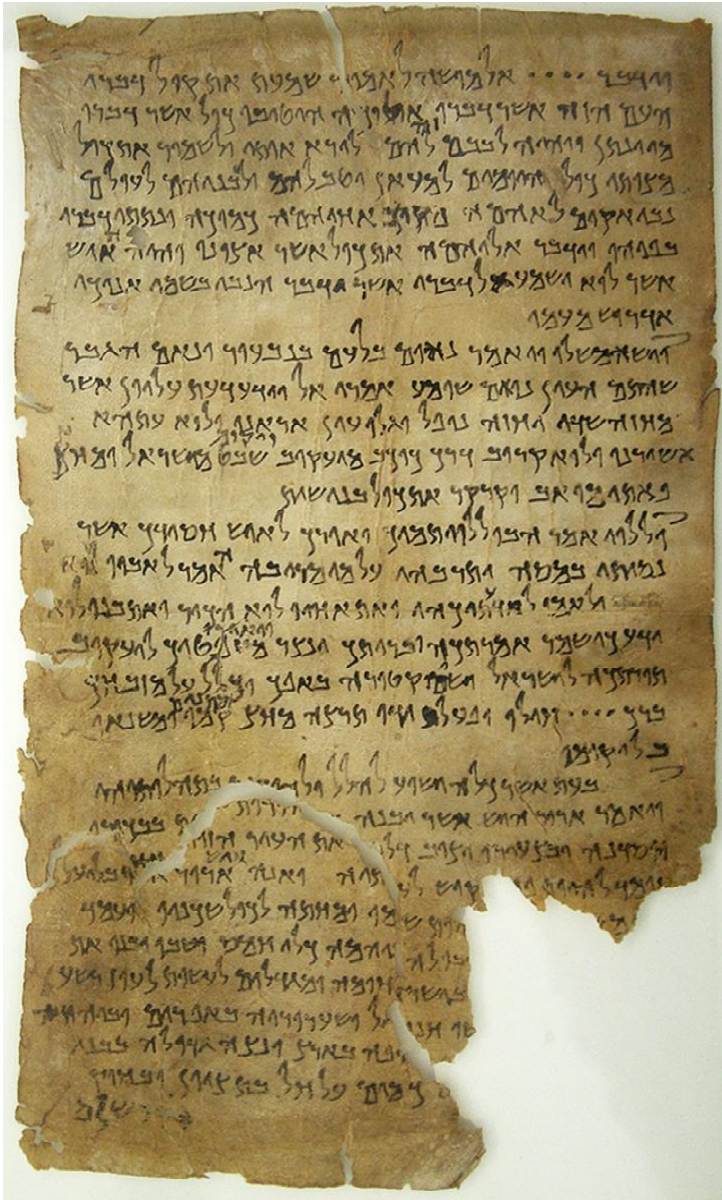
The Zionist vision manifest in our generation might best be symbolized as the "footstep of Messiah son of Joseph" (*ikva de-Mashiah ben Yosef*). Zionism tends to universalism (as opposed to Jewish particularism). It is unequipped to realize that the development of Israel's general aspect is but the foundation for Israel's singularity. The leadership of the Zionist movement must be greatly influenced by the gifted few of the generation, the righteous and the sages of Israel. On the other hand, the ideal of Israel's national renaissance, including all the material accouterment - which is a proper thing when joined to the spiritual goal - to date has not succeeded, and the lack of success has brought on infighting, until finally, the leader of the movement has fallen, a victim of frustration. It behooves us to take to heart, to try to unify the "tree of Joseph" and the "tree of Judah," to rejoice in the national reawakening, and to know that this is not the end goal of Israel, but only a preparation.

This is the benefit to be gained by remorse over one whom we might consider the "footstep of Messiah son of Joseph" (*ikva de-Mashiah ben Yosef*), in view of his influence in revitalizing the nation materially and generally. This power should not be abandoned despite the wantonness and hatred of Torah that results in the expulsion of God-fearing Jews from the movement. We must develop the courage to seek that any power that is of itself good be fortified, and if it is lacking spiritual perfection, let us strive to increase the light of knowledge and fear of the Lord such that it (i.e. the light) is capable of conquering a powerful life-force and of being built up through it. Then there will be fulfilled in us the prophecy, "I will grant unto Zion salvation, unto Israel My glory." Return (*teshuvah*) must be from our side. Return will be enduring only if all the powers presently found (and possible to be found) in the nation will be vigorous, and directed to good. Then we will be a vessel for the divine will, "a crown of ornament in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the palm of your God."

The Lamentation in Jerusalem, Rav Kook. Ma'amarei RAYaH 1 (1980) pp94-99¹¹

11. Translation by R. Bezalel Naor.

APPENDIX
MASHIACH BEN YOSEF AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS



- 4Q175, also known as The Testimonia, is one of the Dead Sea Scrolls and was found in Cave 4 at Qumran in the West Bank. Only one sheet long, 4Q175 is a collection of scriptural quotations seemingly connected to a messianic figure. The manuscript was written in Hasmonean script of the early 1st century BCE.
- The Testimonia is a short document containing five Biblical quotations arranged in four sections concerning God's activities at the End of Days. The first three sections refer to future blessings which will come from three figures, a prophet similar to Moses, a messianic figure and a priestly teacher. The first section consists of two texts from Deuteronomy and refers to the prophet-figure who is like Moses (Devarim 5:28-29; 18:18-19). The second section is an extract from a prophecy of Bilaam about the Messiah-figure (Bamidbar 24:15-17). The third section is a blessing of the Levites, and of the Priest-Messiah who will be a teacher like Levi (Devarim 33:8-11). The last section begins with a verse from Yehoshua (6:26), which is then expounded by means of a quotation from the Psalms of Joshua (text 4Q379).
- Some scholars¹² consider this fourth messianic figure to be an early reference to Mashiach ben Yosef, in the form of a new messianic Yehoshua figure¹³.

Diagram 2: Targum Ps.-J. to Exod 40; The Four Craftsmen; 4Q175

	Redeemer Figures			
4Q175	Prophet	King Messiah	Priest	Joshua, War Messiah ben Joseph
Four Craftsmen. Variant A	Prophet	King Messiah	Priest	War Messiah ben Joseph
Tg. Ps.-J. Exod 40,9-11	Elijah, the High Priest	King Messiah	(Elijah, the High Priest)	War Messiah ben Joshua ben Ephraim (ben Joseph)

12. See a fascinating article by David C. Mitchell, *The Fourth Deliverer A Josephite Messiah in 4QTestimonia*, Biblica Vol. 86, No. 4 (2005), pp. 545-553, available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42614629>. Mitchell brings many connections, sources and traditions to support his claim. Other scholars consider the concept of Mashiach ben Yosef to have developed after the death of Bar Kochba and the need for his followers to establish a narrative that he was meant to die, only to be resurrected and return as/with the final Messiah - Mashiach ben David. Mitchell seeks to refute this by tracing the concept of Mashiach ben Yosef to the Second Temple period, over one hundred years prior to Bar Kochba and indeed prior to the rise of Christianity.

13. Both Yosef and Yehoshua lived to 110. Mitchell quotes an ancient Samaritan tradition that a messianic Yehoshua would live to 110.