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לזכות נשיא דורנו, מה"מ—שיתגלה לעיני בשר ממש!

לזכות אריאל זלמן, רפאל שלום, ישע'י יוסף, שיחיו, מש' בק

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Next Issue: Shavuos י"ג תמוז

Inyonei

MOSHIACH AND GEULAH

בי"ה

#8

“YEMOS HAMOSHIACH”—DAYS OF MOSHIACH THE END OF GOLUS OR THE BEGINNING OF GEULAH?

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תהא שנת לעצמות אראנו

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We all eagerly await the coming of Moshiach, the Geulah, and the Messianic Era (*Yemos Hamoshiach*)—the end of *golus* and the beginning of the true and complete Geulah.

The Rebbe spoke in exciting terms about this being the last generation of *golus* and the first generation of Geulah, telling us that we are in the last moments of *golus*, that Moshiach is already active in the world. And yet, the world seems to continue in the natural way in all respects.

In the sicha of 19-20 Kislev, 5752, the Rebbe referred to our times as “*Yemos Moshiach*”, saying that these days are in fact the days of Moshiach, the Messianic Era.

Despite that, the Rebbe continued to speak of the need to bring Moshiach and the true and complete Geulah in actuality. The Geulah is here, yet it is not here. Moshiach is here, yet we need to bring Moshiach. It seems to be a contradiction, but in fact it is not.

By examining this subject, we hope to bring a deeper and more accurate understanding of these concepts as they are explained by the Rebbe. It is our hope that by taking a closer look at the Rebbe’s words we will be able to grasp in a clear way how we can indeed be in “the days of Moshiach” and yet we still have the task to actually bring Moshiach.

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“YEMOS HAMOSHIACH”—DAYS OF MOSHIACH THE END OF GOLUS OR THE BEGINNING OF GEULAH?

I. The World Was Created For *Yemos Hamoshiach*

It is known that *Yemos Hamoshiach* and particularly when the dead will be resurrected are the ultimate purpose and perfection of the created beings of this world, that for this it was created in the first place (and receiving reward is mainly in the 7th millennium, as is stated in Likutei Torah of the Arizal).¹

When we learn in Tanya that *Yemos Hamoshiach*—the Days of Moshiach, the Messianic Era—as “the ultimate purpose and perfection...for which [this world] was created in the first place”, we recognize that we have an obligation to clarify for ourselves what exactly goes on in those days. What is the relationship of *Yemos Hamoshiach* to the coming of Moshiach and the Geulah. The same thing with different names, or different matters entirely? As we examine this subject a little closer, we will probably be surprised to find that we hold some misconceptions about these terms.

The Rebbe often emphasizes that there is only one *halachic* source which rules about Moshiach—the Rambam in his Mishnah Torah, the final section containing the Laws of Kings and Melech Hamoshiach². As the Rebbe points out, none of the commentators on the Rambam challenge any of the rulings there, which means that they are universally accepted and therefore they are *halacha lema’aseh* (laws with practical application).

In those laws, the Rambam describes the events of the period following the rise to power of a king from the House of David, who is Moshiach. These laws are defining for us *Yemos Hamoshiach*—the days of Moshiach. The Rambam states that in this period of time, one should not expect to witness anything miraculous, such as the prophecy of wolf and lamb dwelling together in a literal fashion, but rather “*olam k’minhago noheg*”—the world will conduct itself in its natural manner.³ This is based on the statement of our sages that “there is no difference between this world and the days of Moshiach other than [the end of] servitude to the [gentile] kingdoms.”⁴

The Rebbe points out, however, that the Rambam himself writes in his *Igeres Teimon* that it is possible that there *will* be miracles and wonders at this time, and that the prophecies may indeed be fulfilled literally. Says the Rebbe “*Igeres Teimon* is true...it is a certainty that the Rambam holds that in the time of Moshiach Tzidkeinu there will be signs and indications—wonders.”⁵ It seems strange that the Rambam would contradict his own halachic ruling.

