

Q. Realistic Not Childish Mashiach

Question: I'd like to be able to believe & see the Mashiach concepts and messianic age in a mature, intellectual & practical (not childish) way.

I'm a bit confused over how Moshiach will be named King. 0. Is there a "Coat of Arms" for the House of David? 1. Will there be something like a "coronation" ceremony? 2. Will he (& his family, if he has one) live in something like a "castle" or a mansion, or simply a humble house or apt? 3. Is it said that he will be rich or will he be poor? 4. Will there be a fully functional Monarchy where only King Moshiach is in control of Israel or will there be something like a shared governance like how Britain has the Queen as well as the Prime Minister? 5. Will the current government of Israel cease to exist with the emergence of The King? If Moshiach is to reign supreme over all of Israel, than wouldn't it st& to reason that the current government would be rendered useless? 6. If there is no more need for a government the way it is, would they (the gov't) try to selfishly stop the emergence of Moshiach or even try to assassinate him? 7. Once Moshiach is here, what does that mean for Jews & Noachides around the world who have not been fortunate enough to afford to make it to Israel yet? 8. If the Palestinian Authority succeeds in gaining UN support for a "state" of their own, & move in to "claim" territory, then what will happen to them once Moshiach emerges? 9. Does the Temple come before Moshiach or vice versa? 10. Once Temple is rebuilt, & Moshiach emerges, what becomes of the Mosques on the Temple Mount? Would we have them removed or let them stay? Would HaShem perhaps level it? Thanks so much, John

A. First of all John, allow me to admire your interest in the details of the messianic age- for it shows true, even pragmatic, belief, something very important for all of us, especially after yesterday's Tisha b'Av, which commemorated both Temples' destruction, 2,608 & 1,952 years ago, respectively! In general, it's important to look ahead, to keep constant eye-contact on the eventual goal, nevertheless, the Rambam (Maimonides) stresses that the main point is to live a G-dly life in the present (!), & that way, slowly but surely, we will build & merit that better & ideal future. That being said, regarding your questions (check above, I won't detail them again!): 0. Our tannaic rabbis (in Bamidbar Rabba 2, written about 1800 years ago), recount the tradition that each of the 12 tribes had a flag with the symbol which their forefather received in the blessing from their father Jacob at the end of Breishit (Genesis). Accordingly, David, from the tribe of Judah probably used the flag with his tribal symbol, the lion, which, as the medieval commentator Rabbi Isaac Abarbanel explains, was given the symbol ("King of the Jungle") befitting a king, on a sky-blue backdrop (either consciously or ironically, very similar to the Israeli flag suggested by the first president, Chaim Weitzman). Especially after the secession of the ten tribes, who rebelled & left the kingdom of Judea to found the Kingdom of Israel (which were subsequently exiled & lost about 2,700 years ago), almost all of us "Jews" (from the name: Judah) who remain, including the Mashiach, logically will use that flag which could be a type of coat-of-arms or flag. 1. There will definitely be a coronation ceremony for that is the literal meaning of the term mashiach (=translated as messiah=the anointed one), although his succeeding son would not need such a service. It will probably be by the Shiloach fountain, found about a 10 minute walk from the Temple Mount or Wailing Wall, right by where King David's palace has been uncovered by archeologists, & where his great-great grandfather David was himself anointed. 2. With all his humility, as the head & international representative of the Chosen People of Israel, he must command honor & live respectfully according to the norms

accepted in the modern world. He must be addressed respectfully as is accepted in each generation, & as is the custom in the Jewish world (for example, in yeshivas today), he would clearly be spoken to in the third person (“What does the King feel about...?”, & not “What do you feel about...?”). No one is allowed to sit on his throne, ride on his "horse" (or motorcade), nor use his utensils, even after his death. His wife can't remarry. He is the only one allowed to sit in the Temple in Jerusalem. He must be immaculately groomed, & have his hair cut every day: “see the king in his beauty” (Isaiah 33, 17). In addition, one must stand when the King enters a room, & bow before him, & he may not even voluntarily forego this, or any of the other aforementioned honors, for they are not personal tributes, but represent the honor of Israel. On the other hand, in his heart, he must be extremely humble & he must not act arrogantly towards others, just according to the necessary protocol, “so that he shouldn't be haughty before his brothers” (Dvarim 17, 20). He must be merciful to small & great alike, & must serve Israel responsibly, & address them as brothers. 3. He must find the delicate balance, between the obligated necessary wealth needed to command respect & receive presidents, prime ministers and kings, run the army & state of the world super-power, but he isn't allowed to amass more wealth than is necessary, for this can lead to arrogance (Dvarim 17, 17). He cannot amass extraneous personal wealth in his treasury, & if he does so, the Sanhedrin must punish him (see next paragraph). 4. The government will clearly not be a dictatorship, & he must confer with advisors & specialists in each respective field (the Hebrew word for king- melech- is from the verb “confer”, differentiated from the Hebrew word for dictator- moshel (see Nechemia 5, 7; Rashi, Bamidbar 22, 5, & as stressed by the Malbim on Tehilim 22, 29). The checks & balance system for example, calls for the king to answer to the rabbinical Sanhedrin. His pastime should be spent studying the Torah, & he obviously must be in constant contact with the Sanhedrin & Torah scholars, even though he possesses the power to enact special laws, even applying the death penalty to masses (for the national or international needs), even temporarily circumventing the Torah itself, when necessary. Similarly, he must respect & listen to the prophet, & should stand before the Kohen Gadol, nevertheless, the Priest must tell him to sit (unless he has come to ask the Kohen to confer with G-d via his breastplate= Urim v'Tumim) & himself should stand in honor of the king. Similarly, the king must honor Torah scholars, especially the heads of the Sanhedrin (Rabbinical Supreme Court), & must stand before them, & seat them by him. The above is true in privacy, but in public when seen by the people, the king may not stand in honor of anyone, may not speak gently, & may not refer to anyone by any respective title, only by their name, so that all will revere him. 5. The Maharal (Gvurot Hashem 18) & the Malbim (on Micah 4, 8), explain that the messianic kingdom will be preceded by “the first government” which will be a small, non-religious republic (like what we call today: democracy) out of which will eventually grow the religious spiritual kingdom of the messiah. The Talmud (Megilla 17a) written about 1,600 years ago, recounts the tradition that after a long exile (it was about 1,900 years), there will be an agricultural revival of the Holy Land, followed by the ingathering of the exiles (statistically, apparently most of world Jewry already resides in Israel, for the first time since the exile of the ten tribes 2,700 years ago!). The third stage will be the return of the Jewish State to religious law. Just as in the aforementioned first stages, the revival of the Holy Land & the mass Jewish immigration, this transition will also be gradual, with the people, & subsequently the State of Israel, becoming more & more religious & spiritual. In a recent poll, initiated by the largest daily in Israel, Yediot Achronot, they found that 17% of Israeli Jewish adults have described themselves as coming significantly closer to religion over the past five years. This is extremely noteworthy when taking into account the difficult changes involved in one's eating & dress, &

withdrawing from most activities (even smartphones!) every Shabbat (Saturday), as required by Jewish observance. 6. We don't know exactly how it will come about, but we pray that the transition will be natural & peaceful. In fact, the democratic process is ideal for such changes to be made according to the pace chosen by the electorate. The legendary Chief Rabbi Kook explained in this context, that true improvement is the result of educating each generation better & better, & certainly not through religious coercion, which causes animosity rather than identification. As long as man has (thank G-d) free will, inevitably some will be disappointed with any change, but that's what democracy is about. Assassination or any sudden artificial intervention or upheaval is good for the childish imagination, but in reality, almost always cause more harm than good (see Yitzchak Rabin). The democratic & educational process is by far the most natural, real & long-lasting, & that's exactly what we (& G-d) all want. 7. Regarding Jews, the State of Israel already offers free airfare & a generous "basket" of benefits which have already aided more than several million Jews to come home, even from economically problematic countries like Russia, Ethiopia, Algeria, Iraq, Venezuela, etc. Regarding the masses of Noachides who will want to visit, I'm not familiar with any sources, but my educated guess is that at that time, the world will be so enamored with Israel, it shouldn't be complicated to establish scholarship or loan funds for the less fortunate & youth. 8. The entire world, even Moslems, will believe in peace & international brotherhood. International economic &/or military sanctions will eventually clarify to all, that violence is counterproductive & will not be tolerated by the civilized & moral world. Unfortunately, the present "Palestinian" leaders have yet to mature & still believe, like little children & primitive man, in the law of the jungle. Their educational system & even street names glorify suicide bombers according to the number of innocent Jewish citizens which they murdered, & the only way to rectify that is to stand strong & together in order to deter them. The world will definitely not condone their present behavior. 9. Some sources (like the aforementioned Megilla 17a) say that the third Temple in Jerusalem precedes the coming of Mashiach, while the Talmud in Sanhedrin 98a indicates that if there is a mass Jewish return & repentance, then the Mashiach may come first, but if we choose the slower & more natural path (which seems to be the present situation), the Temple will be man-made & will pave the way for Mashiach. 10. The Bible, Talmud & early rabbinical sources obviously don't refer to what to do with the mosque, because it's only been around for about 1,300 years & that's relatively recent as far as Judaism is concerned. What is clear is that although G-d can do anything, already in the Book of Esther, about 2,500 years ago, He clearly prefers not doing super-natural miracles, but rather working through nature (like the Six-Day War in 1967/ז"תשכ"ז), thus enabling us to believe in Him through our free will & not through miraculous coercion. My educated guess is that being that the messiah is for the entire universe, the Moslems themselves will want to participate & help us build the Temple, to atone for their multitude of violent crimes & terrorism which they will surely maturely regret. Unfortunately, in the foreseeable future, no Israeli government (& hopefully no individual) would risk opening up a world war by leveling the mosque, so it seems more likely that the incessant Arab shelling & bombing which has been going on for almost 65 years (including just yesterday), may somehow blow it up by mistake. As we well know, the L-rd works in many ways & we can't know for sure, but as in the time of Haman, G-d often helps the evil destroy itself (Yalkut Shimoni, Yirm. 319), so that we don't have to get involved in international problems.

Hope this explained things more pragmatically.

With Love of Israel,

Rav Ari Shvat (Chwat)