

From Exile Towards Redemption

By Rabbi Dovid Markel

Will the real moshiach please stand up?

As Maimonides states at the conclusion of his magnum opus, Mishneh Torah, the concept of Moshiach has become widespread due to the borrowing and appropriation of this idea by other religions. He points out that ultimately this will pave the path for the worldwide acceptance of the true Moshiach when he finally will arrive, may it be speedily in our days. However, this also is the cause for so many of the blatant misconceptions and false notions regarding Moshiach today; notions that are prevalent not only amongst gentiles, but amongst many Jews as well. As the old saying goes, "Sometimes, having a little knowledge is worse than having no knowledge at all".

The story is told of an older Jewish couple in Czarist Russia whose house was ransacked during a pogrom; something which was all too prevalent in those days. The distraught woman was in tears and to comfort her, her husband told her not to worry. "Soon Moshiach will come and take us to the land of Israel where we won't have to live in fear of these anti-Semites any longer." "Why should **we** be forced to move? She quipped, "Let him take **them** instead!"

Unfortunately, the concept of Moshiach has become shrouded in mystery and misconceptions so that for many of us it has simply come to mean liberation from all our material and physical woes. In many ways, the yearning for Moshiach has become nothing more than a cry of desperation having little to do with spiritual attainment or enlightenment.

In part, this is a result of the incredible suffering Jews have endured throughout the long and bitter exile. From the destruction of our Holy Temple in Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans to the rape, pillaging and decimation of entire Jewish communities during the dark ages, to the religious persecutions of the Spanish inquisition and the countless expulsions from land to land throughout exile, the wholesale horrors of the Chemelnitzky massacres and finally, the ghastly nightmare of the Nazi gas chambers, Jews have clung to the belief and hope of a bright Messianic future. However, the exile experience has left us with a very bitter taste in our mouths and the result is that many of us only see the coming redemption in physical terms.

However, just as an artist does not paint on a canvas that has a finished painting on it, so too, we need to step back from our preconceived notions and start anew on a fresh canvas. Only then can we have any new insight into the subject. Although it is quite beyond the parameters of this small article, let us at least draw a brief sketch of how that era may look. Just as an artist uses the three primary colors, red, yellow and blue to mix his palate of colors, let us use three primary texts as our foundation to a fuller picture of the Messianic era.

“And the wolf shall dwell with the sheep¹, and the leopard shall lie down with the goat; and the calf, lion cub and buffalo shall be together with a young child leading them. The cow and bear will graze together, their young lying together, and the lion will eat hay like the cattle. The infant will play by a viper’s hole, while the toddler will stretch his hand over the adder’s lair. They will neither do harm nor destruction in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of HaShem as the waters cover the ocean floor.²”

“And He shall judge between the nations, and shall reproof many people. They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation will not lift sword against nation, nor will they study warfare any longer.³”

“During that era there will be no famine nor war nor envy and competition, because goodness will be in great abundance and all delights will be as available as dust. The preoccupation of the whole world will be solely to know HaShem. Therefore, the Jewish people will be great sages knowing hidden, deep matters and they will comprehend the knowledge of their Creator to the extent of human potential, as the verse states, 'For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of HaShem as the waters cover the ocean floor.'⁴”

These texts give us three different descriptions of the Messianic era: a) an era of world peace in which all nations will no longer engage in warfare. b) A miraculous time in which all wild animals will be tamed, and c) a time of abundant material pleasures⁵ giving us the leisure to know HaShem and to serve Him without distraction.

Four questions come to mind upon examining these texts:

¹ The famous phrase “The lion shall lay with the lamb” is based on these verses, but does not actually exist.

² Isaiah 11:6

³ Isaiah 2:4

⁴ Maimonides laws of kings 12:5

⁵ See *Medrash Alpha beitus 6* that describes a physical utopia: “There will be rivers of wine oils delicacies and sweets etc. when moshiach will come”. The Talmud in shabbos 30b as well describes a time that the land of Israel will grow pastries. Rambam however explains this to mean that all delicacies will be available and plentiful like dust and not that they will actually grow from the ground. See however Netzach Yisroel Ch. 50 that says that delicacies will actually grow from the ground. He explains though that this doesn’t break the natural order of the world and the world will revert to what the world would have been like would we have not sinned. Though Rambams statement that delicacies will be abundant like the dust of the earth is metaphor the point that there will be tremendous physical pleasure is the same.

- A. Will it be a physical utopia of overflowing abundance of worldly pleasures and delights or is it a spiritual utopia in which our focus will totally be on spirituality and G-dliness? Is it a time of physical delights or spiritual ecstasies?⁶

- B. These descriptions seem to be phantasmagoric flights of fancy that do not seem to fit into our paradigm of reality. Could these things actually happen?

- C. Utopian bliss sounds wonderful now, but if it is eternal won't it become dreadfully boring⁷. What will we do to occupy ourselves for this eternity?

- D. What difference does all this make for to my life today?

Knowing the sickness

There is an old expression that "The diagnosis is half the cure"⁸. So too, a clear understanding of the world as it is today will give us clarity regarding the time of redemption. To understand redemption we must first understand what we will be redeemed from.

It is clear that the future redemption will be more than merely gaining religious freedom, social autonomy and a Jewish homeland. Jews yearned for the coming of Moshiach before any of these qualifications were ever lacking. Even in the period that all Jews lived in the land of Israel, enjoyed political independence and had the full right to practice their religion without obstruction or intimidation, Jews hoped and yearned for the Messianic age. In truth, the hope for the Messianic redemption has been embedded at the very heart and essence of Judaism from time immemorial, well before any Jews were exiled and dispersed to foreign lands⁹. It is absolutely integral and essential to Judaism, so much so, that it is enumerated as one of the thirteen essential axioms of our faith¹⁰.

⁶ What seems tantalizing to one person is awful to the next. For one the thought of an abundance of physical is appealing whereas the thought of sitting and studying Torah the whole day seems downright boring and vice versa.

⁷ A constant pleasure is not pleasurable. (*kesser shem tov 121*)

⁸ See *sefer hashichos 5700* pg 148 that he brings this "*k'maamar h'chacham.*"

⁹ We see that the concept of Moshiach existed during a time when the Jewish people had their sovereignty, had their own land, king, religious freedom, the temple etc. In fact, even prior to the expulsion of the Jewish people during the first exile and the destruction of the first temple they already yearned for Moshiach. The Talmud tells us; א, צד, סנהדרין 94a. G-d desired to make king Chizkiyah Moshiach. Talmud Sanhedrin 94a.

This being the case, clearly exile and redemption are much more profound than a simple shift in the geographical location of the Jewish people from the Diaspora to the land of Israel. It is much more profound than this. Rather, the Messianic redemption entails leaving the unhealthy state of the distorted sense reality that we presently have and coming into a healthy realization of the truth of HaShem's reality. Moreover, not only will the Jewish people be redeemed in the time of Moshiach, but the entire world too¹¹ will reach a higher level of being from its present, unhealthy state¹². If so, not only is the Messianic age not unnatural, but on the contrary, what will be achieved is the most natural and healthy condition possible for the world.

The world was created with structure and purpose. If it has purpose, this means that it is progressing toward an ultimate objective and that history is the voyage toward that objective. Chaos, evil and suffering are part of the Divine plan only in that they are the impediments which must be overcome to achieve it. The Messianic age will bring about a world community unified to serve the common good through serving HaShem. This being the case, not only is it not unnatural, but on the contrary, it is the most natural thing in the world. Rather, it is today's world of chaos and strife which is the abnormal, surrealistic anomaly. The world of Moshiach will be the world of sanity and normalcy. However, it will not be a different world, but the same world in a state of total balance and equilibrium.¹³ So, in a sense, nothing will change when Moshiach comes, but at the same time everything will be profoundly different.

Imagine being in a darkened house that you are unfamiliar with. You either do not see the objects in the room or you may just barely be able to make them out and notice they are there. You accidentally bump into things, stub your toes or mistakenly think that a statue is a man or a man is a statue. You try to grope about but are constantly meeting one obstacle after another. It all is very confusing and bewildering. Now, imagine that the lights have been switched on. Suddenly, the room is illuminated and you can see everything. Instantaneously, it all makes sense. Now, the truth of the matter is that nothing in the room has changed. The only difference is that now you see reality for what it is. In the same manner, this is the difference between our experience of the world today and how we will experience it in the time of Moshiach. The world will stay the same, but at the very same time, there will be a profound difference in how we experience it. Before there was darkness and now there is light. What previously may have been a source of great anguish suddenly becomes a source of great joy.

Right now, our experience of the world is one of darkness. Things and events seem disjointed, senseless and haphazard, but when the light of Moshiach will be switched on, everything will suddenly make

King Chizkiya lived during the time of the first temple almost 600 years before the destruction of the temple and the exile that ensued and yet the Talmud tells us that it was He whom G-d desired to be the Moshiach to his people.

¹⁰ See the preface of the Rambam to Chelek the 12th axiom.

¹¹ The Idea of redemption applies to all the nations as can be seen in the verse in *tzfanya* 3:9 *כי אז אהפך אל עמים שפה* that all humanity will be united under one banner to serve G-d.

¹² See *V'ata t'zava (nun beis)* that *גמטריה* is *חולה* 49. It is explained that the *shar ha'nun* is the *shar hacheirus*, the gate of freedom (*shala meseches shvuos, perek ner mitzvah 17*).

¹³ This is known as *Tikun Olam* – "The rectification of the world".

sense and we will see how it is all connected and part of the same whole. What at first seemed arbitrary and confused will suddenly become completely meaningful and sensible.

Just as blind man can never be an artist nor a deaf man be a musician, so too, we who have only experienced a very dim summation of reality, cannot yet appreciate the true splendor and beauty of HaShem's world. It is analogous to a deaf man who stumbles into a wedding celebration and sees all the guests dancing about joyously. Because he cannot hear the music, it appears to him as if they have all gone raving mad and are thrashing about like possessed lunatics!

In the same way, trying to explain why we should yearn for Moshiach is akin to trying to explain to a person who has been blind or deaf from birth why he should want to see or hear. He simply has no conception of seeing or hearing and no description of it, no matter how glorious, will suffice in making him understand. Being that he has never experienced anything otherwise, he is quite accustomed to the darkness or silence and may even be content with it. He has never known any other reality and is simply incapable of appreciating what he is missing. In the same way, we have no conception whatsoever of what we are missing and may even be content with the world as we experience it today.

This is analogous to the story of a king who sent his son to a remote part of his kingdom where the inhabitants had been living in large underground caverns for many generations until they had forgotten about the surface world altogether. Living in darkness had become natural to them, so much so, that they could not imagine such a thing as light, and they were quite comfortable, happy and content with the darkness. They had no knowledge whatsoever of the sun or the wonderful fruits and produce of the surface world. The prince tried to explain all that they lacked...the warmth and brightness of the sun, the fruits of the earth and the beauty of the world and everything therein. He also spoke to them about the Creator who rules over all, but they only laughed and jeered at him. The longer the prince stayed with them the more saddened and anguished he became over the lack of light, which astonished them greatly. They simply could not understand his distress. Finally, as he was crying, he took his fiddle and started playing a joyous melody. This totally confused them, but he explained, "I am looking forward to when my father the king will save me and take me out of this deep pit. Then I will again behold the light of the world and everything therein, because according to the anguish is the reward. Now, this allegory is very deep¹⁴.

It aptly describes our condition. In our perception of reality things seem to happen in a very confused and haphazardly way, as if there is no rhyme or reason and as if there is no Creator guiding it all. We often do not even yearn for Moshiach. This is not because we do not want Moshiach, but simply because since we have never experienced the light, we simply do not know what we are missing. However, this is all a product of our "lights off" mindset. Were we able to turn on the lights, we would see the beauty and order of HaShem's world.

¹⁴ Derech Chaim, Pg. 88

We are so used to our misperception of reality that we think that “this is how the world runs. This is how the world is supposed to be.” We assume that this “dog eat dog” state of the world, with all its violence, pain and suffering is normal. Because we are so accustomed to the world as it is, we have become apathetic to the darkness and suffering surrounding us. After all, we say to ourselves, “The world is a jungle”.

Our perception of the world is one of contradictions. We lack harmony and in so many ways we suffer from cognitive dissonance. This is the case emotionally, globally, politically and spiritually. It is as if we are in a dream¹⁵. Many things happen simultaneously without any rational explanation. Instead of creating beauty the colors either clash or melt into each other. Instead of creating harmony, the music is a cacophony of unbearable clatter.

It is specifically this blur and disharmony which creates the terrible suffering in the world¹⁶. This is the source of imbalance both on a personal level and in the world at large. The whole of human suffering can ultimately be traced to some kind of imbalance, either on the emotional plane, the global plane, or the spiritual plane.

However, if we were able to somehow switch on the so called “lights” of our consciousness and behold reality as it truly is, our perception of the world would come to a balance, causing the world to be the beautiful place that it actually is.

Actually, when the world was originally created it was in a state of perfect balance. In this balanced world everything worked the way it was meant to function forming a harmonious and homogeneous picture.

However, when man sinned¹⁷ he created a schism in himself, a rift between who he was and the actions that he did. Since man is a microcosm¹⁸ this affected the world, creating a rift in all that is. Things were no longer part of the greater picture but became fractured and shattered as separate, disconnected entities. In such a world violence and hatred can predominate. More so, violence becomes the norm.

¹⁵ The time of exile can be compared to a dream where things don't fit rationally. This is the meaning of the phrase in Psalms 126:1 “*hayinu c'cholmim*” that we were likened to dreamers. See the discourse Blayla HaHu, Toras Menachem Meluket that explains how the exile is analogous to the dream state of simultaneous contradictions.

¹⁶ We are living in a post shevira reality and our job is to make the tikun or balance of the world.

¹⁷ This that sin caused a schism is not as a punishment but a consequence of not being true to one's self and their mission in the world. See *Likutei Sichos* 39 pg 203 for an explanation of reward and punishment being a natural consequence of sin.

¹⁸ Gam es ha'olam nasan b'libo shel adam koheles 3:11

This had a ripple effect upon the animal kingdom too¹⁹. Each creature throughout the ecological system became aware only of its own selfish needs and desires, to the detriment of the system as a whole²⁰.

When all is dark, one is aware only of himself and that which is in immediate contact with him. However, as human beings our mandate is to drive away the darkness by reintroducing HaShem's Divine light into the world. To do this, we do not have to "change" the intrinsic nature of the world or superimpose a nature upon it that does not already exist. On the contrary, our mission is to reveal the true essence and nature which is at the very core of the world's existence. It is specifically by switching on the "light" of G-dliness and revealing it into the world that the world becomes the beautiful place it should be²¹.

Exile and Redemption, nothing changes—all is different

This idea is specifically reflected in the Hebrew words for exile and redemption. The word for exile is Golah-גולה and the word for redemption is Geulah-גאולה. Interestingly, the only difference between them is that Golah-exile is missing the letter alef-א, which represents Alufo shel olam-The Master of the world, the Holy One, blessed be He. Introduce an Alef-א to Golah-גולה and you have Geulah-גאולה. In other words by simply revealing the light of HaShem into the exile we bring about redemption.

גולה גאולה ג(א)ולה

When we perceive the world through a Golah perspective we are in exile, because we are lacking the enlightenment that comes about through being aware of HaShem's presence. However, to leave exile we need not change the essential nature of the world. On the contrary, all we have to do is recognize it. All we have to do recognize the presence of the letter Alef. That is, we have to recognize the presence of the Master of the world, the Alufo shel olam, and the world is transformed from exile to redemption. Through the Alef²² the world is changed from Golah to Geulah. Through the service of a Jew drawing

¹⁹ See Avodas Hakodesh 2:38 that explains that although there will be no difference between this world and the time of moshiach animals will not be vicious because although the world will be natural it will be natural in a way that it is without sin, and can be likened to the time of Adam prior to sin. See Ramban 26:6 that wild animals are result of man sinning and that when moshiach will come and there will be no sin, consequently there will be no wild animals. The Rambam (melachim12:1) however believes that this is all metaphor. See the Ravad there that asks on this from the verse that in Vayikra 26:6 that seems to say that there will be no wild animals. See the Radvaz that answers the Ravads question and who says as well that it can be that in Israel the verse will be meant literally and in the rest of the world it will be allegorical. See *Likutei Sichos* 27:191 and the way this connects with the two stages of the redemption and see FN 30 for further discussion.

²⁰ See *Likutei Sichos* 27 pg 194 FN 37 that according to Ramban before the sin of Adam animals were not carnivores and according to Rambam although they were carnivores before the sin they would only attack another animal for sustenance, not for sport.

²¹ See *Likutei Sichos* 6 pg 81 that the world is intrinsically good and all the negativity is a "shinuy ha'chozer l'briyaso" a superimposed change on its natural state.

²² See this idea in the sicha Achrei nun aleph as well as lku"t Ba'haloscah 35,3

down and manifesting the Alef - the Master of the Universe, into the dimension of “Exile”, it is thereby transformed into “Redemption.”²³

This is what we need to introduce into our lives²⁴. We do not need to radically change our nature or to take drastic measures to radically change the world. All we need is to introduce the “Alef” and with the clarity of the Alef, our lives will be changed. Adding the Alef switches on the light of HaShem and the world of confusion automatically becomes a world of clarity, goodness and holiness.

Adding the Aleph

This corrects and alleviates many issues on many levels. Though it is impossible to address all of them within the parameters of this small article, nonetheless we will give examples of just a few. Bringing HaShem into our consciousness changes our lives on a personal level, on a global level and on a spiritual level.

A. A personal level- the issue of self esteem.

Many of us suffer from a problem of self-esteem. Many leading physiologists state that a lack of healthy self-respect causes much emotional turmoil and are a lead cause in the emotional unrest and turmoil that many people exhibit throughout their lives.

The question is what is at the root of this problem?

The heart²⁵ of the issue is that there is internal conflict and a lack of alignment between whom a person wishes to be and who he is in actuality. This causes inner tension resulting in a negative image of oneself and there are many negative characteristics that are the fallout of this.

When a person is in a state of internal confusion problems of self-esteem flourish. The dichotomy between who he ought to be and who he actually is causes imbalance and internal discord. This creates a lopsided sense of self.

Nathaniel Branden, one of the leading pioneers of the “self-esteem movement” in his book six pillars of self-esteem, writes that self-esteem is the practice of maintaining alignment between one’s behavior and one’s convictions, he writes;

“When we behave in ways that conflict with our judgment of what is appropriate, we lose face in our own eyes. We respect ourselves less. If the policy becomes habitual, we trust ourselves less or cease to trust ourselves at all.”

²³ See all this in the Sicha of Achrei-Kedoshim 5751

²⁴ See this idea expressed as well in the Ben Yehoyada bava basra 10a

²⁵ In his book Nathaniel Branden posits more reasons as well, but the essence of all his explanations is a balanced self-image.

If we have an image in our mind of what a good person ought to be and fail to live up to that image, it is difficult to live with any degree of inner satisfaction and self-respect. These two conflicting images cause an identity clash and the greater the clash the lower the self esteem.

Through adding the Aleph into our lives the schism is healed. There no longer are two distinct personalities dueling with each other. Now there is only one balanced²⁶ and homogenous individual.

B. The global level.

War also is a product of the “Shattered world syndrome”. During all of history there have been precious few periods when there was not a war taking place somewhere in the world. However, constant war between nations is as absurd as a person who hits and wounds himself²⁷. To use a popular idiom, it is like someone who cuts his nose to spite his face. The only one he is hurting is himself. Similarly, when the world is at war, the whole world suffers. This is only because we see ourselves as separate and competing entities, rather than as one organism in which each organ benefits the whole in its own unique way.

When each nation is only aware of itself and its own needs to the detriment of the needs of other nations, this leads to war. When we cannot recognize the humanity of others, it is a sign that there is something awfully wrong with our own humanity. Each nation protecting only its personal interest leads to war to the detriment of all, including its own citizens. However, if we would bring the Alef consciousness into the world and recognize that the world is one organism under one G-d, not only would nations not conspire and fight against each other, they would cooperate for their mutual benefit.

C. The spiritual level

The same principle is also true on the spiritual level. We have been conditioned to think that physicality and spirituality are two opposites at odds with each other. We cannot imagine how they could possibly co-exist in harmonious symbiosis. We have been led to believe that a person who is spiritually attuned cannot experience the physical as being anything but a distraction to his spirituality or that a person who is aware of the physical cannot have true access to the spiritual. However, Torah gives us a deeper view of the relationship between them. Not only is physicality not antithetical to spirituality, but on the contrary, the whole purpose of Creation was to homogenize the two, so to speak. In the words of the medrash;

²⁶ There are other examples that are closer to home as well. For instance take the idea of dieting. The greatest problem that people have with obesity is that they are eating to feed the tongue not their stomachs. If the two had a more balanced relationship there would not be problems of over eating.

²⁷ See the allegory in Yerushalmi Nedarim Perek 9 Halacha 4 concerning loving your fellow Jew. We are borrowing the allegory here for all mankind.

Rabbi Ami said: “The Holy One, Blessed be He, desired that just as he dwells above, so too, He should dwell below.”²⁸

According to the teachings of Chassidus²⁹ this is the very reason for the creation of the universe. HaShem did not create the physical world as a prison for us to escape from. We do not need to rise above the world to find G-d. Rather, we can find Him in the world by bringing Him into our lives. Our true mission is to reveal G-dliness by making the world a home for HaShem. Creating this home through our Torah and Mitzvot makes the world a place where G-d can feel comfortable, so to speak, and just as a person is the most “himself” specifically when he is at home, so too, HaShem is the most “Himself” specifically when we welcome Him into our lives.

The world with the Alef

There is no difference between this world and the world to come except the yoke of the government.³⁰

In light of everything that was explained to this point this statement may now be understood. The purpose of the Messianic redemption is not to exchange the world for a different one, but to introduce the Alef dimension. This will bring about the perfection and transformation of the world into a one in which G-dliness is openly revealed, but it still will be the same world. Reality will not change. Rather, true reality, which always was at the very core of the world, will be revealed.

So what is the Alef?

Nothing is random in Torah. Each of the letters contains meaning and is there for a reason. Adding an “*alef*” to a word is therefore not merely symbolic. The name of the letter alef means the same as the word “Aluf” which means the “master” of the world and refers to HaShem.

What needs to be revealed in creation is the Alef, which is the “Divine essence”. Revealing the alef changes everything and transforms reality. This “Divine essence” is the underlying source and foundation of all existence. When it is hidden the world is in a state of chaos and confusion. But when it is introduced everything becomes unified and purposeful.³¹ The world, as HaShem created it is perfect. Despite the fragmentation and conflict we perceive, ultimately all its diverse elements are united by their intrinsic harmony and unanimity of purpose. The era of Moshiach will be a time when this underlying harmony will be readily perceivable and revealed.

²⁸ Midrash Tanchuma; B’chukoisai

²⁹ See samach vov beginning.

³⁰ Talmud Brachot 34b

³¹ To use an example from quantum physics it is similar to a unified field theory, or the theory of everything.

Creating the Alef

Essentially, every single Mitzvah brings about this synthesis. This is because, on the one hand, mitzvahs are physical acts, but on the other hand, we bring about spirituality into the world through them. Our objective in doing the mitzvahs is not to escape the world, but to permeate it with G-dly illumination and awareness. Hence, it is specifically through our performance of the mitzvahs that we bring about the perfection of the world and ultimately, the coming of Moshiach.

This is because every mitzvah we do brings about a homogenous relationship between the physical and the spiritual. This results from the fact that, as said above, every³² mitzvah is comprised of two components; the physical and the spiritual, as one.

In integrating the aleph into our lives we focus on two things; a) using the physical world and b) infusing it with a deeper, spiritual awareness. This “switches on” the light at the essential core of everything.

There is no better way of accomplishing this than to do as many mitzvahs as possible and learning Torah, thus instilling a deeper and deeper understanding of Torah values in ourselves and our surroundings³³. When we learn Torah deeply our whole mindset is transformed and we view the world from a new vantage point of goodness and holiness. In this way the world becomes permeated with spirituality.

But will it become boring

Imagine a world with no selfishness, strife, jealousies, war, hunger or disease; a world in which these and all other maladies, both physical and spiritual will have been resolved. What does one do in such a world? What will be our preoccupation?

It really is difficult to conceive of it, because in the world as it is today, even the good things we do which are positive and praiseworthy; are done in reaction to something negative. They are all driven by need. Through medical research we eliminate illness, by feeding the needy we eliminate hunger, by teaching we eliminate ignorance etc.

However, imagine a world in which we are not driven by the negative in order to do the positive, a world in which the goodness in and of itself is motivation enough, a world in which we are not stimulated from without but from within³⁴. This is what we will do when *Moshiach* comes.

³² Even mizvos that are dependent on the heart the mitzvah is to make that the physical heart should actually feel the love.

³³ See the sicha 9 Kislev 5752 where the Rebbe speaks that everything is ready for Moshiach and all we need to do is go out of our personal exile and “open our eyes”. The Rebbe’s practical advice was to learn Chassidus in a way that will open the mind’s eye.

³⁴ The Rebbe brings out that this is similar to a rocket that must have an internal thrust to fly in space where there is no resistance from the atmosphere.

Goodness does not just have to be an answer to “badness”. Goodness has an intrinsic value of its own, independent of badness. Imagine if all people had an intrinsic drive to do good; to invent, discover, grow, for goodness itself? Imagine the level humanity would achieve with that kind of drive!

It really would be quite awesome, so much so, that it is difficult to imagine. This is the ultimate result of “Geulah-Redemption”; doing good for its own sake; doing good with G-dly awareness.

The time is now

In summation, redemption is process in which the underlying unity and perfection of Creation unfolds as the true essence of every created being is realized.

As such, each one of us needs to undergo a personal Geulah-redemption. Through this the redemption in the world at large will also be achieved. We each have a responsibility to make the world a better place by increasing in acts of goodness and kindness—this tips the scales and ushers in a reality of a redeemed world that is at peace with itself.

Each one of us needs to become more aware of the *Alef*. Today, it is not hard to see that our world is steadily approaching that tipping point. The world is steadily becoming a “smaller place”, so to speak. Every day we are becoming more and more dependent on cooperation and symbiosis rather than competition and working against each other.

Not so long ago it was difficult to fathom instantaneous connection with someone on the other side of the globe, but now, with internet based technologies we connect and share ideas with virtually anyone, anywhere, anytime.

World economies are linked together more than ever before. Our world is literally becoming a global village.

Today we realize that the environmental choices we make affect us not only locally, but globally. Today it is not enough just to want world peace; we need world peace for the world to survive!

Today we realize the incredible importance and effect every individual can have on the world and that no person or action is insignificant. A post on the internet can bring down dictators and a video posted online can go viral in minutes.

Clearly, today we live in a world in which even our seemingly insignificant actions can take on cosmic proportions.

“Therefore, each person needs to regard himself throughout the year as if he is half meritorious and half guilty, and that the whole world is half meritorious and half guilty. If he commits a single sin, he tips the scales for himself and for the whole world toward guilt thus causing

destruction, if you fulfills one mitzvah, he tips the scales for himself and for the whole world toward merit thus causing salvation and rescue to himself and to the world.³⁵

In our times it is easy to understand this statement not just theoretically or on a spiritual plane, but in a concrete, practical sense as well. Every individual through a single action has the ability to turn over the entire world for either good or evil³⁶.

Imagine if we all really adopted a “paid it forward” attitude creating a chain-reaction of goodness, each of us inspiring others to do good and each one of those people continuing the chain and inspiring others too! The positive change that it could bring would be beyond imagination.

It would create that “tipping point” and would usher in the era of the true and complete redemption, may it be speedily, now!

³⁵ Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Teshuvah, 3:4

³⁶ The Lubavitcher Rebbe who’s visionary attitude set this ball moving in an incredible fashion building on itself in an exponential fashion. Sending his emissaries across the world with the mission do good and to get others to do good. It is this amazing model that has the power to usher in this era.