



## UNDERSTANDING THE GEULAH AND BRINGING MOSHIACH

### YAAKOV AVINU PLANS TO REVEAL MOSHIACH'S COMING

Yaakov Avinu was close to the end of his life. He called for his children and told them to gather around: **האספו**, *gather together*, **לכם**, *and I'm going to tell you*, **ואגידה לכם**, *and I'm going to tell you*, **את אשר יקרא אתכם באחרית הימים**, *what's going to happen with you in the end of days* (Bereishis 49:1).

I'm trying to imagine that. Yaakov Avinu, was the *bechir ha'avos*. Yaakov's passing marked the end of the *Avos* era - the culmination and perfection of the foundation of Klal Yisrael. Yaakov Avinu is on the way out, and he says, "I'm going to share something with you." **בקש לגלות את הקץ**.<sup>1</sup> This was going to be one of the most momentous times in the history of the world, where Yaakov Avinu was going to reveal exactly when the Moshiach will come. But the *Shechinah* left him, which meant that Yaakov Avinu was not able to share with them this great piece of information.

So, what does he do instead? He turns in a different direction and he gives his children *brachos*. It says later on that the *Shechinah* came back to him. But when the *Shechinah* departed from him, he asked his children, "Maybe there is someone among you who has some kind of a *paslus*. Perhaps the reason why the *shechinah* left me is because of some shortcoming within the *shevatim*." Now, that's a pretty strong assertion. If somebody would come to you and say, "Maybe there's a *paslus* in you," you would think, "Okay, maybe *taka*." But we're talking about the *Shivtei Kah*. What did they say? **שמע ישראל ה' אלקנו ה' אחד**. They said we are completely committed, dedicated to *Hashem echad*. We understand **אין עוד מלבדו**. We understand that we live for Hashem. The only thing that exists is Hashem. Yaakov Avinu then says: **ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד**.

So what happens? He says, "Okay, let me give you *brachos* now." The question is did he switch his plan of what he wanted to say? No, he didn't switch entirely. See, there are a number of aspects to the coming of Moshiach. There is one aspect that focuses on when exactly Moshiach will come. That's what all the 'Curious Georges' want to know. There are people who want to know the *keitz*. "Give me the date." There is a second aspect: people are curious to know what it's going to be like when Moshiach comes. "How are things going to be?" But then there's a third part. The third part is: how are we supposed to behave and conduct our lives in order to bring the *geulah*, in order to bring Moshiach?

### WHAT IS BI'AS HAMOSHIACH GOING TO BE LIKE?

*Bias haMoshiach* is simply a total revelation of Hashem. It's amazing. When Moshiach comes, what do you think it's going to be like? There is one thing that is going to be the focus. *Chazal* tell us, and the Rambam brings it: **לא נתאו הנביאים והחכמים**, the *Chachamim* and *Nevi'im* did not yearn and desire *yemos haMoshiach* so that we should rule over the world, or to be able to put *ovdei kochavim* and *mazalos* in their place, nor was it to get *kavod* from the nations, or to eat, drink and be merry, **בתורה**, *in order to bring the geulah*. The whole reason that the *Nevi'im* and the *Chachamim* desired *yemos haMoshiach*, was so that they should be free to invest their time, their efforts, and their minds into Torah and its *chochmah* and they shouldn't have any challenges or anything that's going to be *mevatel* them from learning Torah.<sup>2</sup>

And what's the goal of that? **חיי עולם הבא**, *so that they should have time on their hands to prepare for* **חיי עולם הבא**.

The Rambam says that in those days there won't be any hunger in the world. There won't be any *milchamos* in the world. No Iran. No ISIS. There won't be any jealousy. There won't be any competition. There's going to be a lot of *tovah* in the world. Commodities are going to be available like dirt inexpensive and plenty. The entire world is going to have one goal, and that is **לדעת את ה' בלבדו**, to know Hashem. Therefore, Klal Yisrael will be full of **חכמים גדולים ויודעים דברים הסתומים**. Klal Yisrael will know the secrets of the universe. They're going to fathom the *da'as* of their Creator as much as the *koach* of an *adam* can.

That's what a person has to know. It's going to be amazing. Many people say, "I wonder when Moshiach is going to come. I wonder what it will be like when Moshiach comes." They're thinking of a good life. I've told a number of people, "Do you understand what *yemos haMoshiach* is going to be like? You're going to spend all your days learning Torah. You're going to be learning in *kollel* all day long. Is that what you envision? Is that what you yearn for? Because that's what you're going to get."

<sup>1</sup> **ואגידה לכם**. בקש לגלות את הקץ ונסתלקה ממנו שכינה והתחיל אומר דברים אחרים (רש"י)  
<sup>2</sup> לא נתאו החכמים והנביאים ימות המשיח. לא כדי שישלטו על כל העולם, ולא כדי שירדו בעכו"ם. ולא כדי שינשאו אותם העמים, ולא כדי לאכל ולשתות ולשמוח. אלא כדי שיהיו פנוין בתורה וחכמתה. ולא יהיה להם נוגש ומבטל כדי שיוכו לחיי העולם הבא. כמו שבארנו בהלכות תשובה. ובאותו הזמן לא יהיה שם לא רעב ולא מלחמה. ולא קנאה ותחרות. שהטובה תהיה משפעת הרבה. וכל המעדינים מצויין כעפר ולא יהיה עסק כל העולם אלא לדעת את ה' בלבד. ולפיכך יהיו ישראל חכמים גדולים ויודעים דברים הסתומים ושיגו דעת בוראם כפי כח האדם, שנאמר (ישעיה יא, ט) "כי מלאה הארץ דעה את ה' כמים לים מכסים." (משנה תורה, הלכות מלכים ומלחמות י"ב:ד)

## USING THEIR *MA'ALOS* TO REACH THE *KEITZ*

Originally, Yaakov Avinu wanted to tell them what the date of the *keitz* was. Hashem didn't allow him to do so. But you know what Yaakov Avinu told them? "Let me share with you," he said, "how to prepare and get to the *keitz*. I'm going to tell you, that you, *Shivtei Kah*, the twelve nations of Klal Yisrael, every single one of you, are made up of totally different personalities. Every one of you has a totally different *tafkid* in the world. By each one of you fulfilling your task, working on your *middos*, that's going to bring the Moshiach." He tells each one, "Your responsibility to bring honor to Hashem in this world is your greatest responsibility. And the way that you show that responsibility and demonstrate that you're a responsible person is by utilizing all the specific *kochos* that Hashem gave you to bring out *kevod Hashem*."

Yaakov Avinu starts with Reuven, and he says (ibid 49:3), "Reuven, בכורי אתה, you're my firstborn. You're my *koach*. You're *reishis oni*." And he tells him a frightening thing. He says, "Reuven, you should know, you were born in such *kedushah*. I was at a super-high level of *kedushah* when I had you." Often, when children don't turn out good, it's because of the parents' lack of *kedushah*. Yaakov said, "I was on the highest level of *kedushah* possible." Yaakov wasn't a young man. He said, "You were my first drop. You should have been the one who carried the mantle of *kehunah*. Your destiny was to carry the mantle of *malchus*. מי גרם לך להפסיד כל אלה, who caused you to lose all these things? הפחזו. You rushed. You got upset, you made a rash decision, you got angry and because of that you forfeited."

I'm trying to put myself in Reuven's shoes. I think I would have been totally and completely devastated. To realize that your father is not telling you a warning. He's telling you this after the fact. One act in his life that he did, one mistake, involving the *kavod* of his father - and he was doing it for the *kavod* of his mother. It was one act of *מבזה כבוד אביו*, *kavod Hashem*. Yaakov Avinu said, "You forfeited these tremendous assets that Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave you."