The Rebbe resolves this seeming contradiction by explaining that in fact *Yemos Hamoshiach* are divided into two *tekufos*, two distinct periods: a) the beginning of *Yemos Hamoshiach*, when “there is no difference from this world besides servitude to the nations alone”; and b) a period following this when the natural conduct of the

Based on this, we can understand how it could be that the Rebbe is asserting that the miracles and wonders of the Geulah are being manifest, yet for us it seems that the world still continues in a natural way, *olam k’minhago noheg*. The reason is simple—we are still on the level of the ignorant *am ha’aretz*. In order to elevate ourselves to the level of *Talmidei Chachomim* we must fulfill the Rebbe’s advice that the way to break out of the *olam k’minhago noheg* perspective is:

...through *learning Torah* in the subjects of Moshiach and Geulah, because it is in the power of the Torah to *change* the nature of the person, that even when he is still, G-d-forbid, *outside* the concept of the Geulah as regards his feelings (since he did not yet go out from his personal *golus*), then via learning Torah in the subjects of Geulah he is elevated to a standing of Geulah...³⁹

Through this we can also fulfill the requirement to serve a true *Talmid Chochom*, because we are fulfilling the instructions of the Rebbe himself. And it goes without saying that “כל המרבה...הרי הוא משובח” “anyone who does much [in terms of fulfilling the will of the Rebbe], he is praiseworthy”, as we see from the words of the Zohar which the Rebbe identifies as the source for this matter:

Just as the Holy One divided them [assigning to different levels] at Har Sinai, so he will divide them in the final Geulah...it says “I will carry you on the wings of eagles”, which are the clouds of glory..and the Children of Israel go out with a raised hand, this is how *Talmidei Chachomim* go out [of *golus*], with all this glory.... And like it says about the *am ha’aretz*...that he gathered at the foot of the mountain, this is how it will be in the final going out [of *golus*] under the *Talmidei Chachomim*...this is what He will say to them in the exodus of the final Geulah: if you will accept upon yourselves *Talmidei Chachomim* going out of *golus*, like a person who rides a horse and a servant who serves him, well and good, and if not...⁴⁰

IX. Summary

We have attempted in these pages to get a grasp of the Rebbe’s definition of “*Yemos Hamoshiach*”—Moshiach can be present in the world long before the “coming of Moshiach”, and those who have not reached the level of *Talmidei Chachomim* will even experience the beginning of the second, miraculous *tekufa* of *Yemos Hamoshiach* in a way where the world seems to continue in its natural way—an internal *golus*. The actual “coming of Moshiach” is about the *revelations* of Moshiach down in this world—Hashem opening our eyes in a way of “all flesh will see”, when we can point with a finger and say “*this* is Moshiach Tzidkeinu”, and we will realize that “he already came”. May it take place immediately, *mamash*, without any delay!

יְתִי אֲדוֹנָי מוֹרְנוּ וְרַבֵּינוּ מֶלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ לְעוֹלָם וָעַד!

...the revealed things will be revealed and known to every Jewish man...without forgetfulness and there will be no need to labor in them, but for the *Erev Rav* who will not merit to taste from the Tree of Life which is *Pnimitiyus Hatorah v'Mitzvos*, they will need to labor in [the revealed Torah] to weaken the power of the side of impurity which clings to them...and they will need to know the details of the revealed Torah regarding forbidden things and impurity more than Israel...

The Rebbe explains this by elaborating on the concept of the two *tekufos* of *Yemos Hamoshiach*, that it also applies to each individual:

In the future Geulah there will be, generally, two stages, both in time and in the individual. For the ignorant (or, as it states in Igeres Hakodesh, the *Erev Rav*)—and at the beginning of the time of the Geulah it will indeed be this way for all Israel—it will be in the way of “there is no difference between this world and the Days of Moshiach except for servitude to the nations alone”...but the *Talmidei Chachomim* (and as stated in Igeres Hakodesh for Israel that are not from the *Erev Rav*) and ultimately it will be so generally, it will be “I will remove the spirit of impurity from the earth”.³⁸

In other words, individuals on different levels will be having different experiences. The matter is further explained by the Rebbe:

In the *sefer Avodas Hakodesh* he writes that there is no dispute as to how the Geulah will be, because it will be one way for *Talmidei Chachomim* and another way for the ignorant. As brought in Igeres Hakodesh *siman* 26, there is nothing between *golus* and *Yemos Hamoshiach* besides servitude to the nations. But for the *Talmidei Chachomim* there will be more lofty things than this.⁵

What qualifies one as an ignorant *am ha'aretz*, for whom the *Yemos Hamoshiach* will (initially) be experienced in a mundane fashion? Says the Rebbe: “Jews have no time to learn due to the pressures of *golus*, so they are ignorant. Even a Rosh Yeshiva who doesn't serve *Talmidei Chachomim* is [in the category of] ignorant *am ha'aretz* (Sotah 22a).” Since the term *Talmid Chochom* is used in Chassidus to describe great Tzaddikim like Rashbi, it seems that the vast majority of Jews are in the category of ignorant *am ha'aretz* at the onset of *Yemos Hamoshiach*, experiencing no change in the natural conduct of the world. However, the Rebbe reassures us that those on this level will also experience a progression from one level to the next:

...even those who at the beginning of *Yemos Hamoshiach* will be on the level of the ignorant, in the end they will arrive to the level of ‘they merited’ and they will also be on the level of *Talmidei Chachomim*, and they will also merit to signs and wonders of the second *tekufa* of *Yemos Hamoshiach*.⁵

world will be nullified and instead the conduct of the world will be in a way of wonders. As the Rebbe writes:

“the Rambam himself holds that there are two matters in two different *tekufos*: there is a time in the Days of Moshiach which is connected with the coming of Moshiach, and there is another **additional** time, which is added **after** the period of the beginning of the Days of Moshiach...when the conduct of the world will change.”⁶

A simple question arises: are the days of Moshiach the period that begins *after* Moshiach comes, or is the period that *leads up to* the coming of Moshiach? The question is made stronger by the fact that the Rebbe said⁷ that “we are found now” in *Yemos Hamoshiach*, yet in subsequent sichos the Rebbe speaks of actions which “bring closer the coming of Moshiach”.

II. Moshiach Comes—Before the “Coming of Moshiach”

When speaking about the time that “Moshiach comes”, one can be making a reference to two very distinct instances. For we must recall that Moshiach must, according to the Rambam, accomplish a series of tasks, beginning with compelling all of Israel to live according to Torah, fighting the wars of Hashem, building the Beis Hamikdash, and gathering the exiles. It is self-understood that the first thing is that Moshiach must come (“a King arises from the House of Dovid”) and only then we can begin to speak about *Yemos Hamoshiach*. Then, only after the Moshiach has accomplished all of these things, do we actually experience the revelations of Moshiach, which is in fact referred to as “the coming of Moshiach”.

This matter is explained in the “famous letter” of the Rebbe Rashab⁸ in which it is explained how all the sources (both *nigleh* and *nistar*, from the Rambam to the Zohar) follow the same sequence—first Moshiach comes, then he builds the Beis Hamikdash, then he gathers in the exiles—but in the *maamor* in Siddur⁹ the Alter Rebbe writes “that the ingathering of the exiles will be before the coming of Moshiach.” Explains the Rebbe Rashab:

This means that the revelations of Moshiach down below will be after the ingathering of the exiles...that after they will be gathered by him then he can be a king over them...and then will be the revelations of Moshiach.¹⁰

In other words, there is a “coming of Moshiach” at the *beginning* of *Yemos Hamoshiach* and there is a “coming of Moshiach” at the *culmination* of *Yemos Hamoshiach*. This enables us to understand how the Rebbe could refer to “in our days—*Yemos Hamoshiach*—in which we find ourselves now”⁷ and one month later devote the better part of an entire sicha¹¹ to the concept of “bringing *Yemos Hamoshiach*”. Having drawn this distinction, we will now proceed to examine *Yemos Hamoshiach* in more detail.

III. *Yemos Hamoshiach* Part 1: The End of Golus

As mentioned, the Rebbe clarifies many of the seemingly contradictory statements about *Yemos Hamoshiach* by explaining that *Yemos Hamoshiach* consists of two distinct *tekufos*, a *tekufa* where the world conducts itself naturally—followed by a *tekufa* of wonders, when the world will operate in a manner that transcends its nature as we know it.

We see from this that *Yemos Hamoshiach* is a period of change and transition—from the natural to the wondrous, from *golus* to Geulah. The Mittlerer Rebbe describes *Yemos Hamoshiach* as “like an intermediary aspect between Matan Torah and the World to Come.”¹² The Rebbe writes:

...this world (*olam hazeh*) is the time of war between the *yesh* and the spiritual, the good and the evil...In *Yemos Hamoshiach*...the bnei Yisroel will complete the war and refine the good from the bad and separate the bad from the good and will be redeemed from *golus*...during *Yemos Hamoshiach* itself they will ascend via their *Avodah* on the ladder of perfection...¹³

This also helps clarify that while the final “coming of Moshiach” (mentioned by the Rebbe Rashab) is indeed the true and complete Geulah, this is not so by the initial coming of Moshiach and the ensuing *Yemos Hamoshiach*, both of which take place while the Jews are still in a state of *golus*. In other words, when Moshiach comes (“a King arises from the house of Dovid”) we are still in *golus*. “Rambam is writing about the sequence of events which will be *before* the revelation of Moshiach, which means *before the beginning* of the Geulah.”¹⁴

The proof of this, as explained by the Rebbe, is that one of Moshiach’s tasks is to compel all Jews to keep the Torah, something which is only necessary when there is a state of *golus* and Torah observance is lacking. The Rebbe explains why all of the tasks that Moshiach must accomplish, which includes fighting the wars of Hashem and being victorious, are “still not a *sure* sign of the Geulah, because all of this can still happen in a state of *golus*.”¹⁵

It should be noted that the Rebbe identifies these two *tekufos* as underlying the halachic ruling of the Rambam and explains how it could be that the Rambam would seem to contradict his ruling in the Mishnah Torah by what he writes in *Igeres Teimon* as follows: the Rambam could not know which way Moshiach and the Geulah will come, whether Israel will merit the “miraculous” Geulah, or if it will be in a way of “they did not merit” and thus the Geulah in a way of *olam k’minhago noheig*. In his halachic ruling, the Rambam rules according to the “minimal accomplishment”—that lacking any other merits the Geulah will come in a natural way. Regardless of how the Geulah might *begin*, everyone, including the Rambam, agree that it will eventually reach miraculous proportions. Additionally, the Rebbe only ever speaks of the coming of Moshiach and the Geulah in miraculous terms—going with clouds of Heaven in the way of “suddenly he will come”. Although the Rebbe learns out a “natural” *tekufa* of *Yemos Hamoshiach*, we do not find that the Rebbe speaks of it in

VII. The Geulah—In the Blink of an Eye

Unlike leaving *golus*, which is accomplished gradually, the Rebbe emphasizes that the Geulah occurs in an instantaneous and miraculous fashion, wherein “entering the land, conquering and inheriting the land is immediate.”³¹ Explains the Rebbe:

The beginning of the Geulah will be via Moshiach Tzidkeinu, and immediately the middle and the completion of the Geulah...it will be the beginning of the Geulah and its completion immediately ‘without the delay of a blink of the eye’.³²

The concept of a gradually unfolding process, according to the Rebbe, does not apply to the Geulah, which is characterized by a sudden transition to a new reality. Explains the Rebbe:

Those who say that the Geulah of Yisroel will come in a natural way and slowly...they are hiding from **the reality**...that in the blink of an eye the army of Hashem will go out from Egypt...and be carried on wings of eagles...in this way will come the transformation of the entire Creation...³³

This immediate and instantaneous “opening of the eyes” is expressed by the Rebbe’s favored phrase³⁴ “with clouds of heaven”, which the Rebbe describes as “a flight faster than the flight of an ‘airplane’, because we are flying ‘with clouds of Heaven’, with ‘the Holy One’s airplane’...”³⁵ As if to emphasize to what degree the Geulah will be something beyond nature, the Rebbe notes:

It has been spoken about...how Moshiach Tzidkeinu can come on Shabbos. Since we are speaking about the **true and complete** Geulah—it is understood, that it is not in a way where on the day of Shabbos we are found in “Brooklyn”, and after Shabbos goes out we get onto an “airplane”, and we travel several hours until we arrive in our Holy Land...—for this is not **true and complete** matter of “**immediately**”, but rather in a single moment “one suddenly realizes” (“כאפט מען זיך”) that we are found in Yerushalayim the Holy City, on the Har Habayis and in the third Beis Hamikdash, together with Moshiach Tzidkeinu.³⁶

As the Rebbe explains in many places, the Geulah *klolis* of the entire Jewish people is composed of the Geulah *protis*, the personal Geulah, of every single Jew; the complete revelation of Moshiach comes from revealing the spark of Moshiach within every individual Jew.³⁷ Based on the explanation of the two *tekufos* in *Yemos Hamoshiach*, the Rebbe reveals that this concept also applies to us individually.

