

Introduction:

No modern movement has done more for Klal Yisroel than Chabad and their saintly leader, the Rebbe, was the architect who arranged it all. He sent emissaries to every corner of the world to spread Torah Judaism to the sadly assimilated Jewish masses. His charismatic leadership inspired thousands to reach out to the millions and offer, in brotherly love, a road back to Judaism. Because of the Rebbe, Jews everywhere have been exposed to Torah. His example has inspired courage in many to adopt Torah observance and in many others to take pride in their Jewish heritage. The number of souls that were saved by the Rebbe's efforts is uncountable.

According to some prognosticators, the events of Gimmel Tammuz – the Rebbe's "histalkus" (see chapter 3) – spelled the end for Chabad. Without the Rebbe, Chabad could not continue. However, these predictions have been proven wrong. Not only has Chabad remained strong, it has grown at an unprecedented rate. Thousands more emissaries have been sent out since Gimmel Tammuz and Chabad in general

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has been remarkably energized. Rather than ending Chabad, the Rebbe's histalkus has fueled its growth.

One important reason for this growth is the perception that the end is near. While Lubavitch was always famous for its belief that Moshiach is coming, the loss of the Rebbe means that Moshiach is right around the corner. If we can only do a little more, put in greater effort, then the Rebbe will return as the King Moshiach.

But this ideology has problems. It was no secret that towards the end of the Rebbe's life his followers declared him to be Moshiach. Aside from the billboards and signs, the ever-present singing of "Yechi" made it clear what most Lubavitchers believed.

But the Rebbe's death made this belief hard to retain. When has Judaism ever accepted that Moshiach can come from the dead? However, the talented scholars and orators from among the Rebbe's followers quickly created a new position in which they can maintain that the Rebbe is still Moshiach.

Granted, the concept of a resurrected Moshiach is foreign to the Jewish public. But that is only due to a lack of familiarity with the somewhat obscure sources in Jewish literature. A close reading, they claim, reveals that Moshiach really can come from the deceased. Furthermore, the Rebbe never really died anyway. He is only temporarily hidden from us.

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Our task is to investigate whether these claims are correct. The proponents of these ideas have an obviously large emotional stake in believing that the Rebbe is still Moshiach and may have been swayed by it. We wish to take a detached look at the sources and, in the traditional talmudic method, carefully analyze them. What do the texts really tell us about a Moshiach from the dead?

We are under no illusion that our short book will cause people who have for decades been advocating the Rebbe as Moshiach to suddenly drop their cause. We would hope that there are people who constantly reevaluate their positions in an intellectually and emotionally honest way. But our limited understanding of human nature is sufficient to know that courageous people like that are few and far between. Why, then, write this book? It will certainly cause disharmony within an already embattled people. What possible gain do we envision this book will produce that will outweigh its guaranteed negative reaction?

Lubavitch, as a group devoted to outreach, has thousands – perhaps hundreds of thousands – of marginal affiliates with limited Torah background. These brave Jews have taken the life-changing step of coming close to Torah. However, their unfortunate lack of education in Jewish topics is frequently remedied solely by Lubavitch rabbis and their literature. Everything they know about Torah Judaism is from Chabad. Many of these people have grave doubts about the Rebbe being Moshiach but the sources are presented to them in a way that overwhelmingly supports the Meshichist platform.

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For various reasons, the scholars in Chabad who recognize the misuse of sources are almost entirely silent. From whom will these baalei tshuva learn if all the rabbis refuse to teach?

What can these people do? Their common sense and basic instincts tell them that Moshiach cannot come from the dead. But the only rabbinic voices that they hear tell them that Judaism does and always has affirmed the concept of a resurrected Moshiach. Should they trust their common sense or authoritative representatives of Judaism? Are their instincts dulled because of their non-religious background?

We are here to say that, at least in this case, their instincts are correct. There is a clear and consistent message from Jewish texts that once someone dies he cannot be Moshiach. Eloquent orators with obscure sources have been trying to confuse this message. However, we firmly believe that a careful reading of a broad variety of sources offers a clear picture. We will generally focus on early sources because they are the foundation of Judaism on which later generations based their views. If the Gemara and Midrash tell us something, these authoritative texts must be heard. When a talmudic or midrashic passage is unclear, we will search through the medieval writings for explanations because the later rabbis based their comments on the earlier ones. And, to a great degree, we will present the texts in their original Hebrew along with an English translation. There are no cards up our sleeves and we want our presentation and methodology to be as transparent as possible. We believe that a logical and careful reading of the

sources yields only one conclusion – the Rebbe is no longer a candidate for Moshiach.

But readers of this book are to be cautioned. We are certain that this work will not be the final word on this matter. While constructive criticisms are always welcome, in light of recent history we expect that most critiques of this work will not focus on the important issues. We have intentionally stressed our important arguments and readers should make note of them before reading reviews of this book. Then check the criticisms and see whether they focus on minor issues. Do they discuss style more than substance? We will offer solid arguments and critiques must answer these points in order to be substantial rebuttals. Therefore, we strongly recommend that after reading a criticism of this book one re-reads this work to see if the main points have been sufficiently addressed.

Also make note of where the critics agree with us. There may be prominent scholars who will agree with everything in this book except for one argument. It is possible that a critique may well focus solely on this one argument. But do not be fooled. Re-read this book and note where the agreements are. Do not let anyone, or any critique, discredit this entire work by arguing on one point.

Your task, as an intelligent seeker who must ultimately answer to G-d, is to sift through the rhetoric and find the truth. We hope that this small work of ours will help you in this task.

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May the clarification of issues relating to Moshiach bring him quickly in our day!