Then he speaks to Shimon and Levi. He tells them, "You know, you also. You have the craft of *retzichah*. You're proud Jews. You stood up for your sister's pride. Somebody came and was *mevazeh* us terribly. Some *sheiget* came and took away our daughter, our sister, and you stood up against that." In today's world they would get prizes. Somebody would hire them for security. They would hire them for the army. He says, "You want to know something? You wiped out 24,000 people." He says, "I want you to know, that's from the *brachah* of Eisav. You took that from your uncle. That's your uncle's lifestyle." Jews with guns who are into this macho stuff, even if they do it for the right reason, it's the craft of Eisav. He says, "You robbed this from Eisav." He tells them, *pashut*, very strong *mussar*.

Yaakov Avinu said, "You *taka* had *achvah*, you had tremendous brotherly love between the two of you, and you destroyed a whole city."

It's amazing. We could ask, "That's what bothers you?!" They destroyed people who were *chayav misah!* They were *goyim*. They were *gazlanim*, kidnapers! And he says, "And you sold Yosef too." Yaakov Avinu said, "This is a very destructive *chevrah*, so therefore, I'm going to *אחלקם ביעקב*, I'm going to divide you and I'm going to have you dispersed among Klal Yisrael. *אפרידם מזה מזה*, I will separate you; you're going to have to develop your *ma'alos* alone. The *hashpa'ah* of you two together is not good."

And Yaakov Avinu went on, and told each one of his sons their *ma'alos*.

As you go through the *birchas Yaakov* and you look in *Chazal*, you see how Yaakov Avinu foresaw what was going to happen in the rich history of Klal Yisrael. Every year, I look at this and I think about this. And I think, "Are we learning from this?" Are we focusing on our *ma'alos* in order to utilize all the specific *kochos* that Hashem gave us to bring out *kevod Hashem*?

## HOW R' AVIGDOR MILLER, ZT"L, CHANGED THE WORLD

You have to know, Rabosai, that every single one of you is part of the *Shivtei Kah* and therefore shares this responsibility. Every single one of you has a different personality. Every single one of you has a different destiny. And you have to be *zocheh* to fulfill your destiny. You have to be *zocheh* to bring out your amazing *kochos*, that only you have. The *yetzer hara* is going to put all his energy to take your *kochos* and undermine and destroy you, and make you use your *kochos l'ra* so that you lose your ability to bring *kevod Shamayim*. But if you're *zocheh*, and you think big, and you retain your ambitions, and build upon your ambitions, then a person can be *zocheh* to tremendous *shleimus*. He could change the world.

I always think of my grandfather (Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l). He was a young boy in Baltimore, a city that was as far from Yiddishkeit as a place could possibly be. And Hashem was moving him around like a pawn in a game of chess. A person himself has no idea in the early stages of his development, of how Hashem is moving him and where Hashem is directing him to. Hashem eventually took him to Slabodka Yeshiva in Lithuania in a miraculous way. It wasn't his plan to go there. But he ended up in Slabodka and he applied himself there. And he did another tremendous thing. What did he do? He had a brother. He convinced his brother to go to Slabodka. I don't know how he convinced him. I can't imagine what he said to his brother to convince him. It wasn't his type. But he decided he had to *shlep* him there, and *shlep* him there, he did.

I'm trying to imagine. His brother wasn't a baby. He was in his 20s. Going to Europe was like going to China. It's like saying, "Come with me to China." Why would he go? I can't understand it. He *chapped arein*, and he saved a second branch of his family.

There were other branches. They got destroyed. They got lost. They got assimilated and fell into the woodwork. But he *shlepped* his brother along. That was a far-reaching, tremendous *siyata deshmaya* that he had. He was *matzil* not only his own *nefesh*, he was also מציל נפש אחת מישראל. It's unbelievable.