VIII. Two *Tekufos* For Each Person

In *Igeres Hakodesh* (siman 26), the Alter Rebbe writes about *Yemos Hamoshiach* (before the Resurrection of the Dead) that there will be significantly different levels:

Moshiach is revealed*...the Persian king provokes an Arab king...Moshiach announces to Israel ‘the time of your redemption has arrived.’” Later in the year, the Rebbe made it clear that the events of the *Yalkut Shimoni* had indeed been fulfilled: “we have already seen in actuality ‘wonders’ which testify that this is the ‘year in which the King Moshiach is revealed’.”²⁷

...the wonders which have already been seen in actuality and in a revealed way in the eyes of the entire world in this year, that in them the words of the *Yalkut Shimoni* were fulfilled: “the year in which the King Moshiach is revealed...the time of your redemption has arrived.”²⁸

So the year 5751 was the year “in which the King Moshiach was revealed”, yet this revelation still needed to be drawn down into the consciousness of Israel. The Rebbe still needed to stress the need to “pay attention” to the manifestation of this miraculous new era:

...especially in these days—*Yemos Hamoshiach*—in which we are found now, and we only need to “open our eyes”, and then we see that the true and complete Geulah is already found in actuality.⁷

The “true and complete Geulah” is not in “actuality” during the first *tekufa*, which is the end of the *Avodah* of *golus* (although Israel surely could have merited the Geulah at any moment, even before entering the first *tekufa*). Recall what was quoted above from the Rebbe Rashab, that the Geulah, the “coming of Moshiach” is the **revelation down here** of *Kesser*, *Chochma*, *Bina* (which are above the world, which was created from *Chesed*). Again, it becomes clear that the Rebbe is trying to convey the remarkable idea that the first *tekufa* of *Yemos Hamoshiach*—the time of “the world conducts itself in a natural manner”, the end of *golus*—is giving way to the second *tekufa*, the transition to Geulah.

Having said this, we must be exacting with the Rebbe’s words. The Rebbe said numerous times in the years 5751-52 that everything is ready for the Geulah, all the *Avodah* has been completed, the Geulah is found in actuality, and similar expressions. But in those very same sichos the Rebbe spoke passionately about the need for us to bring “in actuality and in a revealed way the true and complete Geulah.”²⁹ While the Geulah is here, it is not yet revealed to us—because we are still in *golus*, which is “mainly a personal *golus* in the service of Hashem”.³⁰ Thus the Rebbe demands of us to be stubborn in order to “bring in actuality the true and complete Geulah immediately,” for when we will succeed, we will see the results instantly, for unlike the progressive developments of *Yemos Hamoshiach*, the Geulah occurs in an instant. (Note: Until these matters are visible to us, they cannot impact *halacha*, since a judge rules “according to what his eyes see”.)

*) Note that the language of this *Yalkut Shimoni* seems to be grammatically incorrect: “[the] year in which the King Moshiach is revealed” . It should in fact read *בה* נגלה . The word ‘year’ *שנה* is feminine, and it should be referred to with the feminine “in her” (meaning “in the year...”). However, it is referred to in the masculine ‘in him’ *בר* נגלה . Perhaps it is possible to say that the level of “Melech Hamoshiach” (the level of the second *tekufa*, higher than the level of “ben David” which is associated with the first *tekufa*) is revealed “in him”—in the individual who himself is the redeemer.

practical terms.

The first *tekufa* of *Yemos Hamoshiach* can be summarized as follows: Moshiach comes, the world continues to operate in a natural way, and Jews are still in a state of *golus* (although not in a state of “servitude to the nations”^{*}). During this time, Moshiach is in fact transforming the Jewish people and the world to be ready for the second *tekufa* of *Yemos Hamoshiach*, which is the beginning of the true and complete Geulah culminating in the resurrection of the Dead. “In *Yemos Hamoshiach* they will be completely refined...until they will be ready for the World to Come.”¹²

IV. *Yemos Hamoshiach* Part 2: Transition to Geulah

The second *tekufa* of *Yemos Hamoshiach* fits the Rebbe’s expressions of redemption much more than the first. During the first *tekufa* of *Yemos Hamoshiach*, the Jewish people leave the state of *golus* (individually as well as collectively, as will be explained further on, G-d willing). It is only during the second *tekufa* of *Yemos Hamoshiach* that we actually begin the transition to Geulah, as the world is transformed to a place of wonders. (As we will see, the Rebbe is quite clear that the experience of the Geulah occurs in a single instance, so the concept that there is a gradual transition is only valid while Jews are still in a state of *golus*.)

All of the miraculous prophecies and statements of our sages are connected with the second *tekufa* of *Yemos Hamoshiach*, from “the wolf will dwell with the lamb” to “barren trees giving fruit” through to the most radical departure from the natural way of the world—*Techiyas Hameisim*, the resurrection of the dead.

The difference between the first and second *tekufos* of *Yemos Hamoshiach* corresponds to the difference between whether we merit the Geulah by our own efforts, or if the End will come “in its time”, the concept of *B’Itah Achishena*, which we hope to be able to explain in the next edition of this publication, ה”א. The Rebbe explains that this is the reason why the Rambam mentions *Yemos Hamoshiach* as a time when the world does not depart from the natural order:

Regarding wonders Rambam does not rule in a clear way about the first *tekufa* (about which he writes about the signs of identifying who is Moshiach) because there won’t necessarily be any wonders—it depends if they are in a way of “they merit” with clouds of Heaven—because it is possible that the Geulah will be in a way of “they do not merit”, the world conducts itself in a natural manner. Only after this will come the second *tekufa* of signs and wonders.

*) Perhaps we can be exacting with the words of Shmuel in the gemara, that there is no difference between this world and *Yemos Hamoshiach* “except for servitude to the nations **exclusively**”—that in the time of “this world” a Jew is in a state of “servitude to the nations exclusively”, implying that *everything* he does is in a state of “servitude to the nations” (meaning for the sake of self-interest or worldly pleasure—even serving Hashem is done for reward or to avoid punishment, etc.). However, in the first period of *Yemos Hamoshiach*, while in various ways a Jew may find himself in a state of servitude to the nations (acting out of self-interest, worldly pleasure, fear of ridicule, etc.), nonetheless he is not **exclusively** in servitude to them because at this stage of *Yemos Hamoshiach* it is already possible to serve Hashem, at least occasionally, out of the pure motivation of the G-dly soul.

...We are forced to say that even if the beginning of the Geulah is in a way of “they didn’t merit”, then certainly in the end they will reach the level of “they merited”, because no one will be pushed away and certainly in the end the second *tekufa* of *Yemos Hamoshiach* will come—a change in the conduct of the world in a way of signs and wonders—*niflaos*.⁵

Since ours is the last generation of *golus* and the first generation of Geulah (as the Rebbe said countless times), it is self-understood that we will experience *Yemos Hamoshiach*. Therefore, the Rebbe spoke in many sichos, increasingly more so every year, which indicate where we are holding in the scheme of the Geulah. We will now take a closer look at this matter.

V. *Yemos Hamoshiach* Are 40 Years

As mentioned above, the Rebbe stated explicitly “these days...in which we are found now” are “*Yemos Hamoshiach*” (full quote appears in section VI). After absorbing the significance of that statement, we must ask ourselves: which *tekufa* of *Yemos Hamoshiach* does the Rebbe imply? Seemingly, if this the first time the Rebbe is announcing that we are in *Yemos Hamoshiach*, then one would assume that the Rebbe is informing us that *Yemos Hamoshiach* are beginning.

The truth is, that as far back as the first year of the Rebbe’s *Nesius*, the Rebbe was already saying expressions such as “the truth is that Moshiach is already here”¹⁶. Furthermore, the Rebbe spoke many times about the significance of the passing of 40 years since Yud Shevat, 5710, beginning with the Rebbe’s sichos in Shevat 5749—the beginning of the 40th year following the *Histalkus* of the Frieddicker Rebbe. In those sichos, and many others in the following years, the Rebbe repeatedly mentioned the teaching of *chazal*¹⁷ that after 40 years pass, a student is able to completely comprehend what his Rebbe taught him, something which is drawn down to all members of the generation through the *Nosi*.¹⁸

Also emphasized by the Rebbe is that the forty years corresponds to the forty years the *bnei Yisroel* wandered in the desert before entering Eretz Yisroel, and it was after 40 years that Moshe Rabbeinu informed them that they now had “eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart to know” (referring to seeing, hearing, and knowing G-dliness). A number of times the Rebbe makes reference to the statement in the Gemara¹⁹ that *Yemos Hamoshiach* is forty years and connects it to the forty years since Yud Shevat 5710.²⁰ For example:

...we are standing prepared for the coming of Moshiach, and how much more so after *forty years* in this generation (forty—after the *histalkus* of my father-in-law the Rebbe)...the *tekufa* of forty years is connected with the time of the Geulah—as it says in the Zohar “the time of the redemption of Israel is in the fortieth year”, and similarly in the gemora it states “*Yemos Hamoshiach* are forty

years...” particularly since the completion of forty years is the year 5750, “a year of miracles”, a time fitting and appropriate for miracles...²¹

When one takes the time to review the sichos of these years, it becomes clear that the Rebbe is implying that the forty years from 5710 were the first *tekufa* of *Yemos Hamoshiach*, the 40 years²² of *Yemos Hamoshiach* mentioned in the gemora, the *tekufa* where Moshiach “fights the wars of Hashem”, “compels Israel to go in the way of the Torah” and all the while “*olam k’minhago noheig*”—the world continues in a natural manner.*

Based on this, we will not be surprised to find that the Rebbe begins speaking in 5749 (the beginning of the 40th year) about entering a “new *tekufa*”, one of miracles and wonders, and in fact the Rebbe says there that it is a “new *tekufa*...a *chiddush* in the entire reality and all the powers of a Jew.”²³ In Nissan of that year,²⁴ the Rebbe explains that for a Jew miracles become natural and that in fact one *can* rely on such miracles. The year 5750 is named “*shnas nissim*”, year of miracles; 5751 is named “*shnas nifla’os areinu*”, “I will show you wonders” (wonders being higher than miracles, as the Rebbe explains in numerous sichos); 5752 is named “*shnas nifla’os bakol*”, wonders in everything. This emphasis on miracles and wonders is relevant only in the second *tekufa*, when the world begins to depart from the natural order.

VI. The Rebbe’s Proofs: Collapse of USSR and Gulf War

Not only did the Rebbe say that those years would be a time of signs and wonders (the definition of the second *tekufa*), but that in fact these miracles were already taking place: “...we have seen with our own eyes in the miracles and wonders of the latest *tekufa*, including and especially as regards that nation [the Soviet Union]...”²⁵

In fact, as regards the collapse of the Soviet Union (and other revolutions occurring without bloodshed) the Rebbe notes that although “it seems as if *olam k’minhago noheig*, as if the world is conducting itself in a natural fashion”, in reality these events are “a great miracle which is only in the power of the Holy One, blessed be He, the Omnipotent.” With those words the Rebbe explicitly negates the inference that we are speaking of the first *tekufa* of *Yemos Hamoshiach*. Whether we notice that this is the case is another matter, as the Rebbe said there: “it is the greatest wonder that they are not paying attention to this.”²⁶

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union came another global event: the Gulf War. Over the course of a year the Rebbe connected the unfolding events of the conflict in the Persian Gulf to the words of the *Yalkut Shimoni* “In the year in which the King

*) We could ask: if the Rebbe wants us to know that the forty years following Yud Shevat 5710 were actually the first *tekufa* of *Yemos Hamoshiach*, why was this not spoken of prior to this time? Why is it only alluded to *after* the *tekufa* is ending? Perhaps part of the answer is connected with the Rebbe’s unwavering assertion that the Coming of Moshiach and the Geulah is miraculous—“with clouds of Heaven”. In this view, the first *tekufa* of *Yemos Hamoshiach* is not considered at all part of the coming of Moshiach and the Geulah, for it is only the end of *golus*. Furthermore, since in the early years of the Rebbe’s *nesius* there was a need to undermine the mistaken notion that it was the “beginning of the Geulah”, it would have only been a point of confusion if the Rebbe would also be saying that we were in *Yemos Hamoshiach*. But “כלא מחשבותי מחשבותיכם”, and all this is only “b’derech efschar”.