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Meshichim

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Chazal speak of two Meshichim, Messiahs: Mashiach ben Yosef[[1]](#footnote-1) and Mashiach ben David. Each of these great men were the heads of their respective tribes and had different roles. These roles reverberated down through time, in the Tanach, through various personalities and institutions. In this study I would like to take a deeper look at these two Meshichim and the hints to them in the Tanach.

First of all, it must be known that in each generation, there is a person who has the potential to be Mashiach Ben Yosef and Mashiach ben David. This creates free choice for every generation to bring Mashiach, and when the Almighty decides to, He actualizes this potential and unleashes the role of Mashiach (on one or both of them) in a particular generation.

Discussions about messianic matters, be it Mashiach ben Yosef, or Mashiach ben David are not matters of Jewish Law[[2]](#footnote-2) and do not fall into the category of belief in the coming of Mashiach which is one of the Thirteen Principles of the Jewish Faith as outlined by RaMBaM.[[3]](#footnote-3) Messianic discussions are never really clearly set out and explained. There is much confusion about how messianic events will actually unfold in detail.

We recognize the modern day Bne Yehuda[[4]](#footnote-4) and Bne Yosef[[5]](#footnote-5) and identify them by their characters and behaviors as opposed to their names and blood-lines. We identify them based on the traits of their respective ancestors because Mashiach (ben Yosef and ben David), according to the Torah, comes from the tribe of Yehuda. There are indications that these two are the same person.

An important tool for identifying Mashiach ben Yosef in Tanach, is being aware of revelation and explicitness in Tanach, vs. lack of explicitness and withholding of detail. In Jeremiah[[6]](#footnote-6) the verse describes two “documents” which are to be “preserved”. One is called: “the revealed or explicit document”. The other is called: “the hidden or sealed document”.[[7]](#footnote-7)

As an aside: Moshe and Aaron were both born in Mitzrayim because the Mashiach ben Yosef always come from the country that He is to overthrow. In the same way, the future Mashiach ben Yosef will come from the western world and almost certainly from the United States, which is the greatest country in the western world.

In Kol HaTor[[8]](#footnote-8) the Vilna Gaon teaches that these two documents represent the two Meshichim. The “revealed / explicit document” represents Mashiach ben Yosef, while the “hidden / sealed document” represents Mashiach ben David.[[9]](#footnote-9)

What this comes to teach us is that Tanach relates to the qualities of the two Meshichim differently. The qualities of Mashiach ben Yosef are identified through the explicit details and revealed facts found in the verses of Tanach. Although this is also true to a certain extent of the qualities of Mashiach ben David, they are mainly expressed by the absence of details given and are implicit, instead of explicit.[[10]](#footnote-10)

For an example to demonstrate this we can look at Tanakh’s approach to Avraham Abinu. When we arc introduced to Avraham in the end of Parshat Noach, we are told almost nothing about him. However, 30 years later, from the time that Avraham first receives full prophecy from Hashem and begins his journey to Eretz Israel, we are told vast amounts of details and recollections of Avraham’s life. Why is it that the first 30 years of Avraham's life arc left out, only to be narrated by The Oral Torah while the remainder is found explicitly in Torah SheBichtav (The Written Torah of Scripture)?

The answer is that during the first 30 years of Avraham's life he primarily manifested the qualities that would later be expressed in Mashiach ben David. Because these developments were primarily internal, deep, inexpressibly private journeys unique to Avraham's soul, the Torah does not write about them. However, from the time Avraham is ready to go out into the world and attempt to rectify it and bring others to the true spiritual path, in manifestation of the qualities of Mashiach ben Yosef, the Torah begins to reveal all the most significant details.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Similarly, by Yaakov, the details of his personality are initially given almost no elaboration. Of the 14 years he spent by Shem and Ever spiritually refining himself, we are told nothing. But, from the time Yaakov goes out into the world to contribute to its rectification, the details start pouring in.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Thus, when Tanach gives detail about people, it is generally communicating the teachings and qualities associated with Mashiach ben Yosef and Tikkun Olam. When we find that details of a certain episode or period in a person's life are left out, we can assume, by very absence of detail, the implicit inclusion of qualities associated with Mashiach ben David and Tikkun Adam.[[13]](#footnote-13)

(One might even suggest that the reason that we find almost no explicit reference, in the oral Torah, to Mashiach ben Yosef, whereas much more is found in explicit reference to Mashiach ben David, is in compensation for the greater amount of explicit material that relates to Mashiach ben Yosef in Tanach. On the other hand, because Mashiach ben David is related to much less in Torah, the oral Torah compensates by referring to those qualities and aspects more explicitly).[[14]](#footnote-14)

Chazal fixed the order of the blessings in the Amidah prayer (from the ninth blessing onwards), according to the order that the redemption will happen in, they begin with a national revival (the flowering of the land of Israel and the ingathering of exiles), and only after this focus on the spiritual elements (the transition to a Jewish judicial system, (in the blessing ‘return our judges’ - the Sanhedrin, whose job is to punish the wicked and to give a good reward to the righteous), the building of the temple and Mashiach ben David).[[15]](#footnote-15)

Jewish tradition speaks of two redeemers, each one called Mashiach. Both are involved in ushering in the Messianic era. They are Mashiach ben David and Mashiach ben Yosef.

Mashiach Ben Yosef is the one who starts the redemption. He is the central figure in the process preceding the final and complete redemption in which a king from David’s house is eventually anointed – and this is “Mashiach Ben David”. Mashiach Ben Yosef fights the wars of Hashem against the gentile enemies of Israel, and since it is he who STARTS the redemption, he is also called “Mashiach HaAtchalta” – the Mashiach who begins the redemption. He is responsible for the physical, material redemption which precedes the spiritual one. The physical redemption is the ingathering of the exiles, the conquering of the Land of Israel and wars against the gentile (and for this reason he is also coined by many midrashim as the “Mashiach Milchama” – the anointed for war). Mashiach Ben Yosef comes to wage war. But not physical war, according to the esteemed Kabbalist of the 20th century, Rav Yehuda Ashlag. It is a war against consciousness, against false teachings, lies and the illusion of the material world. There will be Jews who rise up against the Messiah[[16]](#footnote-16) who will wage war against the Messiah.

In contrast, Mashiach Ben David is responsible for the spiritual side of the redemption which comes afterwards.

The following points summarize this issue and are agreed to in all the Midrashim that deal with the Mashiach ben Yosef and the Mashiach ben David:

* They are two different people from two different tribal families.
* They live at the same time.
* Mashiach ben Yosef never takes the throne nor is he entitled to.
* Mashiach ben Yosef is a warrior (Mashiach ben David would also appear to be)[[17]](#footnote-17)
* Mashiach ben Yosef will be killed in BATTLE[[18]](#footnote-18) and will be the first to be raised from the dead by Mashiach ben David.

The period of time from when Mashiach ben Yosef first comes into prominence until he is resurrected after the Mashiach ben David comes to his throne is very short, the longest period is under two years.

The basic chronology of events is that there is a seven-year period. It starts with continual problems; it starts to improve and then in the sixth year it gets worse again. In the seventh year there are great wars in which the Mashiach ben Yosef is first successful and then he is killed in that later part of the year. Many Jewish people will become depressed and fall away. At the end of the seven years Mashiach ben David comes and finishes the job and there comes the resurrection of the dead.

**Yosef must first be king in**

**Mitzrayim; only then can Yaaqob "send Yehuda before him to Yosef".[[19]](#footnote-19)**

**Yehoshua of Yosef and Shaul of Binyamin must rule in Eretz Israel before David haMelech of Yehuda.**

**Mishkan[[20]](#footnote-20) Shiloh of Yosef was the center of the nation before the Bait HaMikdash[[21]](#footnote-21) in Yerushalayim.[[22]](#footnote-22)**

**The geulah[[23]](#footnote-23) will begin with Mashiach ben Yosef before Mashiach ben David.**

**The reason why Yosef has to be dispatched in the future before the arrival of the Mashiach ben David is because he is the natural enemy of Esau, inasmuch as he is his exact opposite.**

# An Ox and a Donkey

Upon his return to Eretz Israel, Jacob sent a message to his brother Esau: “I have an ox and a donkey”.[[24]](#footnote-24) Why was it necessary to tell Esau about this ox and donkey?

According to the Midrash,[[25]](#footnote-25) Jacob was not speaking about the material possessions he had amassed, but about something of far greater significance. The ox refers to Mashiach ben Joseph, the precursive Messianic leader descended from Joseph. The ox is a symbol of the tribe of Joseph; both Jacob and Moses used the imagery of an ox when blessing Joseph.[[26]](#footnote-26)

And the donkey? That is a reference to Mashiach ben David, the ultimate Messianic king descended from David, who will arrive as “a pauper riding on a donkey”.[[27]](#footnote-27)

Why do we need two Messianic leaders? And why are they represented specifically by these two animals?

In a remarkable eulogy entitled “The Eulogy in Jerusalem,” delivered after Theodore Herzl’s death in 1904, Rav Kook explained this concept of two Messiahs. The eulogy beautifully articulates his views on the secular Zionist movement and the tragic rift between the religious and secular sectors of the Jewish people.

God created us with both body and soul. We have forces that maintain and strengthen the body, and forces that protect and develop the soul. The ideal is to have a robust body together with a strong and healthy soul. The soul, with its remarkable faculties, is meant to utilize the body to fulfill God’s will in this world.

The Jewish people function in an analogous fashion to the body and soul. There are forces within the nation that correspond to the body, working to meet its material and physical needs. These forces prepare a firm basis for Israel’s holy mission. And there are forces in the nation that work directly toward developing Israel’s special spiritual qualities.

Efforts to promote public security and welfare are common to all nations, just as all creatures have bodily and physical functions. But the higher aspect of furthering our spiritual aspirations on the national level is unique to the Jewish people — “It is a nation dwelling alone, not counted among the other nations”.[[28]](#footnote-28)

## Joseph and Judah

These two tasks were divided between two tribes, Joseph and Judah. Joseph looked after the material needs of the Israelites in Egypt. The Sages taught that Joseph spoke seventy languages, thus indicating that his task was a universal one, common to all nations. He protected the Jewish people in Egypt, and is described as “the opposing force to Esau” (Breishit Rabbah), defending the nation against those who attack the Jewish people.

Judah, on the other hand, was responsible for cultivating the special holiness of the Jewish people. “Judah became His holy nation” (Psalms 114:2).

Ultimately, both of these aspects were to be combined in the Davidic monarchy. David was a warrior who fought the enemies of Israel and brought peace to the nation. But he was also the “sweet singer of Israel,” the psalmist who would rise at midnight to compose holy poems praising God.

## The Split

When Jeroboam led the northern tribes of Joseph to split from the southern kingdom of Judah, he introduced a tragic divide between these two forces, the material and the spiritual. The Midrash says that God grabbed Jeroboam by the coat and told him: “If you repent, I and you and [David] the son of Jesse will walk together in the Garden of Eden.” Together, you and the Davidic monarch will nurture the Jewish people and enable them to accomplish their Divine mission.

Jeroboam’s reply, however, was: “Who will lead?”

God answered, “The son of Jesse will lead.”

Jeroboam refused to recognize the pre-eminence of the nation’s spiritual mission. Throughout history, we have witnessed the ongoing conflict between these two forces: secular movements that work towards improving the nation’s material lot, and religious ones that promote its spiritual nature exclusively.

The redemption of the Jewish people can only be attained when both of these forces are functioning. Those who work towards strengthening the nation’s spiritual aspects are preparing for Mashiach ben David, who personifies the ultimate goal of the nation. This spiritual goal, however, cannot be attained without the necessary material foundations. All efforts to better the material conditions of the nation are part of Mashiach ben Joseph’s mission.

## The Fall of Mashiach ben Joseph

The Talmud in Sukkah 52a teaches that Mashiach ben Joseph will be killed, and that a “great eulogy in Jerusalem” (Zechariah 12:13) will be delivered at his death. What is the significance of this piercing eulogy, when the nation will mourn the loss of Mashiach ben Joseph “as one mourns for an only child”?

Due to the rift within the Jewish people, these two forces clash. Those who promote the nation’s material aspects belittle the importance of Torah and mitzvot. And those who stress the special nature of Israel reject all changes and attempts to better its material standing. This leads to rebellion against religion on one side, and anemic stagnation on the other.

With the fall of Mashiach ben Joseph, all will realize that these are not opposing movements, but forces that should work together so that material progress will form a basis for developing the unique character of the nation. This is the significance of the “great eulogy in Jerusalem.” All sectors of the nation will mourn this loss, all will recognize that it is a tragic mistake for these forces to be divided and estranged from one another.

## The Ox and the Donkey

What about Jacob’s message to Esau? Why did he use these two animals, the ox and the donkey, to allude to the two Messianic leaders?

The ox is used to plow the ground, preparing the area to be planted. This corresponds to the mission of Mashiach ben Joseph — to defend the nation from enemies and prepare the way for the revelation of Mashiach ben David. We also see this in the fact that the Tabernacle, a preparation for the Temple, was established in Shiloh, in the territory of Joseph, while the Temple itself was built in the inheritance of Judah.

The donkey, on the other hand, is used to carry produce from the field. This corresponds to the mission of Mashiach ben David, who brings the final fruit of redemption.

## A Hint to Esau

Jacob’s message to his brother, “I have an ox and a donkey,” alluded to the future Messianic Era, a time when he will no longer fear Esau’s enmity. We find a second hint later on. After the two brothers meet, Jacob promises that he will visit Esau on Mount Seir. The Sages wrote:

“We searched throughout the text of the Torah, but we never found that Jacob visited Esau on Mount Seir. It could not be that Jacob was deceiving him. So when will Jacob go to him? This will take place in the future era, as it says, “Saviors will ascend Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Esau”.[[29]](#footnote-29)

(Sapphire from the Land of Israel. Adapted from Shemuot HaRe’iyah (VaYishlach 5691), quoted in Peninei HaRe’iyah, pp. 68-72. “Eulogy in Jerusalem” from Ma’amarei HaRe’iyah, pp. 94-99.)

# Bimodal Calendar

The Jewish calendar also contains another duality and synthesis: its days are counted in accordance with the cycles of the sun *and* the moon. While the West’s calendar, based on the Roman one, is purely solar, and the Islamic calendar is purely lunar, the Jewish calendar has aspects of both. Each month in the Jewish calendar follows the moon, yet, the Jewish year often contains two *Adar* months. This way, Passover always occurs in the spring, and all other months correspond to particular seasons accordingly. Here also, Yosef appears primarily associated with the year as a whole (countering Esau), while Yehuda appears to be primarily connected to the lunar months (countering Yishmael).

This duality in the Jewish calendar is reflected in the Jewish people itself and in their two prototypical leaders: Judah and Joseph (See Appendix B).

Yehuda represents *Nisan*.[[30]](#footnote-30)

Ephraim[[31]](#footnote-31) represents *Tishri*.[[32]](#footnote-32)

Tishri is the new year for Gentile kings[[33]](#footnote-33)

Nisan is the new year for Jewish kings.[[34]](#footnote-34)

During Temple days the Torah was read through in three and a half years. The first cycle began in Tishri and the second cycle began in Nisan. This suggests that the first cycle represents Ephraim and Gentile kings, while the second cycle represents Yehuda and Jewish Kings.

Because the two cycles cause the same reading to be offset by six months, we learn that the readings have a connection to Ephraim, and then three and half years later that same reading applies Yehuda. Thus, the months of the years achieve a prophetic significance relative to these two tribes.

# Yosef and Yehuda

Genesis speaks of two great kings from the house of Yaaqov: Yosef and Yehuda.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 41:42-43*** *And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph’s hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; 43 And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 49:10*** *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*

These two men hint to the two Meshichim who will appear to lead the world into the redemption. Yosef was the first world ruler and Yehuda was the ruler over the sons of Yaaqov.[[35]](#footnote-35)

These two great men exhibit the attributes that we will later see in Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben David. Therefore, it behooves us to examine these two men and compare their lives to the roles that Chazal have assigned to the two Meshichim.

In Genesis, Yosef and Yehuda meet for the first time as adults in Pharaoh’s court. Yosef is unrecognizable to Yehuda having been raised an Egyptian for so many years. While Yehuda has maintained his cultural identity, Yosef looks ever so different. More than this, rather than following in the “family business,” Yosef, is now a politician, a Prime Minister of Egypt, a man of the world, so very much unlike the House of Jacob, who are few, isolated and different. Yosef’s name is Egyptian, as are his appearance, wife and children ever so opposite from his brothers. All in all, there is nothing left “Israelitish” of Yosef except one major defining factor. This is his heart.

Yosef did not appear to be Torah observant. He appeared to be cruel, demanding, and unreasonable. He appeared to be an Egyptian, a Gentile. What was in his heart was not visible to his brothers. He was a Torah observant Jew who was completely mis-interpreted by his brothers!

And Yehuda, son number four, takes charge; not by means of authority or Divine decree but rather because that was his personality. His personality made him rise up like a rocket and become a leader among his brothers. This is most unusual that the number four son should rise up and take a position of power and authority in the presence of his older brothers. Nonetheless, Reuven son number one, and Levi, son number three are not heard from. Apparently, they acquiesce to the leadership role of their younger brother Yehuda.

There is only one problem here; there already is a leader among the brothers, a mighty and powerful leader at that! This leader is Yosef! Although he is not a leader of his brothers by their choice, he is a leader by right and Divine design. Therefore, we have two leaders, Yosef and Yehuda.

The friction between their two personalities exists and existed even prior to Yosef’s identity being revealed. As it was then, so it is today, as we shall soon see.

Ezekiel prophesied[[36]](#footnote-36) that the jealously and conflict than lasted throughout the history of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel (Joseph) would eventually be resolved in messianic times, with Joseph taking his subordinate place under a Judean king of House David. This prophecy refers to far more than a mere political realignment. It addresses matters that go deep to the heart, to the fundamental psychologies that defined these two men and their perspective Kingdoms. While the Bible is full of information about Joseph himself, and the history of his many descendants, through the Tribes of Ephraim and Menashe, nevertheless, many fail to analyze, or to recognize Joseph personality types and their fundamental differences from Judah personality types.

While Joseph is in Egypt being tempted by and resisting the advances made by Potiphar’s wife, Judah is soliciting a prostitute who unbeknown to him is his daughter in law. So, while Joseph disciplines his sexual urges, Judah does not. For having such control, Joseph acquired the title, HaTzaddik (the one who does what’s right).

One of the things that is emphasized about Mashiach ben Yosef is something that is said about Yosef himself: “And Yosef recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him”. While the potential Mashiach ben Yosef of every generation brings the people the truth and presents before them the conditions for the redemption, the people deny and disrespect him. But because of his “Ahavat Israel”, he is willing to suffer. It is the people’s refusal to recognize the truth which brings upon them the needless wars and tragedies. For if the Jewish People had only accepted and understood Mashiach ben Yosef’s message, he would bring the redemption swiftly, in the way of “Achishena”, with glory and without needless suffering.

## In Egypt

Yosef finally discloses his identity upon witnessing Yehuda’s return to his previous kingship status. The Tribes are reunited and Yosef will continue in his role merely as the dispenser of the grain and all the physical needs of his brethren. It is Yehuda, though, who will take over at the helm in Goshen, as it is specifically he who is sent by Yaakov to establish a Bet Midrash, a house of learning, in the land that Yaakov agrees to inhabit.[[37]](#footnote-37) Why, we might ponder, would Yaakov send Yehuda and not Levi[[38]](#footnote-38) or Yissachar,[[39]](#footnote-39) those whose primary responsibility was the diligent learning and teaching so essential to Bne Israel’s existence?[[40]](#footnote-40)

HaShem led Yosef down a very different path from the rest of his family which we should rightly call Israel, and later (in history) Yehuda. Yosef, while assimilated externally, remained faithful to Israel internally. Yet, it is Yosef’s external and foreign posture / appearance that brings him into what our Sages taught was direct conflict with Yehuda. As is clear from the Genesis encounter, Yosef is testing his brothers to see if they are willing to stand together as brothers and defend Binyamin, whom he (Yosef) had set up and falsely accused of theft. Yehuda takes up the argument for Binyamin and his words are harsh and confrontational. Yosef recognizes the sincerity in Yehuda’s words and shortly discards all pretenses and reunites with his brothers.

## Yehoshua and Caleb

The two spies who saved all hopes for entering *Eretz* *Israel* were Yehoshua and Caleb, descendants of Yosef and Yehuda respectively.

## At The Yam Suf

At the splitting of the Reed Sea, the Tosefta*[[41]](#footnote-41)* writes that it was the tribe of Yehuda (other sources isolate Nachshon *ben* Aminadab, a descendant from Yehuda) that jumped in first and caused the waters to split. At the same time, we find the midrash[[42]](#footnote-42) informing us that the sea split when it saw the *Aron* of Yosef.[[43]](#footnote-43)

## Megillat Esther

The only male in Tanachto be labeled explicitly as a “yehudi”, a Jew, is Mordechai,[[44]](#footnote-44) a descendant from the tribe of Binyamin: “Ish yehudi…ish yemini”.[[45]](#footnote-45)

## Judges

Perhaps it is no coincidence, therefore, that the first of the Shoftim, the Judges, descended from Yehuda (Asniel ben Ki’naz), and the very next one in line from Binyamin (Ei’hud ben Gei’ra).

## Kings

King Shaul from Binyamin was the first of the Kings, while David from Yehuda followed and began the perpetual Davidic dynasty.

## Building The Mishkan

Getting closer to HaShem through the Mishkan, the Tabernacle, was also only made possible by the joint effort of Betzalel from the tribe of Yehuda, who led the assembly, and Ahaliav who hailed from Dan.[[46]](#footnote-46)

## Two Become One

***Yehezchel (Ezekiel) 37:16*** *Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: 17 And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.*

Two Meshichim “close up together” **–** two pieces of wood become one, this refers to Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben David;[[47]](#footnote-47) also,

***Zohar Vayigash 206a*** *Yehuda was a king and Yosef was a king, and they approached one another and they united together as one.*

Malbim teaches us that according to rabbinic tradition this prophecy of Yehezchel is actually referring to two Meshichim, not one. He explains that before Mashiach ben David will reign over Israel, there will first be Mashiach ben Yosef, a mashiach from the house of Joseph. This Mashiach will gather up the ten lost tribes that were scattered throughout the world and reunite them with the Kingdom of Judah.

# The Northern Kingdom

The Northern Kingdom of Israel, closely associated with the Tribe of Yosef.

The character of the Bne Yosef, both past and present, can be summed up quite easily by reviewing what exactly the Bible has to say about the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Throughout prophecy the Northern Kingdom is always referred to as Yosef. Therefore whatever is said about the Biblical Northern Kingdom of Israel holds true for the Bne Yosef and helps us identify its characteristics.

Yosef as the representative for the Northern Kingdom is described as rebelling against G-d’s chosen House of David monarchy and the Holy Temple, built by Solomon, son of David, but built for all Israel and not just for Yehuda. By rebelling against David, Jerusalem and the Temple, Yosef can best be described as **rebelling against the very foundations of what today we define as the religion of Torah Judaism.**

The tension, balance, and contrast between Judah and Joseph is very apparent in the way the Torah places the very parallel stories of Joseph and Judah side by side,[[48]](#footnote-48) as well as in the depiction of their direct confrontation, in the Torah portion of Vayigash.[[49]](#footnote-49) Even the names of these two tribes are similar, because Joseph sometimes is called “Yehosef”, carrying the first three letters of G-d’s name, HaShem, just like Judah.

This balance and tension has continued throughout our history, most notably with King David and King Shaul, the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel (also called Ephraim in the Torah), and even eventually with the coming of two Meshichim, ben David and ben Yosef, also known as Mashiach ben Ephraim.

# The Southern Kingdom

The Southern Kingdom of Israel is closely associated with the Tribe of Yehuda.

Throughout the history of ancient Israel, there was always this conflict between Yosef and Yehuda, both the individuals and the tribes that they sired. The relationship between the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Yehuda was never really one of brothers. The relationship between the two kingdoms was tedious at best. Israel in the north claimed to stick to the psychology of the old ways, which of course never really happened. Yehuda on the other hand claimed to be true to G-d, and faithful to His chosen King and Temple, which in all due respect was not so true either. The Bible is replete with the conflicts and sour relationship between the Kingdom of Yehuda and the Kingdom of Israel, with titular leadership from Yosef.