My grandfather went to Slabodka for seven years. He got married there. He came back, and he became a rabbi in Massachusetts. He was thinking, "What good can I do over here?" If you thought America was devoid of Yiddishkeit, the place where he was, was *really* empty. והבור רק אין בו מים. My grandfather decided that he's a *ben Torah*. "I'm going to open a *yeshivah*." What kind of a cuckoo idea was it to open a *yeshivah*? No one opened *yeshivos* in those days. There was no such *musag* of opening a *yeshivah*. That's an ambition. He wasn't Mr. Dynamic. He makes an announcement. He let people know he was opening a *yeshivah*. Some old lady brought her son in straight from the butcher shop. His white coat was full of red blood from the meat. The guy was an older person already. She said, "I want my son to go to *yeshivah*." You know what kind of a joke that is? He wasn't a *bachur*. The guy came to the *yeshivah*. My grandfather should have said, "We're not looking for your age." He said, "Hashem, if that's what You sent me, I'm going to start." This man became an *adam chashuv meod*. He became a person that was *mekarev* many others!

Then, my grandfather told me, he got a phone call one day from Rav Hutner. Rav Hutner offered him a job to be the *mashgiach* in his *yeshivah* in New York. Rav Hutner told my grandfather, "I'm going to let you think about it." My grandfather stayed on the phone for less than a minute, and he said, "I thought about it. My answer is yes." And he went. And he wasn't a youngster anymore. He decided, now life starts. He became the *mashgiach* in Chaim Berlin. Hashem gave him an opportunity to be *marbitz Torah*, a tremendous opportunity, to take young *neshamos* and try to educate them and try to put a love of Torah into them. I'm sure with a lot of them, nothing went in. I'm sure with many of them, something went in.

Then my grandfather decided to become a *rav* on the side. They didn't hire him as a *rav*. You know what he did? In the shul where he davened, there was another rabbi, another man who used to say a *shiur* there. My grandfather offered him a lot of money for those times, for the *zechus* to let him say a *shiur*. The man agreed. It's amazing. You know what that means? You're paying money to have the *zechus* to say the *shiur*. In *Ein Yaakov*. They didn't learn anything big. He bided his time. He taught them when he was able to.

Then he decided he's going to help Klal Yisrael by printing *sefarim* and explaining to the American world the *hashkofos haTorah*, the real *hashkafah* of the Torah, and the rot of the secular world that everybody was looking up to and saying wow, about colleges, about academia. My grandfather exposed them, and he started putting out *sefarim*.

He decided that's not enough. A big dreamer, he was. Then, he decided he's going to make Partners in Torah, to get people who want to learn across America. And he made it. He started Partners in Torah.

And then, I remember he put signs all over New York: "Do you want to get *bar mitzvah*-ed. Maybe you missed the opportunity when you were younger. We're going to afford you the opportunity to get *bar mitzvah*-ed."

Quietly, he undertook a *tzedakah* fund, where every month he sent money to Eretz Yisroel. He partnered people with *tzaddikim* in Yerushalayim. It's amazing how Hashem helped him get the names of big *tzaddikim*. He would tell people, "You send them X amount of money a month." He started partnerships in *tzedakah*.

He was a man who never quit. He was always tremendously ambitious. And he changed the world. One man changed the world. He had no funding. He didn't have any organizations behind him. He had Hakadosh Baruch Hu behind him.

We have to study this. And you have to ask yourself, "What *koach* do you have?"

I always think of Rabbi Dovid Hofstedter. He is a fellow from Toronto, who Hashem blessed with *nechasim* and he decided to make a Torah revolution in the entire world. He started a program called "Dirshu" to bring out the glory of Torah to the masses. I remember when he first started. I said, "This is a wild idea. I wonder if it's going to work." Look what happened. Nonstop. It's mind blowing. In every city, in every country, Eretz Yisrael and Europe, wherever you go people learn Torah under the auspices of Dirshu. One man. It was due to one man! And he took on other projects also. He's full of projects.

### EVERYONE HAS POTENTIAL, IT'S EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

You have to know, every one of us can do projects. Every one of us has to think and *daven* to Hashem, "Hashem help me develop myself and bring myself out." There are some people who can teach Torah to the masses. There are some people who don't have that ability, but they can fund others who are going to teach Torah to the masses. There are many women out there who can do tremendous activities. Some could do *kiruv* to women. Some could help *kiruv* organizations. Some could undertake tremendous *chessed* to help poor people. You don't have to start off big time. You start off small. If you don't know how to do it yourself, you join another organization. You go for classes and you start to learn Torah and you develop yourself, and you go from being a simpleton, from a nobody, and you become great. You change your world. Of course, it's not at the expense of taking care of your family, but maybe at the expense of you jogging for an hour and a half in the gym on some crazy, new-fangled type of bicycle, or drinking smoothies with friends.

People don't realize, they sell their life for nothing. People could do *chessed*. There are so many *chessed* programs that are around, and that can still be started. It's amazing. If a person would just put some thought into it. You don't have to have money. First of all, if your program needs money, you raise money. That's part of it. Big people raise money. All the big businesses raise

money. You should know that. The biggest CEOs, the biggest people are raising capital all the time. If you have a business, you raise capital. You could open up *kollelim*. If a person were smart, he could open up one *kollel* after another, and he could develop himself. Instead of playing with your phones all day long, and talking about getting the latest, newest phone or the latest, newest vacation.

And what if you're not such an ambitious man? Finish *shas*. Plain *shas*. Be *mechazek* your *shul*. Get a group of people together to be *mechazek* the *tefilah*. You're *mechazek* the learning. There's so much to be done. I see so many capable people totally wasting their entire lives. They're forfeiting their own greatness.

And every single one of the *shevatim* had greatness. You have to know that.

*Chessed*, people have to get involved in *chessed*. Invest. People are lazy. The *yetzer hara* gets on your case. He knocks you down.

I remember, way back when I started doing *kiruv*. A guy comes over to me and he says, "Do you think you're going to have any success?" I said, "I sure hope so." He says let me tell you, "Not. You're not going to have success." I said, "Why not?" He says, "You're not going to make anybody *frum*. People don't change. You are not the type."

A number of years later, I met Rav Noach Weinberg, zt"l, in Yerushalayim. I was sitting in his office. I said, "Reb Noach, how was it when you started?" He said, "You want to know the *emes*?" He said, "When I started, I told everybody about my dream and everybody discouraged me. They said it can't be done. It's never been done. It's not going to be done. Then I threw myself into it. I felt challenged. I turned to Hashem, and I went to work. Everybody said, 'He's crazy enough to try and do it.' Then when I succeeded, you know what everybody said? 'Ah, what's the big deal?' I always knew it wasn't that hard."

The *yetzer hara* tries to get you, coming and going. Rav Weinberg changed the world. Everybody could change the world. You squander the tremendous gifts you have on stale potato chips, on a Rubik's Cube, on reading magazines and reading storybooks. People with *kochos*, tremendous *kochos* - they squander their *kochos*.

Then you have dreamers who never do anything because they're not realistic. They want to own the world before they change their *daled amos*. You have to start on your *daled amos*. You have to work on it. You have to make a plan. You have to have a marketing plan. What's the plan going to be? What are you going to accomplish?

### TAKING ACTION TO BRING MOSHIACH

I remember the daunting idea of thinking, "Can I really *mekarev* people? Where do you start? I didn't grow up in the non-*frum* world. I didn't live in the non-*frum* world. How am I going to find people to *mekarev*? Who am I going to pick?" My grandfather gave me a formula which made it much harder for me. He told me who to choose. I told him, "Those people you're telling me to work with, are the hardest people to make *frum*." He said, "Well, if you have something to sell, you sell it to them."

I remember calling people, hundreds of people, real cold calls. "Hello *shalom aleichem*." "*Shalom*." "My name is Yisroel Brog. I'd like to invite you to some Torah study." "What are you?" I said, "I'm Jewish." "No, what denomination are you?" I said, "What denominations do you know?" "Are you Reform?" "No, I'm not." "Are you Conservative?" "No, I'm not." "Are you Orthodox?" "Absolutely not." "So what kind of Jew are you?" I said, "I'm a Torah Jew." "And what is that?" I said, "I would love to explain it to you. Can we meet? Can you give me a chance to explain to you what a Torah Jew is?" "But are you sure you're not Orthodox?" "Absolutely not Orthodox." Many times people showed up. Then they said, "Oh, you're Orthodox." I said, "I'm not Orthodox. I may look Orthodox, but, all Conservative and Reform look the same. Are they all the same? No. One's Conservative and one's Reform. So you think Orthodox looks the same, but I'm not Orthodox. I'm a Torah Jew. I try to be faithful to the word of the Torah."

It's very, very difficult to undertake, especially if you have to fundraise and you have to make changes. You should know simple people, nobodies, could become such great 'somebodies.' Here is a person that brings a *kollel* to a city. Hashem blessed him with some money, and he brings a *kollel* to his city. Do you know what he just did? He changed that city.

If he brings a real *kollel*.

I know a guy. I once tried to inspire him to bring a *kollel* to his city. Next thing I know, he goes to Israel, and he finds seven or eight guys that he's bringing. He calls me up, "Rabbi Brog, I'm bringing a *kollel*." I said, "What are you bringing?" He said, "I got one guy who was a tank commander. One guy was a corporal. One guy is an officer in this battalion." I said, "I didn't tell you to bring an army. I told you to bring a *kollel*." He said, "They learn too." And he put out a whole brochure. He brought them to the U.S. He knew what this guy shoots, and what that guy is. They invited ladies to come to *gemara* classes. I told the guy, "You're a *shoteh*. You fell on your head. You're drunk. It's going to be a failure deluxe. You're not going to change anything. You're not going to do anything." "Rabbi Brog, you have your opinions and I have my opinions." *Baruch Hashem*, the failure wasn't long in coming.

Then, somebody else decided to bring in a real *kollel*. The type that changes places. I remember that one of the first cities that brought a *kollel* in was Toronto. It changed the face of the city. The whole city changed. From being a dumpy little city, it became an *ir ve'eim beYisrael*. *Rabanim chashuvim bnei Torah*. The person who brought that first *kollel* boy, *secharo harbeh meod*.



People have to know, every one of you, even if you're younger, there are many things that you can do. Make a difference, for yourself and for Hashem. That's what Yaakov Avinu told us. Use your *kochos*, use the *brachos* that Hashem bestowed upon you. Use each one. Women could give *shiurim*. It's unbelievable what they can do. *Chessed*. People bring leftover food from *chasunos*. They have food kitchens. There's just so much good that could be done. If you're *mechazek* others, even if a person arranges a *shiur* in *emunah* and *bitachon*. You get a rabbi and you say, "Let me get you five people." And you convince four other people besides yourself to join that *shiur*. Before long, it's going to sprout. It's going to grow.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu should help all of us to reach this pinnacle and develop ourselves and make our lives meaningful and bring Moshiach Tzidkeinu *bemeheirah beyameinu*.

### ❧ THE BOTTOM LINE ❧

The parting message of Yakov Avinu to the *Shvatim* was that bringing the honor of Hashem to the world, using their unique *kochos*, was their greatest individual responsibility. The timeless lesson of that momentous occasion for all of us is that, just as the brothers were tasked with using their G-d given talents to change the world, every one of us also has a responsibility to bring out the *kavod* of Hashem in this world, through using our own special abilities and talents. The stories about Rabbi Avigdor Miller who transformed the face of the American Jewry and its youth in 1950's and 1960's, or Rabbi David Hofstetter's founding of Dirshu in 1997 - the largest Torah organization in the world today - should inspire us to discover our own unique strengths and abilities, and use them, in enhancing the *Chesed*, *Limud HaTorah*, and *Avodah* of our homes, our communities, and our shuls, etc. And in the *zechus* of discovering our inner talents and planning our next steps of making these initial changes, we will see more *siyata dishmaya* in our mission and will eventually graduate, IY"H, to bigger and more global projects.