

## Recognizing the Miracles

We are living in the time when the footsteps of Moshiach can already be heard. All the signs enumerated by our Sages at the end of tractate *Sotah* are plainly visible in the events of our day. It is therefore incumbent upon us to do everything in our power to hasten the *Geulah*, and to remove anything which could, G-d forbid, delay it.

What can delay the Redemption? The Talmud relates in tractate *Sanhedrin* that Hashem sought to make King Chizkiyahu Moshiach. The Attribute of Justice protested: "Master of the Universe! Chizkiyahu, for whom You performed all these miracles, and who did not utter song before You, will You make him Moshiach?"

This requires explanation. The miracle wrought for *Chizkiyahu* was known to all. Sancheriv had conquered every fortified city in Judah, and his armies stood at the gates of Jerusalem. In a single night, an angel of Hashem struck down one hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. No one could have failed to notice. Why, then, was it necessary to say *shirah*?

Yet this is precisely the point. To know of a miracle is not enough. A miracle demands recognition in its full depth, and that recognition must be expressed in open praise and thanksgiving to Hashem. Because this was lacking, the Redemption was delayed for thousands of years, until this very day.

The lesson for our generation is clear. We need not ask who in our time is worthy of being Moshiach; such matters belong to the hidden ways of Hashem. What concerns us is the content of the story: when Hashem performs a miracle for the Jewish people, we are obligated to acknowledge it and to thank Him for it.

In our own day we witnessed the rescue of the hostages at Entebbe. More than a hundred Jews stood in mortal danger, and they were saved. Whoever hears of this event must recognize the hand of Hashem and offer praise to Him.

There are those who argue otherwise. The men who carried out the rescue, they say, were not all Torah observant; perhaps some did not put on *tefillin* that day. How, then, could Hashem have performed a miracle through them?

This argument runs contrary to the teachings of our Sages. Many times Hashem has sent deliverance to the Jewish people through Jews who were not known for their observance. Of the martyrs of Lod\* our Sages declared that no one can stand in their place in the World to Come, for they sacrificed their lives to save their brethren. So too here: these men placed their own lives in danger in order to save their fellow Jews.

\* (Pesachim 50a: The martyrs of Lod were two brothers who gave themselves up to be martyred for the sake of the Jewish people. They falsely admitted to killing the king's daughter in order to prevent a harsh decree from being issued against the entire community. Although they were not known for exceptional piety before that event, they are considered to be extremely holy due to their martyrdom.)

The matter can be put to a simple, practical test.

The Code of Jewish Law rules that a person who is ill must consult a doctor and follow his instructions. Now suppose a person has a dangerously ill patient in his home, and two doctors are available. One is G-d-fearing; he prays three times a day and declares that all healing comes from Hashem, but he is not an expert in the illness at hand. The other is the foremost expert in his field, yet he is not Torah observant, and he attributes his success to his own strength and power. To which doctor must one turn?

The answer is clear, for it is a question that arises every day, in every Jewish community. One goes to the expert, and one trusts that Hashem will send His healing through him. No one would suggest that Hashem cannot heal through such a doctor.

If so, the same holds true of Entebbe. Those who carried out the rescue placed their own lives in danger in order to save so many Jews, and Hashem sent His salvation through them.

Moreover, a doctor receives honor and reward for his skill. Those who saved the hostages received neither; their very names could not be made known. Their deed was one of pure self-sacrifice.

We must therefore do what Chizkiyahu did not: recognize the miracle and give thanks to Hashem.

May our acknowledgment of Hashem's kindness remove every obstacle to the Redemption. And may all Jews, bound together as one like the four species of Sukkos, go forth to greet our righteous Moshiach, speedily in our days.

*Adapted from a sicha of the Rebbe, Simchas Torah, 23 Tishrei, 5737 (October 17, 1976)*