# Sephardim and Ashkenazim

According to one specific reference in the Prophets we are able to generally ascertain where the exiles of both Yosef and Yehuda went, once they left the Holy Land so many centuries ago. The prophet Obadiah (1:20) mentions that the exiled hosts of the Children of Israel went to dwell amongst the previously ejected Canaanites in a land called Tzarfat, which is the Hebrew name for modern day France. Interestingly, the same pasuk states that the exiles of Jerusalem, obviously the tribe of Yehuda who stayed faithful to the holy city were exiled to the land of Sepharad, which in Hebrew is modern day Spain.

***Obadiah 1:20*** *And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel shall possess that of the Canaanites, even unto Zarephath; and the captivity of Jerusalem, which is in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south. 21 And saviors shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau;[[50]](#footnote-50) and the kingdom shall be HaShem’s.*

Based upon this one pasuk many commentators have discerned that the Jewish inhabitants of France, Germany and Eastern Europe are descendants of Yosef, whereas those of Spanish origins are from Yehuda. In modern and direct terms, the blood-lines of Yosef are the original ancestors of the major portion of what we today call Ashkenazi Jewry, whereas the Yehuda blood-line is the source of the original Sephardic Jews from Spain.

There you have it, Biblical proof that Ashkenazim are from Yosef and Sephardim are from Yehuda. At least, this is how it was many centuries ago. Over many centuries, and especially in recent times, we see both personal and mass migrations, where individuals and whole communities moved from one country to the next. Today, the blood-lines of Ashkenazim and Sephardim, and who exactly is from a Yosef tribe or from Yehuda is very much intermingled. Personally, I view this as a blessing from G-d and a partial fulfillment of the prophecy to reunite the Houses of Yosef and Yehuda.

This being said, and the blood-lines being somewhat identified, let us now turn again to the characteristic traits of Yosef, their secularism, and rebellion against Jerusalem, the Davidic Kingdom and the Holy Temple and view this in light of the growth of radical secularism amongst European Ashkenazi Jews over the past two centuries and only then can we come into the modern realm and discuss secular Zionism. I believe the answer to the above question as to the modern identity of Yosef is becoming ever so much clearer.

Those who have ever studied the cultural, sociological and even psychological differences between Sephardim and Ashkenazim come to some rather striking conclusions. While there is of course much that is similar between the two peoples, there are specific traits in personality and world outlook that sharply divide the two types. Interestingly, but it should come as no surprise that the modern-day differences between Sephardim and Ashkenazim ever so clearly parallel the differences between Biblical Yehuda and Yosef. Indeed, although the blood-lines are clouded, the identities of the souls still shine through bright and clear.

# Ashkenazim

Yosef is portrayed in the Bible as cosmopolitan, world savvy, and what we would today call secular. It is then of no wonder that modern day Ashkenazim descendants of Yosef should follow in the footsteps of their ancestors. Yosef was clever, strong and ever so “bull-headed”. Sound familiar? The difference between religious and secular Ashkenazim we will discuss later, but for right now let us focus on the secular and how these modern descendants of Yosef fit into the messianic scenario.

the Ashkenazi secular State of Israel must be viewed not as a re-establishment of Southern Kingdom of Yehuda, but rather as the re-establishment of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Never in the history of Zionism was it ever conceived to re-establish the Biblical state of Yehuda. Never did the Zionists consider naming their new state Yehuda although the founders all considered themselves Jews.

Indeed, the founding Zionist fathers created for themselves a new name and a new identity. No longer were they to be called Jews. Now they are Israelis. This term has not been in use since the days of the fallen Northern Kingdom over 2500 years ago. The resurrection of the term Israeli to also include the members of the tribe of Yehuda (Yehudim-Jews) has not been heard since the days of King Solomon. Like the Northern Kingdom, the present secular State of Israel rejects the authority of the House of David, enshrined as it is in the Orthodox religious leadership, they reject the concepts of both rebuilding the Temple and reconstituting the Sanhedrin. However, to their credit, they have accepted as fact that Jerusalem, capital of old Yehuda is now the one capital of all Israel.

The secular State of Israel today embraces the same rebellious spirit of the ancient Bne Yosef of the old Northern Kingdom of Israel. As such modern-day Israel is the metaphorical Tribe of Yosef, if not the real tribe by rite of Ashkenazi blood-lines. We have now identified modern day Yosef.

In order to do this, let us first remember that the term Mashiach, although it literally means “anointed one” actually means a redeemer and savior. Therefore, Mashiach ben Yosef is to be the savior of the modern-day State of Israel. This therefore means that Mashiach ben Yosef will somehow have to be an Israeli politician and some kind of religious leader.

Throughout ben Yosef literature it is repeatedly taught that he is supposed to die in battle with the enemies of Israel.

Rabbi Hayim Vital, master Kabbalist and codifier of the Arizal system sums up ben Yosef’s fate by saying that his date with death is due to the fact that his soul emanates from the Tree of Knowledge, Good and Evil, instead of emanating from the Tree of Life. This metaphor is packed with meaning.

As we know in the Garden of Eden, there were the two trees; eating the fruits of one brought eternal life, eating the fruits of the other brought death. Adam as we know ate of the Tree of Knowledge, Good and Evil and thus brought death to the world. Mashiach ben Yosef as the true “son of man” (Adam) follows in his footsteps and like every other human being since Eden is destined to “go the way of all the earth.”

ben Yosef, might very well be a dreamer as was Father Yosef himself, but also like Father Yosef, Mashiach ben Yosef will be a savvy, modern and to the eye very secular politician. In his heart and private practice, he will be righteous, whether that righteousness as prescribed by Torah Law will be a known thing to the public remains to be seen. If Mashiach ben Yosef is to be anything like Father Yosef, then indeed he will most likely follow in his footsteps and appear one way in public, and yet, be an entirely different person in private.

Another interesting point about ben Yosef mentioned in classical sources is that similar to Father Yosef his brothers, specifically those led by Yehuda, are said not to recognize him. We know the significance this played in the Biblical story, but we really do have to consider the ramifications of what this would mean if modern day Jews do not recognize Mashiach ben Yosef.

we can foresee Mashiach ben Yosef being a Jewish leader who is not much recognized and accepted by the religious community at large.

Throughout scripture and classical Torah literature it is Yosef who is portrayed as the antagonist of Esau. Esau’s descendants, Edom, have always been identified with the Romans, and the nations that succeeded them, modern day Europe, with the Church of Rome at their head. Thus, the classical conflict of Mashiach ben Yosef is said to be with Rome

The present world situation is ripe for the rise of Mashiach ben Yosef. As we have described him, so shall he come. The religious will not welcome or accept him, whereas many of the secular will look to him as if he, Mashiach ben Yosef, is in reality Mashiach ben David. For this reason alone, he may be destined to die. Then again, like any other Jew, he may humble himself before his Creator in Heaven, embrace the Holy Torah and thus embrace the Tree of Life. In such a case, what will be is anyone’s guess, and HaShem’s Grace will decide the matter.

In Jewish tradition the coming head of Edom / Europe will be called Armilus, based on the name Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome. In one Jewish source, Armilus is identified by his non-Jewish / Christian name. The Midrash Milkhamot HaMashiach calls Armilus, the “Anti-Christ.”

# Two Trees

In the Garden of Eden, there were the two trees; eating the fruits of one brought eternal life, eating the fruits of the other brought death. Adam as we know ate of the Tree of Knowledge, Good and Evil and thus brought death to the world. Mashiach ben Yosef as the true “son of man”[[51]](#footnote-51) (Adam) follows in his footsteps and like every other human being since Eden is destined to “go the way of all the earth.”

Rabbi Hayim Vital, master Kabbalist and codifier of the Arizal system sums up ben Yosef’s fate by saying that his date with death is due to the fact that his soul emanates from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Mashiach ben David on the other hand is said to eat from the Tree of Life and as such will introduce to the world the radical *removal* of the concept of what we know as death.

# Tikkun

The mission of man is referred to as Tikkun Olam (World-Rectification). It exists one step below and feeds into, man’s original purpose, Tikkun Adam (Self or Soul-Rectification). This dichotomy makes up the complete picture of all of man’s challenges and experiences in this world: Man’s relationship to the world around him, his outer world; and his relationship to his inner world, within himself.

Tikkun Olam corresponds to Mashiach ben Yosef and Tikkun Adam corresponds to Mashiach ben David. The following chart shows these relationships:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Mashiach ben Yosef** | **Mashiach ben David** |
| Tikkun Olam | Tikkun Adam |

# Revealed and Hidden

Another important tool for identifying Mashiach ben Yosef in Tanach, is being aware of revelation and explicitness in Tanach, vs. lack of explicitness and withholding of detail. In Yirmiyahu the verse describes two “documents” which are to be “preserved”. One is called: “the revealed/or explicit document”. The other is called: “the hidden/ or sealed document”.

In Kol HaTor the Vilna Gaon teaches that these two documents represent the two Meshichim. The “revealed/explicit document” represents Mashiach ben Yosef, while the “hidden/sealed document” represents Mashiach ben David.

What this comes to teach us is that Tanach relates to the qualities of the two Meshichim differently. The qualities of Mashiach ben Yosef are identified through the explicit details and revealed facts found in the verses of Tanach. Although this is also true to a certain extent of the qualities of Mashiach ben David, they are mainly expressed by the absence of details given and are implicit, instead of explicit.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 42:8*** *Yoseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him*.

The above enigmatic pasuk accurately describes Mashiach ben Yosef. MbY is standing in front of us, yet we have no idea who He is. Part of this idea I described in my study titled: FLOWER.

R. Hillel Rivlin of Shklov writes:[[52]](#footnote-52)

"Yosef recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him". This [hiddenness] characterizes Yosef, not only in his generation, but in every generation in which the Mashiach ben Yosef recognizes his brothers but they do not recognize him. It is part of a diabolical scheme that the qualities of Mashiach ben Yosef are concealed in [the final period of] the Footsteps of the Messiah. Due to our many sins, he is scorned, as well. If this were not the case, our suffering would already have ended. If only Israel would recognize Mashiach ben Yosef*'s* "footprints" [i.e., the signs of his presence], the ingathering of the exiles, etc. [enumerated throughout *Kol HaTor,* including the messianic role of science], we would already have seen the complete Redemption.

# Pshat and Remez

Rabbi Hayim Vital attributed to Joseph the extroverted expression of religion, called in Hebrew, the Pshat. Pshat is usually defined as the simple meanings of religion, but its major emphasis is on externals. Pshat is the external, platonic face of religion. As Joseph was more interested in appearances and not necessarily in essence, Joseph became the archetype of externals-based religion and platonic societies. Platonic externals always emphasize correct form as being the ultimate goal and end-all of expression. How one appears means everything to the external platonic.

Religion that emphasizes external form over internal spirit is expressing the spirit of Joseph. This is the Pshat. Needless to say, overemphasis on form at the expense of substance leads to to loss of essence and thus the corruption of form.

Rabbi Vital associates Judah (and David) with sincere devotional experiential religion. In Hebrew, this level is called Sod, the secrets. And why is it a secret? The answer is because at this level of religious expression, where essence means everything, the relationship between the person and God is most personal and intense. It is internal and as such not visibly seen or measurable by outsiders who judge only by forms. To such platonic types the relationship of the devote is a mystery, a secret which defies platonic external forms.

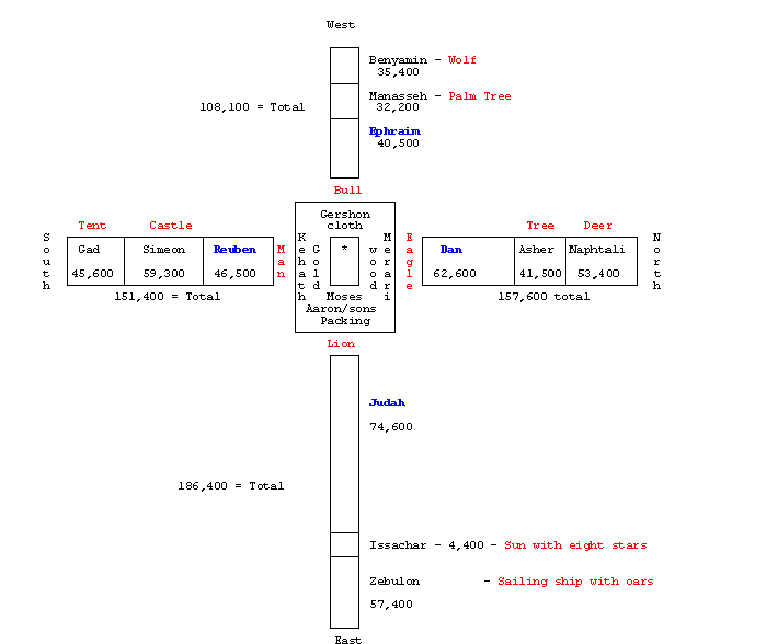
# Torah SheBaal Peh - Torah SheBichtav

When the Tanach gives detail about people, it is generally communicating the teachings and qualities associated with Mashiach ben Yosef and Tikkun Olam. When we find that details of a certain episode or period in a person's life are left out, we can assume, by very absence of detail, the implicit inclusion of qualities associated with Mashiach ben David and Tikkun Adam.

The reason that we find almost no explicit reference in Torah SheBaal Peh to Mashiach ben Yosef, whereas much more is found in explicit reference to Mashiach ben David, is in compensation for the greater amount of explicit material that relates to Mashiach ben Yosef in Tanach (Torah SheBichtav). On the other hand, because Mashiach ben David is related to much less in Torah SheBichtav, Torah SheBaal Peh compensates by referring to those qualities and aspects more explicitly.

# East and West

The prophet Ezekiel’s vision of the Holy Chariot, HaShem’s holy throne, has a lion on the right (the symbol of Judah) and an ox on the left (the symbol of Joseph). The same prophet Ezekiel, in the haftorah reading for Vayigash, is told by HaShem to collect one stick for Judah and one for Ephraim, and to join them together, symbolizing that in future *Yosef* and *Yehuda* will become completely united.[[53]](#footnote-53)



# Tzadik gamur and Baalei teshuva[[54]](#footnote-54)

Joseph is the prototype of the Tzadik gamur,[[55]](#footnote-55) while Judah of the Baalei teshuva.[[56]](#footnote-56)

# Mashiach ben Yosef’s Mission

Kol HaTor 2:118

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 35:10*** *“the redeemed [ransomed] of the Lord will return, and come to Zion with glad song”.*

Whenever redeem is mentioned, it refers to the mission of Mashiach ben Yosef through whom the exiles will be gathered in, as explained by the Gaon at length in his paper on the secret of the letters.[[57]](#footnote-57) From this we learn that the main ingathering of exiles is not less than 600,000, according to the interpretation of our Sages regarding this verse[[58]](#footnote-58) in connection with the two crowns and the Golden Calf and the atonement for the sin. With regard to the verse: “they will obtain joy and happiness”, our Sages said.[[59]](#footnote-59) The Gaon commented about this verse, that had he been born solely to understand the meaning of the Talmud on this matter, he would have considered it worthwhile. In essence, the verse speaks about the two Meshichim.

It is well-known that Mashiach Ben Yosef is killed. But actually, this does not have to happen. For if the redemption comes the way of “Achishena” (swiftly and with glory) – that is, the Jewish People do “teshuva” – then Mashiach Ben Yosef triumphs in battle. On the other hand, if the redemption comes “BiEta” (slowly, at its fixed time) – then one of the results of such a scenario is that he falls in the midst of a difficult and bitter battle, where great suffering and needless tragedy take place.

Mashiach ben Yosef's mission involves the ingathering of the "body" of Israel.

Mashiach ben Yosef (Mashiach the descendant of Joseph) of the tribe of Ephraim (son of Joseph), is also referred to as Mashiach ben Ephraim, Mashiach the descendant of Ephraim. He will come first, before the final redeemer, and later will serve as his viceroy. [The harmony and cooperation between Mashiach ben David and Mashiach ben Yosef signify the total unity of Israel, removing the historical rivalries between the tribes of Judah and Joseph.][[60]](#footnote-60)

The essential task of Mashiach ben Yosef is to act as precursor to Mashiach ben David: he will prepare the world for the coming of the final redeemer. Different sources attribute to him different functions, some even charging him with tasks traditionally associated with Mashiach ben David (such as the ingathering of the exiles, the rebuilding of the Bet HaMikdash, and so forth).

The principal and final function ascribed to Mashiach ben Yosef is of political and military nature. He shall wage war against the forces of evil that oppress Israel. More specifically, he will do battle against Edom, the descendants of Esau. Edom is the comprehensive designation of the enemies of Israel, and it will be crushed through the progeny of Joseph. Thus, it was prophesied of old, "The House of Jacob will be a fire and the House of Joseph a flame, and the House of Esau for stubble":[[61]](#footnote-61) "the progeny of Esau shall be delivered only into the hands of the progeny of Joseph."[[62]](#footnote-62)

Mashiach ben Yosef's jobs are many, and they include bringing the entire Jewish people back to Israel (kibbutz Galiyot),[[63]](#footnote-63) infusing them with a newfound spirituality, and revealing the secrets of the Torah, among other things. Another important task that he is to accomplish is the complete destruction of Edom, as the pasuk says in Ovadiah - the house of Yaaqob will be fire, and the house of Yosef a flame, and the house of Esav will be like straw, and he shall light them and consume them.

The job of Mashiach ben Yosef is gathering in the exiles and building the material aspects of Eretz Israel.

This final purpose follows all the other ones, and is the reason why he leads the Jewish people in the war of Gog and Magog. Although many people mistakenly think otherwise, this great war is actually after Mashiach ben Yosef has done most of his job, and actually segues us into the period of Mashiach ben David.

If we can imagine the scene for a moment, we have Mashiach ben Yosef who has led the entire Jewish people to a genuine spiritual renaissance, returning the entire nation back to their rightful homeland, to Israel. He represents the promise of a new age for humanity, one of peace, love and harmony. And yet, he is challenged by a force known as Gog and Magog. This force is actually composed of a few different components, but is mainly led by Amalek, the arch-enemy of the Jewish people (which reared its ugly head in World War II in the form of the Nazis of Germany), as well as the Erev Rav - that section of the Jewish people who attempts to remove the Jewish people's relationship with Hashem. They combine forces with many other nations of the world (see Yehezchel 38-39) to try to prevent the triumph of Mashiach ben Yosef and his mission to remove evil from the hearts of mankind. This true axis of evil, however, would rather die than allow mankind to be beholden to the Higher Power that created them.

Just as Mashiach ben Yosef is about to destroy the last vestiges of evil, the leader of the Erev Rav, named Armilus, is somehow able to kill him.

Military strength and conquest of the land of Israel, the conspicuous traits of the tribe of Ephraim appear here in Mashiach ben Yosef, whose job is to take vengeance on the other nations and conquer the land from them in return for all that they did to us.

“from the shadow of Yehoshua your servant...for he was the one who divided the land of Israel, and his descendant Mashiach ben Yosef will be the one who will lead the jewish people to defeat Gog and his helpers at the end of days.”

Targum Yonatan[[64]](#footnote-64) referred to Mashiach ben Yosef as a character who mainly suffers, but the sources that we have brought[[65]](#footnote-65) prove the opposite, that the main portrayal of Mashiach ben Yosef is as the one who avenges the vengeance of what the Jews suffered from the other nations. One who looks at the comparisons of Aurbach, will understand how he arrived at his mistaken conclusion. Despite the fact that there is an opinion that Mashiach ben Yosef will be killed,[[66]](#footnote-66) all of the victories of Mashiach ben Yosef which are mentioned in the sources, prove that also according to that opinion, Mashiach ben Yosef will first of all win many battles.

According to our teacher the Vilna Gaon, all of the work of the ingathering of exiles, the building of Yerushalayim and the expansion of the settlement in the land of Israel to return the diving presence, in all of their details and minute details, are the job of the mashiach of the beginning, the first mashiach, Mashiach ben Yosef,

This ultimate confrontation between Joseph and Esau is alluded already in the very birth of Joseph when his mother Rachel exclaimed:

***Genesis 30:23*** *G-d has taken away my disgrace.*

With prophetic vision she foresaw that an "anointed savior" will descend from Joseph and that he will remove the disgrace of Israel. In this context she called his name "Yosef, saying 'Yosef Hashem - may G-d add to me ben acher (lit., another son), i.e., ben acharono shel olam - one who will be at the end of the world's time’,[[67]](#footnote-67) from which it follows that 'meshu'ach milchamah - one anointed for battle' will descend from Joseph."[[68]](#footnote-68)

***Succah 52b*** *And HaShem showed me four craftsmen’ (Zecharya 2:3). Who are these four craftsmen? R’ Chunuh ben Bizna, citing R’ Shimon Chasida, replied: Mashiach the son of David,* ***Mashiach the son of Yosef****, Eliyahu, and the Righteous Priest.*

The immediate results of this war[[69]](#footnote-69) will be disastrous: Mashiach ben Yosef will be killed. This is described in the prophecy of Zechariah, who says of this tragedy that:

***Zechariah 12:10*** *they shall mourn him as one mourns for an only child.[[70]](#footnote-70)*

His death will be followed by a period of great calamities. These new tribulations shall be the final test for Israel, and shortly thereafter Mashiach ben David shall come, avenge his death, resurrect him, and inaugurate the Messianic era of everlasting peace and bliss.[[71]](#footnote-71)

Quite significantly, R. Saadia Gaon (one of the few to elaborate on the role of Mashiach ben Yosef) notes that this sequence is not definite but contingent! Mashiach ben Yosef will not have to appear before Mashiach ben David, nor will the activities attributed to him or his death have to occur. All depends on the spiritual condition of the Jewish people at the time the redemption is to take place:

The essential function of Mashiach ben Yosef is to prepare Israel for the final redemption, to put them into the proper condition in order to clear the way for Mashiach ben David to come. Of that ultimate redemption it is said, that if Israel repent (return to G-d) they shall be redeemed immediately (even before the predetermined date for Mashiach's coming). If they will not repent and thus become dependent on the final date, "the Holy One, blessed be He, will set up a ruler over them, whose decrees shall be as cruel as Haman's, thus causing Israel to repent, and thereby bringing them back to the right path."[[72]](#footnote-72) In other words, if Israel shall return to G-d on their own and make themselves worthy of the redemption, there is no need for the trials and tribulations associated with the above account of events related to Mashiach ben Yosef. Mashiach ben David will come directly and redeem us.[[73]](#footnote-73)

Moreover, even if there be a need for the earlier appearance of Mashiach ben Yosef, the consequences need not be as severe as described. Our present prayers and meritorious actions can mitigate these. R. Isaac Luria (Arizal) notes that the descendant of Joseph, by being the precursor of the ultimate Mashiach, is in effect kissey David, the "seat" or "throne" of David, i.e., of Mashiach. Thus when praying in the daily Amidah, "speedily establish the throne of Your servant David," one should consider that this refers to Mashiach ben Yosef and beseech G-d that he should not die in the Messianic struggle.[[74]](#footnote-74) As all prayers, this one, too, will have its effect.

It follows, then, that all the above is not an essential or unavoidable part of the Messianic redemption that we await. Indeed, it - (and the same may be said of the climactic war of Gog and Magog) - may occur (or may have occurred already!) in modified fashion.[[75]](#footnote-75) This may explain why Rambam does not mention anything about Mashiach ben Yosef. R. Saadia Gaon[[76]](#footnote-76) and R. Hai Gaon,[[77]](#footnote-77) as well as a good number of commentators, do refer to him briefly or at length. In view of the divergent Midrashim and interpretations on this subject it is practically impossible to present a more definitive synopsis that would go far beyond the above. Thus it is wisest to cite and follow R. Chasdai Crescas who states that "no certain knowledge can be derived from the interpretations of the prophecies about Mashiach ben Yosef, nor from the statements about him by some of the Geonim;" there is no point, therefore, in elaborating on the subject.[[78]](#footnote-78)

***Ovadiah 1:17*** *But in mount Zion there shall be those that escape, and it shall be holy; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. 18 And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau; for HaShem hath spoken. 19 And they of the South shall possess the mount of Esau, and they of the Lowland the Philistines; and they shall possess the field of Ephraim, and the field of Samaria; and Benjamin shall possess Gilead. 20 And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel, that are among the Canaanites, even unto Zarephath, and the captivity of Jerusalem, that is in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the South. 21 And saviors shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be HaShem’s.*

He we see, from verse 18, that the House of Joseph (including its leader) has a military role in the end-times drama. Verse 21 indicates that this is a joint effort. From this we see that the time when the Mashiach ben Yosef comes ends with a period of peace. This would indicate the period we have seen above when there is world peace, a renewal of the Davidic kingdom, etc. Let me summarize the Rabbinic writings with regards to Mashiach ben Yosef:

There will be a period of about seven years of terrible famines and other troubles. The land of Israel will at that time be under Non-Jewish control, and a leader of the tribe of Ephraim, will arise to lead militarily against these nations who control Jerusalem. He will be successful, but after his initial victory he will die in battle. This will cause a great mourning and many will lose faith. At that time (still within the seven years) the Mashiach ben David will be revealed, he shall finish the battle. After which, he will resurrect all the dead, starting with the Mashiach ben Yosef. Both of them will go up to Mount Zion to fulfill the prophecy in:

***Ovadiah 1:21*** *And the saviors* (plural - both Messiahs) *shall go up onto Mount Tzion and judge Mount Esav, and the kingdom will be for HaShem.*

There is the fulfillment of ALL the major prophesies like an end to war and a world at peace with the Jewish people in a restored Jerusalem with the third Temple.

**Kol HaTor 2:39 (Genesis 42:8)** Yosef recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him -- This is one of the traits of Yosef not only in his own generation, but in every generation, i.e., that Mashiach ben Yosef recognizes his brothers, but they do not recognize him. This is the work of Satan, who hides the characteristics of Mashiach ben Yosef so that the footsteps of the Mashiach are not recognized and are even belittled because of our many sins. (See below 103). Otherwise, our troubles would already have ended. Were Israel to recognize Yosef, that is, the footsteps of ben Yosef the Mashiach which is the ingathering of the exiles etc., then we would already have been redeemed with a complete redemption.

One of the things that is emphasized about Mashiach Ben Yosef is something that is said about Yosef himself: “And Yosef recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him”. While the potential Mashiach Ben Yosef of every generation brings the people the truth and presents before them the conditions for the redemption, the people deny and disrespect him. But because of his “Ahavat Israel”, he is willing to suffer. It is the people’s refusal to recognize the truth which brings upon them the needless wars and tragedies. For if the Jewish People had only accepted and understood Mashiach Ben Yosef’s message, he would bring the redemption swiftly, in the way of “Achishena”, with glory and without needless suffering.

But in the scenario of “BiEta”, only a handful understand, identify, and go with Mashiach Ben Yosef. And while the people continue to deny him, he continues his mission in any case, provoking the goyim and sanctifying the Name of G-d, and eventually falling, as stated above. It must be pointed out here that the major obstacle for Mashiach Ben Yosef is not the gentiles, but rather the destroyers from within. They are called the “Erev Rav”.[[79]](#footnote-79) According to the Gaon from Vilna, the major battle of Mashiach Ben Yosef is against the “Erev Rav”, who prevents the Holy People from recognizing the truth which would bring the redemption swiftly, “HaGiulat Achishena”.

Alshich Hakadosh (Rabbi Moshe Alshich) on Zee 12:10 “When they look on Me, that they will look to me in complete repentance, seeing that the one they have pierced is the Messiah son of Joseph, who will take all of Israel’s faults upon Himself”.[[80]](#footnote-80) [[81]](#footnote-81)

## Gentiles

Our Sages taught that Yosef spoke seventy languages, thus indicating that his task was a universal one, common to all nations.

***Midrash Rabbah - Numbers XIV:5*** *SEVENTY SHEKELS, AFTER THE SHEKEL OF THE SANCTUARY (VII, 49). This alludes to the fact that Gabriel came and added to Joseph's name one letter from the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, and taught him seventy languages; as is borne out by the text, He appointed it in Joseph (yehosef - יהוסף)[[82]](#footnote-82) for a testimony, when he[[83]](#footnote-83) went forth against the land of Egypt. The speech I had not known I understood.[[84]](#footnote-84) Had he not done so the Egyptians would not have accepted Joseph as a ruler over them.*

He protected the Jewish people in Egypt, and is described as "*the opposing force to Esau*",[[85]](#footnote-85) defending the nation against those who attack the Jewish people.

# Mashiach ben David’s Mission

Mashiach ben David's mission relates to the ultimate redemption of the *soul*. Ultimate spiritual liberation from the Angel of Death will only be brought about through Mashiach ben David*.*

The essential task of Mashiach ben Yosef is to prepare the world for the coming of the final redeemer. Different sources attribute to him different functions, some even charging him with tasks traditionally associated with Mashiach ben David (such as the ingathering of the exiles, the rebuilding of the Bet HaMikdash, and so forth).

The term Mashiach unqualified always refers to Mashiach ben David (Mashiach the descendant of David) of the tribe of Judah. He is the actual (final) redeemer who shall rule in the Messianic age.

Every act of ransom and saving by Mashiach ben Yosef is aided by Mashiach ben Davidin line with the incident in which Judah saved Joseph. According to what is written: “What profit is it if we sell our brother and cover up his blood?” etc. By saving Yosef, Judah merited being the one from whom the kingdom of David descended.

## Holy Nation

Judah was responsible for cultivating the special holiness of the Jewish people.

***Tehillim (Psalms) 114:2*** *Judah became His holy nation*.

# Messianic figures

## Yitzchak

Yitzchak was given the task of Mashiach ben Yosef at the akeda. His task was to die for all of the Bne Israel who were in his loins at the time of the Akeda. The ram caught in the thicket became a substitute for Yitzchak. Just as the ram was prepared on the twilight of the sixth day of creation, so also was Mashiach ben Yosef prepared with that ram.

***Pirkei Avot 5:6*** *Ten things were created on the eve of the Sabbath at twilight, and these are they:*

*[1] the mouth of the earth,*

*[2] the mouth of the well,*

*[3] the mouth of the donkey,*

*[4] the rainbow,*

*[5] the manna,*

*[6] the staff [of Moses],*

*[7] the shamir,*

*[8] the letters,*

*[9] the writing,*

*[10] and the tablets. And some say: also the demons, the grave of Moses, and the ram of Abraham, our father. And some say: and also tongs, made with tongs.*

The ram became a burnt offering instead of Mashiach ben Yosef, AKA Yitzchak ben Avraham. Yitzchak thereby redeemed all of the Bne Israel trough his death.

## Moshe Rabbeinu

Moshe Rabbeinu was given the task of redeeming the Jewish people and the Gentiles from Egypt. Redemption is the task of Mashiach ben Yosef. The redemption of the Jewish people, under the leadership of Moshe Rabbeinu, is also a picture of the final redemption of the Jewish people as we learn from the prophet:

***Micah 7:14-15*** *Tend Thy people with Thy staff, the flock of Thy heritage, that dwell solitarily, as a forest in the midst of the fruitful field; let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old.* ***15****'As in the days of thy coming forth out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous things.'*

Moshe had to suffer in order to redeem the

***Pesikta Rabbati 36*** *The Holy One, blessed be He, will tell (the Messiah) what will befall him: ‘There are souls that have been put away with you under My throne, and it is their sins which will bend you down under a yoke of iron, and make you like a calf whose eyes grow dim with suffering, and will choke your spirit as with a yoke; because of the sins of these souls your tongue will cleave to the roof of your mouth. Are you willing to endure such things?…if your soul is sad at the prospect of your suffering, I shall at this moment banish these sinful souls.’ The Messiah will say: ‘Master of the universe, with joy in my soul and gladness in my heart I take this suffering upon myself, provided that not one person in Israel shall perish; that not only those who are alive be saved in my days, but that also those who are dead, who died from the days of Adam up to the time of redemption; and that not only these be saved in my days, but also those who died as abortions; and that not only these be saved in my days, but all those whom You thought to create but were not created. Such are the things I desire, and for these I am ready to take upon myself whatever you decree.’ At these words, the Holy One, blessed be He, will appoint for the Messiah the four creatures who will carry the Messiah’s throne of glory.*

***Yalkut Shimoni, Yeshayahu 499*** *Before the world was created, Hashem created the soul of Moshiach. It shone very brightly, and is hinted to in the verse: “And Hashem saw the light, that it was good.” The forces of evil also saw this light, and asked Hashem, “Whose light is this?” Hashem answered, “This is the king who will defeat all of you in the End of Days.” The forces of evil then fell on the ground in fear before the soul of Moshiach. Hashem then asked Moshiach, “It is destined that you will suffer greatly. Are you willing to accept this suffering?” Moshiach answered, “If you agree that in the Days of Moshiach everyone will live again and even those who were meant to be born will come to life — upon these conditions I happily accept the suffering.” And when the time for Redemption comes, Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov will come to Moshiach and say, “Perhaps you have bad feeling towards the Jews who sinned, and therefore caused you to suffer. Maybe you don’t want them to have a share in the joys of Geulah?” And Moshiach will answer them, “But all my suffering was only for their sake! Of course I want them to have a share in the Geulah!” And our Avos will answer him, “Moshiach, you have comforted us!”*

## Yehoshua

Yehoshua was responsible for gathering all the Jews and the Erev Rav into the promised land. He also led the wars to remove the Canaanites from the land.

A final hint to Yehoshua’s manifestation of the mission of Mashiach ben Yosef in his lifetime is the juxtaposition of Yehoshua’s burial to the burial of Yosef. Sefer Yehoshua 24:29-30 recounts Yehoshua’s death and burial. Yehoshua, like Yosef, died at the age of one-hundred and ten.[[86]](#footnote-86)

The following pesukim relate that Am Israel served HaShem throughout Yehoshua’s lifetime and throughout the generation of the Zikenim (Elders) that lived afterward. Then[[87]](#footnote-87) Yosef’s burial in Shechem is recounted, clearly pointing out the strong connection between Yosef and Yehoshua. Yehoshua, being the continuation of the spiritual legacy and mission of Yosef HaTzaddik, who fully encompassed the role of Tikkun Olam, setting the precedent for all future Mashichei ben Yosef to follow. Until the final stage of the process is fulfilled and we merit the coming of Mashiach ben David, may he come speedily in our days, Amen.

Yosef became Jacob’s first-born by his father’s personal decree and received the appropriate double-portion of land inheritance in Eretz Israel. While Yehuda was certainly the singularly largest of the twelve tribes, the two Yosef tribes of Ephraim and Menashe were together bigger than he. Indeed, when Moshe Rabbenu chose his own personal successor to lead the Jewish people, he did not choose his brother in-law Caleb from the tribe of Yehuda, husband of his sister Miriam and by all means a worthy individual who could by right lead Israel. Rather Moshe Rabbenu chose his servant, his assistant Yehoshua, a man descended from Yosef. No one questioned this choice, not even Caleb.

Yehoshua was a man of Yosef and as such was fit and proper to rule. Throughout the days of the Judges, until the Kingdom of David, the Yosef tribes were always looked to for leadership in Israel. And when David’s grandson took the throne and decreed edicts unacceptable to the people, what did the other tribes do? They rebelled and cast off Davidic (i.e. Yehuda) leadership and formed their own Kingdom under the leadership of no one other than a ben Yosef!

Yehoshua was a descendant of Efraim ben Joseph, the one who fought Amalek.

The Vilna Gaon taught[[88]](#footnote-88) that Yehoshua bin Nun began to manifest the mission of Mashiach ben Yosef from the time he lead the battle against Amalek.[[89]](#footnote-89) War against Amalek, who represent the antithesis of Tikkun Olam, is one of the main aspects of Mashiach ben Yosef’s mission, whether it is on a physical or spiritual plane.

Part of what Moshe Rabbenu bestowed to Yehoshua when he assumed the leadership of the Jewish people, was the spiritual mission of Mashiach ben Yosef, in its entirety; as it says: “And you shall place, from your majesty, upon him…”

Yehoshua was the most fitting choice to receive the mission of Mashiach ben Yosef, as a descendant of Yosef’s son Ephraim, to whom Yosef had extended his right hand, bestowing exceptional blessing and spiritual strength, which would be required in the mission of Mashiach ben Yosef towards Tikkun Olam.

Thus, it was Yehoshua bin Nun who lead the conquest of Eretz Israel, for the goals of Tikkun Olam depend upon the fulfillment of the Jewish people’s destiny in Eretz Israel.[[90]](#footnote-90)

## Efraim

Mashiach ben Yosef is sometimes called Mashiach ben Efraim.

## Shaul

Shaul HaMelech manifested strong qualities of Mashiach ben Yosef during his reign. The Vilna Gaon taught[[91]](#footnote-91) that during the wars that Shaul fought, during his reign he manifested the mission of Mashiach ben Yosef, which includes going to war against the enemies of the Jewish people and expanding the borders of the land of Eretz Israel.[[92]](#footnote-92)

Also, Hashem’s choosing Shaul to be the king commanded specifically with the mission of wiping out Amalek[[93]](#footnote-93)clearly places Shaul in the role of Mashiach ben Yosef; one of whose main mission is to fight against Amalek.

Another, more subtle hint is the verse[[94]](#footnote-94) where Shaul refers to himself by the term: **צעיר**; which is a reference to Ephraim, the son of Yosef, and subsequently, Mashiach ben Yosef, who stems from Yosef.

# Body and Soul

Rav Kook[[95]](#footnote-95) views Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben David as two components of a larger product, namely, the Jewish people. If the Jewish people could be described as one person, Mashiach ben Yosef would be the body, Mashiach ben David the soul. This accords well with the Nazarean Codicil:

***I Corinthians 12:27*** *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*

# The Future

With the fall of both Kingdoms and centuries of assimilation the actual blood-lines of the tribes have become blurred and, in many cases, outright lost. To this day, although the blood-line identities of the members of the Yosef and Yehuda tribes have been for the most part blurred, the psychological conflict between them is still as strong and evident as ever. However being that we today have lost sight of the original historical conflict of the tribes we also do not know how to recognize its modern manifestation because we do not know how to recognize the modern day Bne Yehuda and Bne Yosef and identify them by their characters and behaviors as opposed to their names and blood-lines.

But in the scenario of “BiEta”, only a handful understand, identify, and go with Mashiach ben Yosef. And while the people continue to deny him, he continues his mission in any case, provoking the goyim and sanctifying the Name of G-d, and eventually falling, as stated above. It must be pointed out here that the major obstacle for Mashiach ben Yosef is not the gentiles, but rather the destroyers from within. They are called the “Erev Rav” (mixed multitude). According to the Gaon from Vilna, the major battle of Mashiach ben Yosef is against the “Erev Rav”, who prevents the Holy People from recognizing the truth which would bring the redemption swiftly, “HaGiulat Achishena”.

This mission of man is referred to as Tikkun Olam (World-Rectification). It exists one step below and feeds into, man’s original purpose, Tikkun Adam (Self or Soul-Rectification). This dichotomy makes up the complete picture of all of man’s challenges and experiences in this world: Man’s relationship to the world around him, his outer world; and his relationship to his inner world, within himself.

Two Messiahs as one

Redemption "in its set time" is by means of Mashiach the son of David alone (after Mashiach the son of Joseph is killed). In the redemption that takes place prior to its set time, we merit the two Messiahs as one.

# Mashiach ben Dan

Onhaga

Moses, Leave me to destroy

**Shnei Meshichim**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Mashiach ben Yosef**  **(Yosef)** | **Mashiach ben David**  **(Yehuda)** |
| Rachel | Leah |
| Revealed / or explicit | Hidden / or sealed |
| Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil | Tree Of Life |
| Tikkun Olam  (repair the world) | Tikkun Adam  (repair man) |
| Yosef ben Yaaqob | Yehuda ben Yaaqob |
| Northern Kingdom (Israel / Ephraim) | Southern kingdom (Yehuda) |
| Material | Spiritual |
| Sod: Yosef symbolizes ***redemption***.[[96]](#footnote-96) A bottom up approach. | Sod: Yehuda symbolizes ***prayer***. A top down approach. |
| Body (externals) | Soul (Internals) |
| Ashkenazim | Sephardim |
| Tzadik gamur[[97]](#footnote-97) | Baalei teshuva[[98]](#footnote-98) |
| Torah SheBichtav  (Written Law) | Torah SheBaal Peh[[99]](#footnote-99)  (Oral Law)[[100]](#footnote-100) |
| Torah SheBichtav says an “eye for an eye”,  thus, middat HaDin. | Torah SheBaal Peh says, “monetary compensation”,  thus, Middat HaRachamin. |
| Pshat - literal | Sod - secret |
| Physical Mission | Spiritual Mission |
| Tishri | Nisan |
| Ita’aruta de L’tata (arousal from below) | Ita’aruta de L’Eila (arousal from above) |
| Yetzer HaRa (Evil Inclination) | Yetzer HaTov (Good Inclination) |
| West | East |
| Mission: Restoration and Purification | Mission: Elevation and Transformation |
| mashpia (giver) | mekabel (receiver) |
| Tafel - וטפל‎  (enabler of the essence, or secondary) | Ikar - עיקר  (essence, or primary) |
| Ephraim[[101]](#footnote-101) represents *Tishri*.[[102]](#footnote-102) | Yehuda represents *Nisan*.[[103]](#footnote-103) |
| Tishri is the new year for Gentile kings[[104]](#footnote-104) | Nisan is the new year for Jewish kings.[[105]](#footnote-105) |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Yosef** (Rachel) | **Yehuda** (Leah) |
| **Ben Noach** | **Bne Israel** |
| **Physical Mission** | **Spiritual Mission** |
| Tafel - וטפל‎ (enabler of the essence, or secondary) | Ikar - עיקר  (essence, or primary) |
| Good vs. Evil | True vs. False |
| Very strict on himself, no leeway for transgressions. | Leniencies for his transgressions. |
| Rachel’s children must be in ***physical*** control of physical resources. | The ***spiritual*** control of Israel is in the hands of Yehuda’s family. |
| Awakening from below (human initiative) | Awakening from above |
| Concerned for the world. | Concerned for the family. |
| Tzadik Gamur[[106]](#footnote-106)  Yosef is the higher Tzadik who serves God through the higher consciousness. | Baal Teshuva[[107]](#footnote-107)  Yehudah is the lower Tzadik who serves God through the manner of lower consciousness. |
| Higher Wisdom –  Esoteric dimensions of the Torah. | Lower Wisdom -  Revealed dimensions of the written and oral Torah. |
| Ashkenazim | Sephardim |
| Written Torah | Oral Torah |
| Sealed deed of the purchase[[108]](#footnote-108) | Open deed of the purchase[[109]](#footnote-109) |
| Sod: Yosef symbolizes ***redemption***.[[110]](#footnote-110) A bottom up approach. | Sod: Yehuda symbolizes ***prayer***. A top down approach. |
| Yosef craves Torah study while performing mitzvot. | Yehuda craves mitzvot while studying Torah. |
| Level of Yaaqob | Level of Israel |
| Zionism[[111]](#footnote-111) |  |
| Concealed Holiness | Revealed Holiness |
| Revealed World  (Buried on the road.) | Hidden World (Buried in a cave.) |
| Hidden | Revealed |
| Toil of Shabbat. | Toil of the weekdays. |
| Yosef is pleasure, the Oneg of Shabbat, the eating of the Shabbat meal. | Yehudah is the pain and difficulty of the weekdays. |
| Roots | Fruit |
| Mashpia (Giver) | Mekabel (Receiver)[[112]](#footnote-112) |
| Higher rung now. | Higher rung in messianic days. |
| Mashiach ben Yosef  Messiah of the Beginning | Mashiach ben David |
| Zeir Anpin[[113]](#footnote-113) | Malchut[[114]](#footnote-114) |
| Ephraim[[115]](#footnote-115) represents *Tishri*.[[116]](#footnote-116) | Yehuda represents *Nisan*.[[117]](#footnote-117) |
| Tishri is the new year for Gentile kings[[118]](#footnote-118) | Nisan is the new year for Jewish kings.[[119]](#footnote-119) |
| Pekidah (Yesod) | Zechirah (Tiferet)  he mystery of God-consciousness. |

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# Appendix B – The Twelve Tribes and Months[[120]](#footnote-120)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter** | **Month** | **Sign** | **Permutation** | **Exodus** | **Numbers** | **House** |
| ה | Nisan | Aries | YHVH | Reuben | Judah | Life |
| ו | Iyar | Taurus | YHHV | Simeon | Issachar | Property |
| ז | Sivan | Gemini | YVHH | Levi | Zebulun | Attraction |
| ח | Tamuz | Cancer | HVHY | Judah | Reuben | Ancestors |
| ט | Av | Leo | HVYH | Issachar | Simeon | Descendents |
| י | Elul | Virgo | HHVY | Zebulun | Gad | Health |
| ל | Tishri | Libra | VHYH | Benjamin | Ephraim | Coition |
| נ | Cheshvan | Scorpio | VHHY | Dan | Menasseh | Death |
| ס | Kislev | Sagittarius | VYHH | Naftali | Benjamin | Travel |
| ע | Tevet | Capricorn | HYHV | Gad | Dan | Government |
| צ | Shevat | Aquarius | HYVH | Asher | Asher | Friends |
| ק | Adar | Pices | HHYV | Joseph | Naftali | Enemies |

# Appendix C – In Modern Politics

The Deeper Meaning of Israel’s Latest Election Cycle

By

Rav Yehuda Hakohen

-

14 Heshvan 5783 – November 8, 2022

Post-Election Benjamin Netanyahu. Nov. 6, 2022.

The constant election coverage and polls that Israelis were bombarded with over the last several weeks had essentially conditioned much of the public to see a political race taking place between two blocks – a right and left block (or a pro-Netanyahu and anti-Netanyahu block).

The fact that President Yitzḥak “Buji” Herzog will task the party leader with the most potential coalition partners totaling at least 61 seats with forming a government notwithstanding, the media’s framing tends to have created a misleading illusion of something resembling a multi-limbed two party system.

Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu seems assured to be given first crack at forming a coalition. We shouldn’t be surprised if he initially attempts to form a government with the Ḥaredi parties and outgoing Defense Minister Benny Gantz (National Unity), leaving Betzalel Smotrich (Religious Zionism), Itamar Ben-Gvir (Otzma Yehudit) and Avi Maoz (Noam) in the opposition.

This isn’t because Netanyahu has any personal or ideological preference for Gantz over Smotrich and his partners. Rather, it’s for two important reasons that are often lost on the average voter:

1. External – In the face of mounting pressure from the United States, Europe and Diaspora Jewish organization, Netanyahu will most likely (as always) try to moderate his image to the outside world by forming a coalition with parties more in line with Western sensibilities who at least pretend to support the policy of partitioning our country into two states.

2. Internal – Netanyahu will want to leave himself a potential alternative coalition waiting in the opposition in order to keep his initial, more internationally palettable coalition partners in line.

It’s also possible that Smotrich and Ben-Gvir separate their factions in order to allow the former to join the government while the latter is left out as a concession to all those pressuring the Likud leader against a narrow nationalist coalition.

Applying Western Political Framings to Israeli Society

Another problematic feature of our election coverage was the presentation of Israel’s political map as a one dimensional linear spectrum.

To properly analyze the dynamics of our political system, it’s important to recognize that Western political framings don’t fit Israeli society. The Shas party, for example, successfully campaigned on its identity as the only electoral option that is simultaneously Jewish, yemini (nationalist) and ḥevrati (supportive of social programs to help our weaker sectors). While the party champions socio-economic policies that would put it squarely on the left of any European nation’s political map, its positions on Jewish culture and identity might place it on the right of any such nation in which it represents the dominant majority population.

What pundits from outside Israel might find even stranger is the fact that Shas leader Aryeh Deri made it clear throughout his campaign that a vote for Shas will help ensure Netanyahu’s return to the prime minister’s office.

In addition to seeing Netanyahu as a close political ally and sensing that the contradictions between where each party hopes to lead Israel are currently non-antagonistic, Deri understood that many of his potential voters were struggling to choose between his party and Netanyahu’s Likud. In order to make it easier for this demographic to vote Shas, Deri made clear his intention to recommend Netanyahu to the president and to sit in a Likud-led coalition. A party campaigning hard (and planning to deliver) on its leftist socio-economic policies rarely flaunts the fact that it plans to form a government with a prime minister well known for liberal economic positions. This dynamic alone should make clear the problematic nature of trying to understand Israel through Western linear political framings.

Liberal, conservative, left, right, religious and secular are all categories that developed in Europe and have deep roots in the West. They grew out of Greco-Roman civilization, Christian dogma and the revolutionary transition from feudalism to capitalism. Trying to impose such a framing on non-Western societies obviously leads to major errors in our analyses.

Left vs. Right

Right and left, for example, mean something totally different in the Israeli context than they do in the West.

The term “left” in the State of Israel generally refers to two groups. The first is Israel’s westernized Liberal-Zionist ruling class that is primarily concerned with the material wellbeing of the Jewish people (security, economy, diplomacy, etc.) but maintains a very European sense of national identity while remaining largely estranged from the ancient values and traditions of Am Israel.

The second group is a smaller sector of the population that is far more universalist and has almost fully adopted the narrative of Israel’s critics. Despite its seemingly insignificant numbers, this second group actually does resemble the left in other parts of the world and expresses some important points that the broader Israeli society should really consider (but probably can’t just yet). On election day, this group likely voted for Ḥadash-Ta’al (or Balad if they didn’t fear voting for a faction unlikely to pass the 3.25% threshold).

The term “right” in Israeli society also refers to two groups – ideologically motivated Jewish nationalists (for lack of a better term) fully living their people’s story on the one hand, and those with a European style of nationalism similar to the first group of “leftists” but who resemble Western conservatives in their focus on security and economic liberalism on the other.

An early feature of this past election cycle had actually been the antagonization of contradictions between these two groups of “rightists” (the most offensive example being Israel Beiteinu leader Avigdor Lieberman’s crass video portraying Netanyahu as a puppet of Rav Zvi Israel Tau). What had been referred to by certain political figures as the “normal right” or “sane right” is actually those who’ve adopted conservative Western positions, while those psychologically living in Jewish history and loyal to the aspirations and folkways of our ancestors are often defamed as “messianic” or “extreme.”

From whatever perspective we approach Israel’s political map, it’s helpful to acknowledge that terms like “left” and “right” have already become too broad and ambiguous to mean anything concrete. And that’s without even struggling with the question of where the Ḥaredi and Palestinian parties would fall on such a linear political spectrum.

Israel’s Tribal Political Map

It’s clear that a more precise set of terms is required to more accurately understand Israeli society and the broader Jewish world. And when we search within our own culture for such a socio-political framework, we find that what best suits our people is a model based on our Hebrew tribal identities.

Although these tribes were once biologically defined, today they should be understood differently. If we accept the worldview of our ancestors that saw the people of Israel as expressions of a single spiritual organism shining into this world, then we should see the tribal identities as different shades of that collective soul. Or in simpler terms, as different personality types found within the Jewish people.

Yosef vs. Yehuda

The two main leadership tribes within Israel have always been Yehuda and Yosef. Yehuda represents what’s unique about the children of Israel’s identity, worldview and historic mission, while Yosef tends to be more focused on Israel’s material wellbeing and emphasizes that which we share in common with other nations – especially the most dominant civilization of any given period.

Yehuda and Yosef are also orbited by tribes that serve as extreme expressions of their characteristics (for a breakdown of the Jewish people’s broader tribal political map and how these identities manifest in Israel’s current political system, readers are encouraged to check out this more in depth analysis).

This friction between Yehuda and Yosef has played itself out in many different ways over thousands of years. One of the clearest examples would be the two rival kingdoms of the first Temple period. The most impactful leaders of the kingdom of Israel came from the tribe of Yosef (specifically the Ephraim sub-tribe) while the kingdom of Yehuda continued to be led by the descendants of David.

While most Jews today are descendants of the Yehuda kingdom (which is why the term “Jew” subsequently expanded to include the tribes of Shimon, Levi and Binyamin), anyone living through that historic period would have likely seen Israel as the more important kingdom. But while the Yosef-led Israel was stronger and more engaged with other nations, it was also more culturally influenced by these nations than the landlocked isolationist Yehuda kingdom. Unchecked, this led to the Israeli kingdom’s ultimate downfall.

Our sages have long understood the concept of Mashiaḥ ben Yosef (the messianic force of Yosef) as the redirecting of Yosef’s ability to successfully manage the material world towards the fulfillment of Jewish national aspirations.

The Gaon of Vilna taught his students that the physical rebuilding of the Jewish people in our land would be the process of Mashiaḥ ben Yosef and that it would emphasize the features of our identity that we share in common with other nations. In his eulogy of Binyamin Z’ev Herzl, HaRav Avraham Yitzḥak HaKohen Kook expounded on this idea and essentially dubbed the Zionist movement that messianic expression of Yosef.

But once Zionism’s revolutionary role was accomplished, Yosef appears to have naturally slid back towards an assimilationist impulse that characterized its tribal identity in the Diaspora (it’s worth exploring the dialectical relationship between the Haskala and Zionism). The desire of our Zionist political factions for Israel to be accepted as part of the West is a clear expression of this.

There are contemporary examples that can help us better understand the friction between Yosef and Yehuda that lie at the core of the current tensions within Israeli society.

Yehuda Jews tend to understand the world around them through lessons learned from the Jewish past, the statutes of our Torah and ancient prophetic ideas about our collective destiny and mission. When any given social or political issue arises, a Jew with a more Yehuda orientation generally tends to see the issue through the prism of Israel’s history spanning thousands of years. He might even cite Biblical examples of how our ancestors responded to certain challenges in ancient times in order to advocate for similar policies today.

But Jews with a more Yosef orientation tend to look at the very same social or political issue through the prism of what’s universally considered just according to the values of what they perceive to be the most morally advanced civilization of the time.

So Yehuda and Yosef generally look at the same issues, come to radically different policy conclusions and often relate to the positions of the Other as deeply frightening.

Yehuda often sees the universalist orientation of Yosef as stemming from a weak connection with our people’s identity and an unhealthy need to gain gentile acceptance, while Yosef generally sees the particularist orientation of Yehuda as dangerously chauvinistic and out of touch with a more enlightened modern world.

Illusion of a Unity Government

Even though the groups superficially defined as comprising the right in Israeli society have had significantly more electoral power in recent elections than those defined as left, the plutocratic coalition headed by Naftali Bennett (Yamina) and Yair Lapid (Yesh Atid) showed us that the divide between Yehuda and Yosef is actually deeper and more significant that what many of us are conditioned to see as a right-left divide.

The Bennett-Lapid government, with the exception of Mansour Abbas’s United Arab List party, was comprised of different shades of Yosef. And because the tribe of Yosef today represents and emphasizes the part of Israeli identity that we share in common with the West, one can easily look at all the political expressions of Yosef as making up a linear political spectrum ranging from liberal to conservative. This government was mistakenly hailed by many as a unity government representing different ends of Israel’s political map because the people making that claim tended to see the non-Yosef tribes as essentially illegitimate and beyond the pale of what should be politically acceptable.

While on the surface, Israel’s internal conflict might appear to be one between a westernized ruling class and a population more connected to the identity and traditions of our people, there’s also something deeper taking place beneath the socio-political surface between the forces of Yosef and Yehuda. The more we understand this friction, the more we appreciate its place at the center of these past elections.

The Inevitable Shift

Itamar Ben-Gvir was the focus of this past election cycle not because of his positions on Arab issues but rather because his rising popularity signals a significant socio-cultural shift. What once appeared to exist at the fringes of society has suddenly gained acceptance from the Israeli masses.

Attempting to examine Religious Zionism, Otzma Yehudit, Noam and their voters through a Western political lens can easily lead one to mistakenly equate them with far-right nationalist formations in Europe and the United States. But although some shallow parallels can be drawn, this lazy analysis completely misses the mark and can only lead to erroneous conclusions. In truth, such a comparison is probably as accurate as categorizing our Ḥaredi community as Israel’s version of the American Christian right. It simply doesn’t fit (a slightly better but still flawed comparison might be the Muslim Brotherhood).

The Jewish people are unique in history. We’re the only example of an ancient people that was displaced from its land, maintained its identity in exile for roughly 2,000 years despite overwhelming persecution and actually returned home to take possession of its land and establish a modern state (largely using colonial tools). That’s why it’s so easy to see Zionism as either an indigenous people’s liberation movement or as a colonial project born in Europe.

Both claims can be proven true using selective facts but a more intellectually honest and inclusive perspective reveals that Israel simply can’t be understood through Western political framings or neatly placed into the categories most political analysts in the West are accustomed to. Anyone seeking to understand the dynamics of Israeli society and where we are headed therefore needs to be careful to first understand the Jewish people.

In the cultural conflict taking place within Israel between those psychologically living in Jewish history and those psychologically living in the ideological paradigm of the modern West, Yehuda – or Shimon in Ben-Gvir’s case – appears to have gained power over Yosef (especially if we view Netanyahu’s Likud as a neutral bridge faction between Yosef and Yehuda). In truth, this shift was inevitable. If it didn’t happen this election cycle, it would have likely happened the next one. For a long time it’s been clear to anyone paying close attention to Israel’s socio-cultural trajectory that we’ve been moving in a more Jewish particularist direction and will likely continue to do so.

What needs to be understood is that this marks an important milestone in Israel’s national development.

So long as Yosef ran the state and set its Western liberal ideological paradigm as the paradigm all other tribes must function within, Yehuda remained focused on narrow Jewish national concerns and Israel under Yosef’s leadership could only exist as a self-styled outpost of Western civilization in the Semitic region (a “villa in the jungle” in Ehud Barak’s words).

But once Yosef cedes leadership to Yehuda, Yehuda will suddenly find itself needing to develop solutions to real societal challenges and human needs that are actually more just than the solutions offered by the liberal ideological paradigm. To accomplish this, Yehuda and its satellite tribes will need to develop a genuine sensitivity to the sectors of society that appear most at risk by their political ascension (Arabs, African asylum seekers, LGBTQ+ people, descendants of Jews who are not themselves Jews according to how we’ve defined the term for thousands of years, etc.) and to find solutions that address their needs coming from real Jewish sources.

The Israeli public and Jewish Diaspora need to see that Israel can become a more deeply Jewish society without excluding or marginalizing anyone.

This shift is especially important in regards to Arab issues because Zionism (a uniquely Jewish flavor of European-style nationalism) doesn’t possess the depth of Jewish national consciousness to safely confront the Arab narratives or the tools to imagine a state that’s deeply Jewish yet fully inclusive of the Other. Zionism tends to relate to the Jewish people as an object with a problem and seems obsessed with proving to the world that Israel is right and the Arabs wrong.

The introspection and self-criticism required for Israel’s growth can be dangerous for those Jews with a shallow reactionary nationalism. But the core voters and spiritual leaders who supported the Religious Zionism list last week tend to see the Jewish people as a subject with desires and are therefore not truly Zionist (if we’re equating Zionism with Yosef). Only those Jews deeply rooted in the worldview of our ancestors and meta-narrative of our people stretching back thousands of years have the ability to confront the Arab narratives without losing their own.

It might be unrealistic to expect Smotrich or Ben-Gvir to do this work but we should appreciate that their conceptions of Torah, Jewish identity and our people’s connection to this land can serve as a base and provide fertile soil for their future successors to formulate new ideas and paths forward. So although we shouldn’t relate to these specific political figures as our ideal leadership or as the ultimate destination Israel is meant to arrive at, they’re most likely a necessary part of a journey that requires us to shed the colonialist mentality inherent in Zionist thinking and to adopt a national consciousness more authentic to our people that aspires to universalism and healthy engagement with the outside world. As counterintuitive and frightening as this might be for some people, these election results might constitute progress in our national development that will likely only be appreciated much later in the process.

One of the ways Yosef had fought to delay this shift was to make our last few election cycles not about Israel’s identity or major policies but rather about the willingness of each political faction to sit in a government with an ostensibly corrupt “King Bibi.” But there’s a limit to how long these tricks can work. Although Yosef built the State of Israel and played a leading role in achieving most of its successes, the nation is now ready for a more advanced stage of the Jewish liberation project and Yosef’s role will likely shift from a leading role to a supporting one as Israeli society continues to develop.

The Challenges Ahead

This new period Israel is entering comes with a new set of challenges and contradictions to be resolved. The forces of Yosef need to reconcile the fact that they no longer have a democratic mandate to run the nation-state they established. They’ll also need to accept the fact that the western liberal paradigm (the ideological superstructure of an unjust system responsible for untold human suffering) does not hold a monopoly on addressing the needs of human beings. In fact, one of the major reasons Israel came back to life in modern history is to create new frameworks for addressing the needs of humanity that are actually more advanced than the frameworks they are destined to eclipse. Humanity can do better than capitalism and liberalism. Democracy shouldn’t just be a synonym for westernization in countries like ours but rather a mechanism for empowering people to influence the structures we live under.

Rather than fight against the trajectory of Israeli society, those deeply concerned with universal values should work to ensure that these values be promoted in such a way that doesn’t bring them into conflict with Israel’s Jewish identity or appear to be imposed on society as a tool of cultural imperialism (such efforts almost always incite a backlash in societies like ours). By working together with the forces of Yehuda, perhaps Yosef can help develop a uniquely Jewish universal approach that can actually compete with Western liberalism on its own ideological turf.

The challenge for the forces of Yehuda (and Levi, Shimon and Yissakhar), meanwhile, will be to help the Yosef Israelis find their healthy place in what the State of Israel is becoming. Despite no longer being suited for leadership, Yosef still has significant contributions to make to Israeli society and to accomplishing the Jewish people’s collective historic mission (according to our prophets and sages it’s actually Yosef that will ultimately defeat Esav).

What’s most important to keep in mind is the larger process of Israel’s national development, from European-style Jewish nationalism (Zionism), to a more uniquely Jewish brand of national consciousness to a Hebrew Universalism rooted in Israel’s ancient identity and worldview but facing the rest of humanity in the modern world with a strong desire to give. The transition period we’re currently entering is understandably frightening for a lot of people but this current shift is a necessary part of the process that will ultimately lead Israel to being what we came back to life to be.

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1. Our Sages have written that there are to be two different types of kings over the Bne Israel: The kings descended from Rachel and the kings descended from Yehuda. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Halakha [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Maimonides [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. According to Kol HaTor, Mashiach ben David is spiritually rooted in the quality of Chessed and it is that which defines the character of his mission. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. According to Kol HaTor, Mashiach ben Yosef is spiritually rooted in the quality of Gevurah/Din and it is that which defines the character of his mission. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) 32:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Tracing Mashiach ben Yosef Throughout Tanach, Based on the teachings of the Vilna Gaon, by Daniel Krentzman. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Kol HaTor 2:96 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Megillah 17b [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. see Zohar portion called Naso [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Fighting the wars of G-d is one of the qualifications an individual must meet before being presumed to be Mashiach. There is no necessity, however, for the war to involve bloodshed or even to be on a physical level (as the fight for spirituality and observance of mitzvot may also properly be described as a "war of G-d".) Hence the expression "a war of peace. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. This is subject to how the end-times drama will enfold. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Bereshit (Genesis) 46:28 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. The Tabernacle constructed in the wilderness. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. The Temple [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Jerusalem [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. The redemption [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Bereshit (Genesis) 31:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Breishit Rabbah 75 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Bereshit (Genesis) 49:6; Debarim (Deuteronomy) 33:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Zechariah 9:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Bamidbar (Numbers) 23:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Obadiah 1:21; Bereshit Rabbah 78:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. *Above the Zodiac: Astrology in Jewish Thought***,** By Matityahu Glazerson. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. The son of Yosef. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Ibid. 5 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Rosh HaShana 3a–b and cf. Gittin 8:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Mishna Rosh HaShana 1:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Bereshit (Genesis) 37:26, 49:8. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Ezekiel 37:16-19 [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. See Toros Vi’uvdos Mi’Beis Raboseinu (Weiss), p. 97, quoting Tiferet Yoel (vol. 3, p. 61). See also R’ Moshe Feinstein’s comments in Drash Moshe, Vi’idos Vi’asifos, drush 2, p. 404. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. It is Levi, in fact, who, the Rambam (Hilchot Avodah Zara, 1:3) writes, was “separated by Yaakov and appointed the head while placed in the yeshiva to teach the way of G-d…” See also the Arizal’s Likutei Torah, Parshat Vayeitzei (p. 90): “Levi sod Talmud Torah, neged Yaakov ish tam…”- and see also p. 94 regarding Levi and Yehuda. (See also Afikei Mayim, Purim (inyan 3, pp. 136-137) discussing Likutei HaGra.) Based on the distinction between Yehuda and Levi drawn by the Netziv- see the introduction to his commentary on the She’iltos (Kidmas HaEmek, 1:4 (5, 6))- however, we could perhaps understand Yaakov’s choice specifically of Yehuda. (For a brief synopsis of the Netziv’s remarks, see Nichocha shel Torah (R’ M. S. Shapira), p. 360.) See also the Izhbitzer’s Mei HaShiloach, vol. 1, Likutei haShas (Yuma 26a), p. 248. See also Har Tzvi al HaTorah, Parshat Vayechi, p. 25, discussing the same Gemara. In addition, see R’ Tzaddok HaKohen’s Machshavos Charutz (63a) and Ohr Zarua LaTzaddik (6a) where he discusses Yehuda as representing the Torah and talmidei chachamim. See also the Chida’s remarks in his Pesach Einayim on Sanhedrin 5a. The gematria Remez (goshna=mashiach) cited in the Sefer Mat’amim (p. 13, and quoted in Otzar Ta’amei HaMinhagim, p. 337) perhaps sheds additional light on the choice specifically of Yehuda. For elaboration, see the B’nei Yissachar, ma’amarei chodshei Kisleiv-Teives, ma’amar 2 (#25). Lastly, see also Derech Sicha, pp. 193-194.  [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. See especially the Netziv’s comments in HaEmek Davar on Vayechi (49:14), and V’zos HaBracha (33:18), and see Koveitz Iyun HaParsha, 5765, gilyon 15/16, pp. 51-52. Regarding the unique madreiga of “bi’nas Yissachar,” see R’ Avraham Azulai’s Chesed L’Avraham (Eiyn Yaakov, nahar 13). See also Bne Yissachar, Ma’amarei Chodshei Kisleiv-Tevet, Maamar 5, #2, and see R’ C. Y. Goldvicht’s Asufas Ma’arachos, Chanukah, Maamar “Yod’ei Binah.”   [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. I subsequently saw the question posed, as well, in Koveitz Iyun HaParsha, 5768, gilyon 40, pp. 36-37. See also Ze’ev Yitraf on Bereshit, p. 446. (See also R’ A. Bazak’s Nekudas Pesicha, pp. 52-53.)  [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Berachot, 4:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Bereshit Rabba, 87:8; Yalkut Shimoni, Tehillim, #873 [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. See the Chida’s Midbar Ki’deimos, ma’areches “kuf,” #5. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. See also R’ Tzadok HaKohen’s Likutei Ma’amarim, 93b, and Ben Yehoyada on Megillah 13a [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Esther 2:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Dan Was Rachel’s firstborn son through her handmaid Bilha. See also Shemot Rabba, 40:4, and see Rabbenu Bechaye’s remarks on Parshat Pekudei, 38:22. See also the remarks of the Maharsha in his Chiddushei Aggadot on Ketubot 5a (“Gedolim”). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. see Malbim on Yehezchel (Ezekiel) 37:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Bereshit (Genesis) Ch. 37 - 39 [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Bereshit (Genesis) 44:18 [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Esav’s all-encompassing downfall, we have been told, would occur at the hands of Rachel’s children. (For various reasons why this is so, see *Bereshit Rabba*, 75:5, 99:2; *Yalkut Shimoni*, end of *Ki* *Teitzei*; *Yalkut Shimoni*, *Sefer* *Shoftim* (5:51); *Pesiqta Rabbati*, #12. (See, however, the terminology in *Bava Batra* 123b.), and see the *Tzeida L’Derech*’s commentary on *Rashi* to 30:25. See, as well, the *Chida*’s related remarks in his *He’Elam Davar*, #111 (and his *Rosh David*, *Parshat Vayeishev*), and see *Midbar Ki’deimos*, *ma’areches* “*gimmel*,” #1. See also: *Parshat Derachim*, *Drush* 26; R’ Yehonasan Eibshitz’s *Ya’aros Devash*, *cheilek* 1, *Drush* 3 and *Drush* 5, and *cheilek* 2, *Drush* 2; R’ David Tebel’s *Nachalas David*, *Drashos*, #5; and R’ Tzaddok *HaKohen*’s *Kometz HaMinchah*, #58 (pp.52-53). See also the *Meshech Chachma*’s explanation appearing in his commentary on *Vayishlach*, 32:6 (concerning the *Midrash Tanchuma*). In addition, see R’ David Cohen’s (Chevron) *Yi’mei HaPurim*, *Maamar* 23, p. 158. See also R’ Avraham Rivlin’s elaboration on the matter in his *HaSetarim B’Esther*, pp. 279-326, and see the remarks of R’ E. E. Kowalsky appearing in his father’s work, *Nechamas Shalom*, vol. 2, pp. 376-379. See also the *Ozhrover Rebbe*’s *Be’er Moshe*, *Vayeitzei*, pp. 608-609. Lastly, see the fascinating *Remez* cited in *Chaim shel Torah*, *Parshat Vayeitzei*, pp. 170-171. ) [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Yeshua’s favorite term for himself is “son of man” – Mt. 8:20, 9:6, 10:23, Mar. 2:28, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. *Kol HaTor*, Chapter 2, par. #39 (p. 485 in Kasher). [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Ezekiel 37:15; *See*Rabbi Matis Weinberg, Patterns in Time, on Chanukah. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Rabbi Moshe Wolfsohn [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Righteous one, who never sinned in the first place. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Those who return to HaShem, acknowledging their mistakes. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Likutei HaGra [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Shabbat 88a [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Succah 48b [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. See Isaiah 11:13 and Rashi there. And Torah Shelemah on Genesis 29:16, note49 [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Obadiah 1:18 [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. See Pirke Heichalot Rabaty, ch. 39; Sefer Zerubavel; Midrash Agadat Mashiach (most of which is quoted in Lekach Tov, Balak, on Numbers 24:17ff.); and cf. Rashi on Sukkah 52b, s.v. charashim. See also Ramban, Commentary on Song 8:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. "Misped b'Yerushalayim" in "Maamarei HaRaya", by Rav Kook [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Shemot (Exodus) 40,11. Aurbach, p.618-620 [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. see also Elya Raba 18 [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Succah 52a [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. The Messianic aspect is derived by analogy with Genesis 4:25 which in Aggadat Mashiach (cited in Lekach Tov on Numbers 24:17) is put into Messianic context. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Midrash Yelamdenu, cited in Kuntres Acharon of Yalkut Shimoni. (This Kuntres Acharon appears only in very few editions of Yalkut Shimoni, but was republished in Jellinek's Bet Hamidrash, vol. VI. Our passage appears there on p. 81, par. 20; and is also cited in Torah Shelemah on Genesis 30:23-24, par. 84 and 89.)

    In context of his military function, Mashiach ben Yosef is referred to as Mashiach Milchama (cf. Sotah 42a, and Rashi on Deuteronomy 20:2, for this term); see Bereshit Rabba 75:6 and 99:2; Shir Rabba 2:13 (a parallel passage of Sukkah 52b); and Aggadat Bereshit, ch. (63) 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Targum Yonatan on Exodus 40:11, and on Zechariah 12:10 (manuscript-version in ed. A. Sperber); Aggadat Mashiach; Pirke Heichalot Rabaty (in version cited by Ramban, Sefer Hage'ulah, shaar IV; ed. Chavel, p. 291); and Rashi on Sukkah 52a; identify the battle of Mashiach ben Yosef with the war of Gog and Magog. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Sukkah 52a, and parallel passages. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Pirke Heichalot Rabaty, ch. 39 (cited in Sefer Hage'ulah, shaar IV); Sefer Zerubavel; Aggadat Mashiach (cited in Lekach Tov, ibid.). See R. Saadia Gaon, Emunot Vede'ot VIII:ch. 5, adding Scriptural "prooftexts" or allusions for all details; and the lengthy responsum of R. Hai Gaon on the redemption, published in Otzar Hageonim on Sukah 52a, and in Midreshei Geula, ed. Y. Ibn Shemuel, p. 135ff. Cf. Rashi and Ibn Ezra on Zechariah 12:10; Ibn Ezra and Redak on Zechariah 13:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Sanhedrin 97b [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Emunot Vede'ot VIII:6; see there at length. Cf. Or Hachayim on Numbers 24:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Peri Eitz Chayim, Shaar Ha'amidah:ch. 19; and Siddur Ha-Ari; on this blessing. The Ari's teaching is cited in Or HaChayim on Leviticus 14:9, see there (and also on Numbers 24:17, where he relates this prayer to the next blessing of the Amidah); and see also Even Shelemah, ch. 11, note 6. Cf. Zohar II:120a (and Or Hachamah there), and ibid. III:153b. See next note. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. The battle of Gog and Magog (see above, Appendix I, note 2) is another of the complex issues of the Messianic redemption. In fact, an authoritative tradition from the disciples of the Baal Shem Tov states that the extraordinary length of the present severe galut has already made up for the troubles of that battle and the trauma of the death of Mashiach ben Yosef, so that these will no longer occur; see R. Shemuel of Sochachev, Shem MiShemuel, