

ANTICIPATING
REDEMPTION

A translation of

Tzipita L'Yeshuah

By

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The Chofetz Chaim

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Chapter One

Because of our many sins, in many areas, the faith has visibly collapsed, so that from youth, many Jewish children are cut off from learning the Torah of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, a phenomenon that never happened in previous times. Now, if we properly examine why this is, we will find several matters, but the main reason is the weakening of the faith. Faith in an eternal afterlife, in reward and punishment, in the coming of Moshiach,¹ and all the other prophecies of Torah, has given the Jewish people the fortitude throughout the generations, to bear all trials and tribulations and stand firmly with self-sacrifice, whether their own or the self-sacrifice of their children, for their faith in *HaShem*-יהו"ה, in that it was better in the eyes of Jewish parents to see their child slaughtered before their very eyes for the sanctification of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Name, thus returning his soul to God in heaven in purity, rather than to see him basking in affluence, but perverting his path from the ways of Torah and *mitzvot*.

But alas, because of our many sins, today, the work of Satan has succeeded in weakening the roots of the faith within Israel through his many emissaries, whether in the matter of belief in reward and punishment, or in the prophecies of the prophets. Thus, when they see the great trials and tribulations that come upon us every day, in their souls many Jews imagine that the Holy One, blessed is He, has utterly hidden His face from us, thus losing all hope in the redemption and

¹ See the Rambam's introduction to Mishnah Sanhedrin, Perek Chelek and elsewhere.

not anticipating the Kingdom of Heaven at all. Rather, every person turns to himself, to find schemes by which to sustain himself and his household, without regard to whether it is permissible or forbidden.

Even worse, amongst the pure and upright, are those who when seeing how greatly the yoke of Torah and *mitzvot* has been cast off by the multitudes, that in many areas, even the most severe matters, forbidden by Torah with the death penalty or the excision of the soul (such as profaning the Sabbath, as written,² “Whosoever profanes it shall surely die,” or forbidden sexual acts, such as having relations with one’s wife when she is still *Niddah* and has not immersed in a *Mikvah*, as written in the Torah portion of *Acharei Mot*),³ their heart sinks within them and they say to themselves, “How can we possibly hope for the mercies of heaven in a generation such as this, being that the Torah of *HaShem*-יהו"ה has been abrogated to such a terrible degree?” As a result, they become totally disheartened from even attempting to correct people who could possibly be saved from descending into destruction. I therefore am dutybound to set forth the truth of the matter, before everyone.

That is, on the contrary, in our times it actually is closer and more applicable than ever to anticipate the redemption. And though, at first glance, if a person considers the conditions for the final redemption, as written in the Torah Portion of *Nitzavim*,⁴ that it will be when we return to *HaShem* with all our heart and soul, to heed His voice in all the *mitzvot*

² Exodus 31:14

³ Leviticus 18

⁴ Deuteronomy 20

that He commanded us, both us and our children, then *HaShem* our God will return our captivity etc., as explained there. Whereas, according to what we currently observe, the generation is not at all worthy of this, which leaves room to lose hope. However, the answer to this will now be explained.

Now, at first glance, this difficulty can also be posed on the words of our sages themselves. That is, the sages of the Mishnah and Gemara gave us signs by which to recognize the imminent arrival of the redemption; signs that are not at all positive or praiseworthy. For example, in the Mishnah, toward the end of Tractate Sotah,⁵ and in Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 97a, they said, “In the time of the footsteps of Moshiach brazenness will become great etc., with no one to rebuke, the youth will embarrass their elders, the elders will stand up to honor the young, a son will disgrace his father, a daughter will rise up against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, one’s enemies will be the members of his own household etc., the wisdom of Torah authors will [be regarded as] stench, those who fear sin will be disdained and truth will be absent-*Ne’ederet*-נעדרת.”

In Tractate Sanhedrin⁶ it is explained that this means that truth will become limited to small groups-*Adarim*-עדריים,⁷ which will steadily go and diminish. That is, truth will dissipate daily from the world and will be greatly washed away. It further states there, “The scion of David will not come etc., until informers multiply etc.” There are many other

⁵ Mishnah Sotah 9:15

⁶ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 97a *ibid.*

⁷ The literal meaning of *Adarim*-עדריים is flocks or herds.

similar quotes, some of which rely directly on the words of the Torah and the prophets.

Now, as a result of our many sins, in our generation we observe that all these matters have come to pass. (Moreover, all the other trials and tribulations have also come about). Now, at first glance, this is very astonishing, for do we not see the very opposite in the verses of Torah? That is, according to the verses of Torah the redemption will happen when we return to *HaShem*, as it states,⁸ “And it shall be, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, that I have set before you, you will return to your heart, when you are amongst all the nations where *HaShem* your God has banished you. You will return to *HaShem* your God and hearken to His voice, in accordance to all that I am commanding you today; you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul. *HaShem* your God will return your captivity and have mercy upon you; He will return and gather you in from all the nations where *HaShem* your God dispersed you.” As Ramban⁹ explained, this is a promise from *HaShem* and will certainly come to pass.

Now, there are several answers that explain this matter,¹⁰ however the one closest to the simple, literal meaning, is that both are true. That is, at the end-time before the redemption, there will be two types of people, both of which will aid in drawing the redemption closer, as will be explained.

⁸ Deuteronomy 30:1-3

⁹ Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman

¹⁰ See Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 97b-98a

One part of the Jewish people will strengthen themselves and their children to serve *HaShem* with all their heart and all their soul. These are those Jews in our generation who are fully faithful to *HaShem* and serve Him. That is, at a time when those who breach our holy faith and rise up to destroy and demolish it, by multiplying and spreading books of heresy and atheism amongst the people, and when there are other agents of the evil inclination, such as licentiousness and greed, causing the yoke of Torah and the Kingdom of Heaven to be abandoned, at the very same time, the remnant of the faithful of Israel strengthen themselves with resolve to keep all the laws of Torah, lest they become weakened. Moreover, they educate their children to keep the Torah of *HaShem*, not veering from it, neither to the right nor to the left.

Certainly, their level is all the higher and more exemplary, for they accomplish this with much greater difficulty and anguish than previous generations, and as known from Avot of Rabbi Nathan,¹¹ accomplishing something one time with difficulty, is greater than one hundred times without difficulty. Moreover, nowadays, service of *HaShem* is pure and free of any ulterior motives, such as seeking honor etc., being that, on the contrary, because of our many sins,¹² whoever desists from evil is considered to be depraved by many people, and whoever fears *HaShem* is despised.

Furthermore, there are those who throughout their days accept lives of poverty and difficulty, dedicating what is left of their meager earnings to employ Torah teachers and

¹¹ Avot d'Rabbi Natan 3:6

instructors to strengthen their children in the Torah of *HaShem*, just so that their children will grow to become proper Torah Jews. Moreover, though they are impoverished, for the sake of the Torah education and fear of Heaven of their children, they do not seek to move from a place of Torah to distant lands where income is more easily gotten. This certainly may be regarded as returning to *HaShem* with all their heart and soul.

This also is so of the remnant of youth who have heard the call of *HaShem* and turn their nights into day studying His Torah, whose faces are blackened by lack of sustenance, and whose only wish is to adhere to *HaShem's* Torah and *mitzvot* with all their might and desire, even in a time such as this, when they encounter many mockers and scoffers. They nonetheless strengthen themselves to remain at their post, guarding holiness, Torah study and Divine service, and everything written in the Torah of Moshe, in that the words of the prophets are holy to them. In a time such as this, is not their level very high and exemplary?

Included in this are young men who though they are overcome with the financial difficulties of the times, nonetheless keep their faith in *HaShem* and accept eating their meager ration of bread and water, only that nothing forbidden should enter their mouth. Though their souls are hungry, thirsty, and weary, not for a mere day, but for many days and years, nonetheless, in all their sufferings they do not complain. Instead, their hearts melt within them due to their inability to study Torah and do *mitzvot* in the optimal way. Is this not

¹² Isaiah 59:15

returning to *HaShem* with all their heart and soul? Thus, their service of *HaShem* is complete service and every one of their merits outweighs many faults, to the left and to the right.

We similarly observe the holiness of the Jewish people, that in spite of the difficulties of the times that come upon each one, they nonetheless strengthen themselves and their children with all their souls to keep the laws of Torah and to come and pray, weep, and confess before the Holy One, blessed is He, justifying His judgment and setting times for the study of His Torah. Moreover, in spite of all their sufferings and difficulties, they are very merciful and perform acts of lovingkindness one with the other, with all manner of effort and wise counsel as how to bring goodness and comfort to the destitute.

About all such people it is very easy to say with certainty, that the above-mentioned Torah verses,¹³ “And it shall be, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, that I have set before you, you will return to your heart... you will return to *HaShem* your God and hearken to His voice,” are fulfilled in them. For this remnant of the fully faithful of Israel “return to their hearts” and know the importance of serving *HaShem* and fulfilling His *mitzvot*, in devoting themselves and their children to fulfilling the Torah.

However, our sages also told us in advance, that not all the Jewish people will remain on such a level. That a generation will arise that is the opposite of the previous generations. Spiritually, they will be on a very low level and each one will do whatever is correct in his own eyes (and as

¹³ Deuteronomy 30:1-3

explained in Mishnah, they will unreceptive to correction). Nonetheless, let not our heart become despondent over this, for this itself is one of the signs of redemption.

That is, those of the first category will hasten the redemption with their good deeds and these will hasten it too. That is, previously, when the generations followed each other in a proper manner, and all Israel stood firmly at their posts, the fathers transmitted the foundations of the faith to their children and the children lovingly accepted and valued everything they received from their fathers.

(Moreover, according to the common conventions of right conduct-*Derech Eretz*-דרך ארץ, which precedes Torah,¹⁴ it is incumbent that young children obey the discipline of their parents. Is not our holy faith received from fathers to sons, from generation to generation going back to the first generation when 600,000 men from age twenty and up, besides the women and children, all stood at Mount Sinai and saw with their own eyes, as written,¹⁵ “Today we have seen that God speaks to man and he still lives.”)

And as we say [in our daily prayers],¹⁶ “His words are alive and existent, faithful and pleasant forever...upon our fathers and upon us and upon our children and upon our generations.” That is, their entire desire, whether that of the fathers or the sons, was solely to merit in Torah and good deeds and to do the will of our Father in Heaven. Thus, in those generations it was not as pressing for the redemption to be close at hand, being that the state of the faith stood firmly

¹⁴ Tanna D’Bei Eliyahu Rabba 1:1; Also see Mishnah Avot 3:17, 2:2

¹⁵ Deuteronomy 5:20

¹⁶ In the blessings of the Shema in the morning (*Shacharit*) liturgy.

in its place, and therefore by the length of the exile, the merit of Israel continued to grow from generation to generation, whether in regard to the merits themselves, which accumulated with each generation, or whether in regard to the merit of awaiting the redemption, that Israel awaited and anticipated the coming of Moshiach for all this lengthy time, standing firmly in their faith and anticipation of redemption. As our sages stated,¹⁷ just as we await redemption, so also, the Holy One, blessed is He, awaits redemption, as it states,¹⁸ “Therefore, *HaShem* awaits to show you grace etc.” Now, being that both He awaits and we await, why then has redemption not come? For us to accumulate greater merit. Therefore, the Holy One, blessed is He, did not quicken the redemption.

However, all this applied then, when the received knowledge of the foundations and roots of the faith were strong, and there was no laxness in fulfilling Torah and *mitzvot* out of lack of faith. However, due to our many sins, in our times, spoilers who profane our holy faith, by spreading many destructive and freethinking books amongst the people, have arisen, and have managed to almost completely extinguish the flame of pure faith from the hearts of the youth, so that many are wiser in their own eyes than the previous generations, and have begun rejecting what they received from their fathers.

That is, in their eyes, the honor of all the wise, understanding, and holy men throughout the previous generations, who gave of themselves with self-sacrifice for

¹⁷ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 97

every Torah law, is insignificant. Moreover, some even have the gall to speak against the sages of the Mishnah and Gemara, all of whom were like supernal angels. Woe to us, that because of our many sins, in our times this has come to pass, as our sages prophesied that brazenness will become great.

The outcome is that, being that they now are rejected, the fathers cannot transmit the foundations of the faith and the preciousness of Torah and *mitzvot* – that they faithfully received from their own fathers – to their children. This being the case, since the transmission of the faith has been disrupted to such an extent, there no longer is any advantage in *HaShem* prolonging the exile. (On the contrary, due to our many sins, we see that the opposite is true, that with the passage of time the children can have an ill effect on their elders.)

Thus, the Holy One, blessed is He, is compelled to hasten the redemption and open the eyes of the blind to behold the light of truth. For the Holy One, blessed is He, will not permit His children to be utterly lost, as the verse states,¹⁹ “Lest anyone will be utterly cast out.” For they are His children, the children of His chosen ones, who He has taken and carried from the days of old, as written,²⁰ “But even so, while they are in the land of their enemies (meaning that the Holy One, blessed is He, banished Israel so that when troubles come upon them, they will repent and improve their ways, but even there, they continue to act in this way, nevertheless) I will not reject them and will not loathe them to exterminate

¹⁸ Isaiah 30:18

¹⁹ Samuel II 14:14

²⁰ Leviticus 26:44

them, to annul My covenant with them, for I am *HaShem*-יהו"ה their God.”

About this, our sages, of blessed memory, said,²¹ “‘I did not reject them,’ refers to the days of the Chaldeans, in which I established Daniel, Chananiah, Mishael, and Azariah for them. ‘I did not loathe them’ refers to the days of the Greeks, in which I established Shimon the Tzaddik and Yochanan the Hasmonean and his sons for them. ‘To exterminate them’ refers to the days of Haman, in which I established Mordechai and Esther for them. ‘To annul My covenant with them,’ refers to the House of Rabbi Yehudah the Prince that I established for them, and ‘for I am *HaShem*-יהו"ה their God,’ refers to the coming future.”

We thus find that in the end-times both types of people will hasten the redemption, these because of their good deeds and their great suffering [for the sake of keeping *HaShem*'s Torah and *mitzvot*] and these because of their negative deeds, and it is self-understood that it is better to be counted amongst the good than the bad. All this is hinted in Torah, in the portion of *Ha'azinu*, which also refers to the final redemption (as explained by our sages in Tractate Sanhedrin 97a) as written,²² “For *HaShem* will judge and have mercy on his servants, for He will see that they are overpowered and none can stop it or help.”

That is (as Rashi states), because His servants also suffer and there is concern that they too will be overpowered. That is, the strength of Israel to remain in exile has dissipated, because none can stop it or help. That is, their strength to

²¹ Talmud Bavli, Megillah 11a

uphold the holy faith has utterly dissipated and the Jewish people no longer have the strength to hold on.

Similarly, from this same scriptural verse our sages said,²³ “The scion of David will not come until informers increase,” meaning that because of this, “none can stop it or help,” in that the spiritual leaders of the nation will no longer have the power to strengthen the faith. They additionally said, “until the Torah scholars decrease.” As Rashi states, this refers to those who strengthen the hands of Israel, by returning them to goodness.” That is, even then, there will be those who are His faithful servants [who strengthen the hands of Israel and return them to goodness], but they will be few and incapable of arresting [the general spiritual decline]. We also find this in scripture about the time of redemption, as the verse states,²⁴ “See that days are coming, declares *HaShem*, when I shall sow the House of Israel and the House of Judah - the seed of man and the seed of animal.” And as written in Gemara,²⁵ the seed of animal refers to people who are empty of Scripture, Mishnah and Gemara. That is, as mentioned before, there will be two types of people, both of whom will help in drawing the redemption close.

What comes out of all the above, is that in our times it is more appropriate than ever to anticipate and hope for the revelation of *HaShem*'s glory in the world according to the literal understanding of the verse,²⁶ “As I live, the glory of *HaShem* will fill the whole earth.” It thus is appropriate for

²² Deuteronomy 32:36

²³ Mishnah Sotah 9:14 and Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 97a *ibid*.

²⁴ Jeremiah 31:26

²⁵ Talmud Bavli, Sotah 22a

every right-hearted person to contemplate what will be when our righteous Moshiach comes. Who will then be praiseworthy and happy? Certainly, those who adhered to *HaShem*, blessed is He, in times of difficulty and hardship, who stood at their post to be Jews who are faithful to *HaShem* and His Torah.

It is upon them that the light of *HaShem*, blessed is He, will shine, each according to his level in the knowledge of Torah and the fulfillment of its *mitzvot*. As stated in Tana D’Bei Eliyahu, chapter one, “How will the light of Torah scholars and the righteous be,” and then lists several levels. There are those whose face will be given to shine like small stars and those who will shine like large stars (as scripture states,²⁷ “Those who teach righteousness to the multitudes will shine like the stars for ever and ever”), there are those who will be given to shine like the moon at the beginning of the month, those who will shine like the moon on fifth of the month, and those who will be like the fifteenth of the month. There will be those who will shine like the sun in the first hour of the day, those who will be like the third hour of the day, and those who will shine like noon, at the sixth hour of the day.” All this is hinted in the verse,²⁸ “Those who love Him will be like the rising of the sun in its full strength.”

In truth, all this is hinted in the scriptural verse,²⁹ “You shall return and see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does

²⁶ Numbers 14:21

²⁷ Daniel 12:3

²⁸ Judges 5:31

²⁹ Malachi 3:18

not serve Him.” Our sages commented,³⁰ “Is not the righteous the same as one who serves God, and is not the wicked the same as one who does not serve him? However, this is like the difference between one who reviews his chapter one hundred times, compared to one who reviews it one hundred and one times.”

That is, according to the degree of one’s toil in Torah will be the degree of the radiance of his face. The verse thus says, “and see,” that is, his level in Torah will be recognizable by the radiance of his face. Tanna D’Bei Eliyahu concludes there, “The general principle is that whosoever gives deference to Torah, merits to greet the face of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem* (the *Shechinah*). However, whosoever is impure from sins will not sit in the presence of the King” (meaning, even after having received retribution in purgatory and being cleansed of his transgressions, he does not merit to greet the face of the King, like what our sages, of blessed memory stated,³¹ “Whosoever commits himself to sin is never absolved.”) What does this refer to? It refers to one who has not repented. However, one who repents before his death, is like a supremely righteous person in all his matters.

It similarly states there,³² “There will be Honor and might to the righteous in the coming future and the coming world. How so? The Holy One, blessed is He, will sit in His study hall with the supremely righteous of the world sitting before Him, and each one will be given a radiant face according to the Torah within him.”

³⁰ Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 9b

³¹ Geder Olam 3, citing Midrash Tehillim (also called Socher Tov).

³² Tanna D’Bei Eliyahu, Chapter 5

Moreover, know that according to the above explanation, that toward the end of exile there will be those with destructive viewpoints, by which they will separate themselves from Torah and *mitzvot*, therefore those who strengthen themselves to learn *HaShem's* Torah and fulfill His *mitzvot*, will then be called “Righteous-*Tzaddikim*.” This is as scripture states,³³ “And your people are all righteous-*Tzaddikim*.” This refers to all those who remain on *HaShem's* side and are not seduced by the sinners (as is written in Avkat Rochel, by the student of the Rosh).

It therefore is incumbent on every person to strengthen himself now in the knowledge of Torah and the fulfillment of its *mitzvot*, because once Moshiach comes, those years will become undesirable, as scripture states,³⁴ “Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the bad days come and years arrive about which you will say, ‘I have no desire in them.’” Our sages, of blessed memory said, “This refers to the days of Moshiach, in which there will neither be merit nor demerit, the reason being that the evil inclination-*Yetzer HaRa* will have then been abrogated.

³³ Isaiah 60:21

³⁴ Ecclesiastes 12:1

Chapter Two

Now, as known to all, whoever does not at all believe in the coming of Moshiach, his sin is too great to bear, for he lacks one of the thirteen fundamental principles of faith.³⁵ The same applies to one who does not await him, who loses hope in him for whatever reason. He is the companion of the above-mentioned person, and is regarded as one who denies Torah. As Rambam wrote in Laws of Kings, Chapter 11, “The king Moshiach is destined to arise and return the kingdom of the House of David to its old glory and original dominion. He will build the Holy Temple and gather in the scattered of Israel. In his days all Torah laws will return as before. We will bring sacrificial offerings and observe the *Shemithah* and *Yovel* years fully, according to their commandments as expressed in Torah. Whosoever does not believe in him or does not await his coming (that is, loses hope in his coming, for whatever reason) does not only deny the other prophets, but is in denial of the Torah and of our teacher Moshe. For the Torah testifies about him, as it states,³⁶ “*HaShem* your God will return your captivity and have mercy on you; He will return and gather you in from all the nations where *HaShem* your God dispersed you. If you have been banished to the ends of the heavens, *HaShem* your God will gather you from there. *HaShem* your God will bring you into the land that your forefathers inherited and you shall inherit it.

³⁵ See Mishnah Sanhedrin, Perek Chelek, and Rambam’s introduction there.

³⁶ Deuteronomy 30:3-5

He will benefit you and increase you more than your forefathers.”

Now, in truth, we must contemplate the past in relation to the future. *HaShem* made several promises to us when we left Egypt. As written in the book of Joshua, Joshua called all of Israel and told them,³⁷ “You shall know with all your heart and all your soul that not one of the good things that *HaShem* your God has promised you is lacking; everything has been fulfilled for you; not one word of it has failed to come about.”

Now, this can also be applied to today, that certainly His promise for redemption will be fulfilled, as it states,³⁸ “Grass withers and blossom wilts, but the word of our God stands forever.” Furthermore, besides what He promised us in His Torah, he also promised us through His servants, the prophets, about the future redemption, such as what is written in the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve prophets. They all are full of prophecies about the future redemption and the exalted spiritual level of Israel in that time, in that all Jews will reach the level of prophecy, as stated,³⁹ “And it shall be that after this, I shall pour out My spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters will prophesy; your elders will dream prophetic dreams, and your young men will see visions.”

They also prophesied about all the honor that the Jewish people will receive from all the inhabitants of the world, as written,⁴⁰ “They shall bring all your brothers from

³⁷ Joshua 23:14

³⁸ Isaiah 40:8

³⁹ Yoel 3:1

⁴⁰ Isaiah 66:20

all the nations as an offering to *HaShem* etc.” Furthermore, it states,⁴¹ “They will bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters will be carried on their shoulders etc.” Scripture stated a general principle about this,⁴² “No eye has seen it God, except for You; what He will do for those who await him.”

The Holy One, blessed is He, already hinted at this through His prophet Hoshea, as the verse states,⁴³ “For many days the children of Israel will settle with no king, no prince, no sacrifice, no pillar, and no *ephod* or *teraphim*. Afterwards, the children of Israel will repent and seek *HaShem* their God and David their king, and they will fear *HaShem* and His goodness in the end of days.”

Moreover, He told us,⁴⁴ “Though he may tarry, wait for him.” This means, “If you think that the promise that *HaShem* swore unto Israel will, God forbid, be abrogated, know that this is not so, but instead, wait for him.” This is like a person who waits for something that he knows will surely come to pass, as the verse states, “Grass withers and blossom wilts, but the word of our God stands forever,” and as the above verse concludes, “He shall surely come without delay.”

For example, as I see it, this is like a king who was angry at his son and banished him from his palace for a period of five years, sending him on a journey of several years to a distant land in the far reaches of the world. In the meantime, the king changed his mind, but he could not rescind his decree.

⁴¹ Isaiah 49:22

⁴² Isaiah 64:3

⁴³ Hoshea 3:4

⁴⁴ Habbakuk 2:3

He contemplated what to do once the five years had elapsed, and thought, “Will it not take several additional years until he returns home? He therefore commanded that all the mountains on the way should be leveled and paved, by whatever devices exist to do so, so that the way back home will be shorter and easier, thus greatly shortening the journey.

The same applies to us. Today, the Jewish people are scattered throughout the world and the ingathering of the exiled will include all of Israel, as the verse states,⁴⁵ “And you will be gathered up one by one, O children of Israel.”

Now, a person could think that the ingathering itself will extend for several years. However, in truth, this is not so, for the Holy One, blessed is He, makes all the preparations for this ahead of time, so that when the time comes, it will not take a long time. This is as written, “Though he may tarry, wait for him.” Lest you say, “Will not the ingathering itself be drawn over an extended period of time?” In answer to this the verse continues, “for he shall surely come.” This means that when the time comes that Moshiach can come, it will not at all be delayed, as the verse states,⁴⁶ “Who are these who fly like a cloud, like doves to their dovecote?” That is, the ingathering of the exiles will be like a very swift cloud.

Now, there is a simple answer in regard to the delay itself, for *HaShem* told Avraham in the covenant between the pieces,⁴⁷ “The fourth generation will return here, for the iniquity of the Emorites will not be complete until then.” Now, in that time, only the seven Canaanite nations obstructed

⁴⁵ Isaiah 27:12

⁴⁶ Isaiah 60:8

⁴⁷ Genesis 15:16

this. Nonetheless, when the Holy One, blessed is He, wanted to fulfill His promise to Avraham, the descendants of Avraham had to wait several hundred years until the iniquities of the Emorites were complete.

However, today, the entire world must be clarified and come under the dominion of the Holy One, blessed is He, and His king Moshiach, as stated in the book of Daniel,⁴⁸ “I saw in the visions of the night, when suddenly one like a man came with the clouds of heaven; he came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him before Him. He was given dominion, honor, and kingship, so that all peoples, nations, and languages will serve him; his dominion will be an everlasting dominion that will never pass, and his kingship will never be destroyed.” This being the case, [that the entire world must be clarified,] it must take place over a long period of time.

Moreover, the first redemption was only temporary, [in that it was followed by other exiles,] as explained in holy books, however this final redemption will conclude all exiles and there will not be any further exiles. As a result, all the faults of Israel from the day they became a nation, must be rectified, and through the lengthiness of the exile, it all is rectified. Furthermore, the exile itself is like a great smelting furnace that separates the bad from the good, as stated at the end of the book of Daniel,⁴⁹ “Many will be clarified and purified and refined etc.” All this requires much time.

However, we must not lose hope because of the delay, God forbid, specifically since the prophet told us about the delay in advance, that, “Though he may tarry, wait for him, for

⁴⁸ Daniel 7:13-14

he shall surely come,” for none of *HaShem*’s words will be unfulfilled, God forbid to think so, as we say in the blessings instituted by our sages after the recital of the *Haftorah*, “You are trustworthy, *HaShem* our God, and Your words are trustworthy; not one of Your words returns unfulfilled etc.”

This particularly applies to this matter, which was not merely stated once, but the words of the prophets are replete with it. Moreover, the statements of the sages of the Talmud are replete with it, and it is an essential principle and foundation of the faith of Israel. Furthermore, we attest to this in the very first blessing of the *Amidah* prayer, “And brings a redeemer to their children’s children, for the sake of His Name, with love.”

This is particularly applicable today, when because of our many sins, the condition of Israel has reached the dust, both physically and spiritually, as written,⁵⁰ “For our soul is lowered to the dust, our belly is stuck to the earth.” The words, “our soul is lowered to the dust,” refer to the souls of the Jewish people, as we know from the spiritual condition of the younger generation, and the words, “our belly is stuck to the earth,” refers to the bodies of the Jewish people.

All this being so, it certainly is incumbent upon us to stand prepared awaiting salvation, as the above-mention verse states, “Wait for him.” That is, we must stand prepared, like one who stands and waits for someone to come. Who knows? In a time such as this, he may already be standing behind our wall, and about to enter.

⁴⁹ Daniel 12:10

⁵⁰ Psalms 44:26

Happy is he who does not lose hope of the redemption and sets his heart, for himself and his children, to increase in Torah and *mitzvot*, lest he be embarrassed in that time. For it is only in this world, which is compared to night, that everything is covered over and the righteous is not readily recognizable from the wicked. However, in that time, everything will be revealed, as Targum Kohelet translates the verse,⁵¹ “In the end of the matter, everything is heard,” that all the deeds of the people of the world will be made known, and each person will be honored according to the Torah and *mitzvot* he has in his hands, as scripture states about that time,⁵² “You shall return and see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him,” as mentioned in chapter one.

⁵¹ Ecclesiastes 12:13

⁵² Malachi 3:18

Chapter 3

Now, in the previous chapters we explained logically that a person should anticipate *HaShem's* redemption. We now will explain this imperative as stated by our sages, of blessed memory. In Tractate Shabbat,⁵³ they stated that in the hour of judgment, a person is asked, “Did you anticipate the redemption?” (As we pray daily, “and lift up his horn with Your salvation.”) This is as stated in Pesikta,⁵⁴ that if a person does not await His kingdom, the Holy One, blessed is He, thunders against him, in that He said to the righteous, “You did not act correctly by loving My Torah, but not awaiting My kingdom.”

From this we see that even the righteous, who love Torah, are asked whether they anticipated the redemption, being that it brings the redemption closer, as stated in Yalkut Eichah,⁵⁵ that when the Holy Temple was destroyed, our forefather Yitzchak said before the Holy One, blessed is He, “Is there no way for my children to return?” The Holy One, blessed is He, answered, “Do not say so. When there will be a generation that anticipates My kingdom, they will immediately be redeemed, as the verse states,⁵⁶ ‘There is hope for your future, declares *HaShem*, and your children shall return to their borders.’” From this, we see that at all times *HaShem*, blessed is He, wants us to await His kingdom. (Apparently, this is why our sages, of blessed memory,

⁵³ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 31a

⁵⁴ Pesikta Rabbati, Ch. 34

⁵⁵ Yalkut Shimoni, Na”Ch, Remez 997

⁵⁶ Jeremiah 31:16

specifically said, “Did you watch-*Tzipitah*-צפית for the redemption.” The term *Tzipitah*-צפית is like a watchman who stands in a high place in anticipation of seeing something new. A Jew should wait for the speedy revelation of the kingdom of Heaven in the same way.)

Now, as known, the Torah warns us to stay away from falsehood, as the verse states,⁵⁷ “Distance yourself from falsehood.” That is, we are warned even if something is not completely false, but only has a small admixture of untruth in it.⁵⁸ This applies when a person speaks to his equal, and certainly applies when he speaks to a prince of Israel. How very much more is this so, when he speaks to *HaShem*, blessed is He. It certainly is imperative that one must be cautious not to speak falsely before Him, as the verse states,⁵⁹ “One who speaks lies will not be established before My eyes.”

This is so, even if he does not mention the Name of the Holy One, blessed is He, when speaking about something, and is particularly so, when His Name is indeed mentioned. It therefore is very astounding that three time daily, we say the *Aleinu* prayer, which concludes with the words, “Therefore, we hope for You, *HaShem* our God, to speedily behold the splendor of Your might.”

Is it not so, that if we truly hope for the speedy revelation of *HaShem*'s glory, every Jew should prepare himself for this, by knowing all the matters of the Divine service that will take place in the Holy Temple, such as all the Torah laws (*Halachah*) concerning the sacrificial offerings

⁵⁷ Exodus 23:7

⁵⁸ See Talmud Bavli, Shevuot 31a

⁵⁹ Psalms 101:7

and all other matters of the Holy Temple? (For example, if it is anticipated that the king will be coming to the city, even if it is only a slight possibility, and even if there are a thousand streets in the city, they all will be decorated in his honor, on the possibility that he may travel on one of them.)

That is, (if the redemption comes and the Holy Temple is rebuilt), but Torah scholars are ignorant of the laws of the Holy Temple, will this not be disgraceful to Him, heaven forbid? For it would be as if we only have been giving lip service before *HaShem* about something that is not truly [in our hearts], especially since two of His holy names are mentioned here. If a person examines himself, he will find that in the course of one week he mentions more than forty holy names in this verse (of the *Aleinu* prayer) alone, and in the course of a year, it amounts to over two thousand times. However, it all is for naught, for though he may state before *HaShem* that he hopes for the speedy revelation of His glory, in truth, he does not at all hope.

Now, in regard to the Jewish people as a whole, we must judge them meritoriously, being that they rely on the priests-*Kohanim*, who are responsible for matters of the Holy Temple and its various services. However, there certainly is reason to wonder greatly about the *Kohanim* themselves, who are lax in learning the laws of the Temple service.

Did not *HaShem* choose them to serve him? And is it not so that our righteous Moshiach can come any day? As it states,⁶⁰ “Whoever says ‘I will be a Nazir on the day that the son of David comes,’ is forbidden from drinking wine every

⁶⁰ Talmud Bavli, Eruvin 43a

day, lest he comes on that day.” Moreover, this is the actual Halachic ruling.⁶¹ Furthermore, what happened in the time of the second redemption (from Babylon) is known, that the Holy One, blessed is He, said to the prophet Chaggai,⁶² “Ask for a Torah ruling from the Kohanim etc.” Certainly, this will also take place in the final redemption. What a great disgrace it will be if they do not know how to answer!

Now, in truth, the responsibility to apportion time for the study of matters of the Holy Temple and its service, is also incumbent upon the Torah scholars of Israel. For as known, our sages said,⁶³ “If one thousand people enter into the study of scripture, one hundred succeed. If the one hundred enter into the study of Mishnah, ten succeed, and if the ten enter into the study of Gemara, one succeeds.” Moreover, just as this applies to all Jews, this also applies to the Kohanim. Thus [a Kohen who is a] scholar that can discern the Halachah is one in a hundred, and the other ninety-nine are totally simple. Certainly, it is important to teach them the laws of the Temple service too. This being the case, every Torah scholar must first know these laws himself.

This is how it was when the Holy Temple was still standing, as stated in Talmud Yerushalmi, in chapter four of Tractate Shekalim, “Rabbi Yehudah said in the name of Shmuel, that the Torah scholars would teach the Kohanim the laws of ritual slaughter and the receiving and sprinkling of the blood. This certainly will be so at the time of redemption, when many Jews will need to traverse the sea [to reach the

⁶¹ Mishneh Torah, Laws of the Nazirite 4:11

⁶² Chaggai 2:11

⁶³ Yalkut Shimoni, Kohelet 7

land of Israel], each of which will need to bring a sacrificial offering of thanks, or a sick person who was healed, which is quite common, or those who need to bring sin-offerings, which will apply to a multitude of Jews who erroneously profaned the Shabbat, and other similar cases.

They all will rush to the Kohanim for them to offer these sacrifices and the Kohanim will rush to the Torah scholars to learn how to properly offer them. How much shame and disgrace will come upon every Torah scholar who does not know how to answer!?! Moreover, to know all their details in practice will take them weeks and months to learn, [thus delaying the sacrifices].

Now, because of the great difficulties of our times, in which almost all the signs for redemption mentioned by our sages have come to pass, we certainly must hope for the impending redemption and must be zealous in preparing for the Temple service with all its laws.

Go and see what our sages said,⁶⁴ that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi saw Moshiach [at the gates of Rome] untying and rebandaging each of his wounds, one at a time, [unlike the other afflicted people, who untied and rebandaged all their wounds at once.] Moshiach himself answered why he did so. He said, “Because I may be needed [to bring the redemption] and do not want to delay it.”

Now, from this we can learn from the minor to the major. If it is not worth delaying the redemption of all Israel by a single minute, what could we say if our righteous Moshiach comes and tells us, in *HaShem's* Name, to offer the

⁶⁴ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 98a

sacrifices that are on behalf of the entire Jewish people and the sacrifices specified in the book of Ezekiel, and at the very least, we will have to wait several weeks or months until we are proficient in them!?”⁶⁵

Go and see what is written in Tractate Bechorot 33b, that though it is a positive Torah *mitzvah*, the sages abrogated the tithing of animals, because a problem could arise. (That is, since we no longer have an altar upon which to sacrifice it, the consecrated animal could mistakenly come to be sheared or put to work).

As the Gemara explains there, [if animal tithing would not be abrogated, to avoid this,] instead of tithing them, people

⁶⁵ Authors note: A person should not say to himself that when Moshiach and Eliyahu come, they are destined to clarify for us matters in which we have doubt. This is as stated in various places in the Talmud regarding various matters in which we have doubt, using the word “*Teiku*-תיקו,” regarding which the commentators said that this is an acronym for “[Eliyahu the] Tishbi will answer questions and difficulties-*Tishbi Yetaretz Kushiyot U’Ba’ayot* ואבעיות קושיות ותשובות יתרו.” If one posits this, we will answer him that although it is true that all matters in which there is doubt will become clarified for us by Eliyahu, nevertheless, the simple matters that are stated in the verses or the explanations of the Torah that we have received as an Oral tradition, that have been passed down to us, and which are explained in *Torat Kohanim* [Leviticus] and in the Talmud, we ourselves must know them according to the maximum of our abilities. For, Eliyahu will not come to learn with each individual and teach him matters that he is able to know on his own, but will solely come to clarify and remove doubts in matters that we are unable to understand on our own. However, when it comes to simple matters that are expressly stated and can be understood on our own, he will tell us, “Why did you not study and learn them on your own before my arrival to announce the redemption, as it states (Malachi 3:22), ‘Remember the teachings of My servant Moshe, which I commanded him at Chorev, for all of Israel – its decrees and its statutes,’ and only in the next verse does it state, ‘Behold, I send you Eliyahu the prophet before the coming of the great and awesome day of *HaShem* etc.’”

would cause a blemish to their entire flock (for as long as they still are ordinary animals and no consecration has taken place, it is permissible to blemish them) and since the Holy Temple may speedily be rebuilt, we will need sacrificial animals, but none can be found. We thus see that due to this possibility, the sages abrogated a positive Torah *mitzvah*. If so, why do we not say that the Holy Temple may speedily be rebuilt, for which we will need Kohanim [who are proficient] in offering the sacrifices, but none can be found, as explained above.

Thus, since [in the *Aleinu* prayer] we say, “Therefore, we hope for You, *HaShem* our God, to speedily behold the splendor of Your might,” we therefore must strengthen ourselves in assuring that there are Kohanim who are qualified to offer the sacrifices. That is, whosoever is a Torah scholar, especially if he also is a Kohen, should establish times for himself to learn matters of the Holy Temple and its sacrifices.⁶⁶ Through this, it will be recognizable that we are

⁶⁶ Authors note: Even one who does not have the time or the ability for this should, at the very least, see to it to ensure that he involves himself in affecting that we come to a state and standing in which others, who are engaged in the study of Torah, study and teach matters that relate to the Temple service and the Holy Temple, so that it is considered as if he himself did so. This being so, how pleasant would it be for him to seek out some wealthy donors who can donate of their property or money to establish one place or another in which they engage groups of young men, who are great in Torah, who would study and teach those orders and be proficient in all of their laws. (This is what I have done in my city. That is, I established that there by ten scholars who are engaged in this matter. Subsequently, I have heard that in the holy city of Jerusalem they soon will be establishing a similar holy group such as I have established. Whoever assists them in doing so and strengthening this matter is praiseworthy.) They should set aside half of their time specifically for this, and the other half of their time for the rest of their studies, each using the rest of their time as they see fit, whether to engage in the study of *Yoreh De'ah* or

awaiting and anticipating the revelation of *HaShem's* glory in the world, when we will fully serve Him in all He has commanded us.

Now, actually, besides the above reason that every Torah scholar should know the laws of the Temple service so that he will be able to instruct the Kohanim, nonetheless, only the matter of receiving and sprinkling the sacrificial blood is exclusive to a Kohen, whereas all other matters of the Temple service, both in general and in particular, apply to all Jews, as well as the Kohanim.

How very great and holy it is to learn these subjects, as it states in Tractate Megillah,⁶⁷ that our forefather Avraham

Choshen Mishpat. They should endeavor to learn each matter and understand it in depth and with clarity, as written by the ShaLa”H in his book entitled “*Yesh Nochalim*.” This will bring doubled and quadrupled benefit. For, aside for the fact that amongst the Jewish people there will be found sages who are expert in these laws that apply at the time of the Holy Temple (may it be speedily in our days), additionally, the Holy One, blessed is He, considers those who are engaged in the study of the laws of the Temple service as though they have brought the sacrificial offerings in actuality (Menachot 110a). This is aside for the *mitzvah* of strengthening Torah, which itself is a very great *mitzvah*. Furthermore, it is quite possible that a person who knows that he has transgressed the Shabbat and is liable to bring a sin offering, will find this group who will study the laws of the sin offering on his behalf. For, the teaching of our sages is known, that whoever engages in the study of Torah regarding the sin offering, it is considered as if he has offered the sin offering. The same is likewise true of the four people who must bring a thanksgiving offering, such as a sick person who was healed, or a person who was imprisoned and the like. During the time of the Holy Temple, such a person was obligated to bring the thanksgiving offering, whereas right now he must study the laws pertaining to the thanksgiving offering. See the end of Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim, in the additions there, where we clarified the practice regarding this. If only everyone would contemplate this statement of *HaShem*, blessed is He, and fulfill it, we would certainly be saved of many travesties and expulsions.

⁶⁷ Talmud Bavli, Megillah 31b

said before the Holy One, blessed is He, “Master of the world, if heaven forbid, Israel will sin before You, will you do to them what You did to the generation of the flood or the generation of the dispersion? (That is, will You bring about a deluge or a scattering upon the entire surface of the earth?) The Holy One, blessed is He answered, “No.” Avraham said before him,⁶⁸ “Master of the world, how will I know that I will inherit it?” *HaShem* answered, “Take for me three heifers, three goats and three rams etc.,” (that is, the sacrifices will atone for them). Avraham said, “Master of the world, that is fine as long as the Holy Temple is standing. However, when the Holy Temple is not standing, what will be with them?” *HaShem* answered, “I already have established the order of the sacrifices for them. As long as they read them, I will consider it as if they offered the sacrifices before Me, and will forgive all their sins.” (What is meant here is that a person should contemplate their meaning and how they are offered. As Rabbeinu Bachaye wrote, we cannot say that what is meant is to simply recite the verses without contemplating their meaning.)

It further says in Midrash, Parashat Tzav, and in Pesikta D’Rav Kahana, Pesikta 15, “Rabbi Acha said in the name of Rabbi Chaninah ben Papa, that Israel should not say, ‘In the past, we used to bring sacrifices and were occupied in (learning) them, but now when we do not bring sacrifices, why should we be occupied in (learning) them? The Holy One, blessed is He, answered, “Because when you are occupied in (learning) them, it is as if you have offered them.”

⁶⁸ Genesis 15:8

It states in Midrash Yelamdenu,⁶⁹ “The Holy One, blessed is He, said, ‘Even through the Holy Temple is destined to be destroyed and the sacrificial offerings will cease, do not forget the order of the sacrifices, but rather be careful to recite and learn them (that is, learn the laws that pertain to them). If you are occupied in (learning) them, I will count it as if you actually are occupied in offering them.’” See there.

Now, I know what people will respond to this, that in our days, the difficulties of the times are many, and Torah laws that apply today take precedence. However, I will ask, are there not several tractates which we learn in depth, as appropriate, though they have no practical application today, such as most of Tractate Sanhedrin, Tractate Sukkot and Tractate Yevamot, and others like them? Why then do we omit those orders that deal with the Holy Temple and the sacrifices?

Moreover, as understood from Gemara, in the days of the Amoraim [when the Holy Temple was no longer standing] they nonetheless learned these orders as they apply in practical terms, just like all the other orders [of Mishnah and Gemara] are learned. They did this for the same reasons mentioned above, that since the Holy One, blessed is He, accepts the study of them as if the sacrifices were actually offered, we therefore cannot absolve ourselves from studying them, just as they could not absolve themselves when the Holy Temple was standing.

⁶⁹ See Midrash Tanchumah, Tzav 14

We find this in Tractate Bava Metziya,⁷⁰ that when Rabbah bar Avuha met Eliyahu... Eliyahu asked him why he had not learned the order of purities. He answered, "If I am not proficient in the four orders [of Mishnah that are commonly learned,] how can I be proficient in all six? Rashi explains there that the four orders refer to the orders of Mo'ed, Nashim, and Nezikin, which are the orders that are applicable today, just as during the time of the Holy Temple. He explains that the fourth order is the order of Kodshim,⁷¹ as it states,⁷² "In every place that incense is offered to My Name," regarding which our sages stated in Tractate Menachot,⁷³ "This refers to the Torah scholars who engage in studying the laws of the sacrificial offerings, that the verse ascribes it as though they have offered the sacrificial offerings in the Holy Temple." Rashi continues and explains that when he stated, "How can I be proficient in all six," he was referring to the Mishnaic orders of Zera'im and Taharot, which do not apply outside of the land of Israel.

We thus see that the Amora'im would study the Mishnaic order of Kodshim just as they studied the other orders. It is for this reason that in the following generations, Rav Ashi and Ravina compiled the Gemara for the entirety of the Mishnaic order of Kodeshim, which they did not do for the orders of Zera'im and Taharot, even though they had thirteen versions of Tractate Okatzin, as stated in Tractate Berachot.⁷⁴ This is because of the aforementioned reason, that the study of

⁷⁰ Talmud Bavli, Bava Metziya 114a-b

⁷¹ Which deals with the Temple service.

⁷² Malachi 1:11

⁷³ Talmud Bavli, Menachot 110a

Tractate Kodshim is considered for the Jewish people as if they still are bringing the sacrificial offerings. The Rambam likewise writes this in his commentary to Mishnah, at the end of Tractate Menachot⁷⁵ as follows, “Our sages of blessed memory stated that Torah Scholars who are engaged in the study of the service of the Holy Temple, are considered by Torah to have built the Holy Temple in their days. It therefore is appropriate for a person to engage in the study of the sacrificial offerings, and in the details of their laws. One should not say to himself that these are matters for which there is no need in our times, as many people say to themselves.”

Moreover, this study helps that the one who studies will not have accusers above, as stated in Midrash Ne’elam of Zohar on Parashat VaYera,⁷⁶ “Rabbi Kruspedai said, “Whosoever articulates the matter of sacrifices with his mouth in the synagogues and study houses (that is, why each sacrifice is brought, the act of the Temple service itself and the offering of each sacrifice) and has intention (that it should take the place of atoning for whatever sin that sacrifice is offered) there is an established covenant that those angels who mention his sins for punishment, cannot do anything but goodness to him. See there, that this secret was revealed to Rabbi Pinchas by Eliyahu the prophet.

From this statement alone we can understand how zealous we should be in studying this, for does not every person know the afflictions of his own heart, that he has many sins, and as a result, has many accusers above, may the

⁷⁴ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 20a

⁷⁵ Mishnah Menachot 13:11

⁷⁶ Zohar I 100a

Merciful One save us, and that from each sin one accuser is created, as stated in Pirkei Avot?⁷⁷ And since we have both the advice and the remedy of how to quiet their spirit, so that they will be incapable of accusing us, but on the contrary, will mention us for goodness before HaShem, blessed is He, we therefore have a great obligation to ourselves, to take that advice to heart and not be lax in it.

Besides all this, is it not so that when the Holy Temple was standing, even if the Prince of Israel would have wanted to offer a sacrifice by himself, he would be forbidden to do so (as a result of which king Uziyahu was afflicted) and only the Kohanim were permitted to do so, whereas, in our time, every individual is permitted to learn the matter of the sacrifices and the Holy One, blessed is He, considers it as if he himself offered them. Moreover, there are many statements from our sages, of blessed memory, that testify to the greatness and holiness of this study, some of which I have quoted in my book Torah Ohr, look there.

These are the words of the fledgling amongst the Kohanim, who hopes in the salvation of *HaShem*, Yisroel Meir, the son of Aryeh Ze'ev HaKohen of Radin, the author of the Chafetz Chayim and the Mishnah Berurah.

⁷⁷ Pirkei Avot 4:11

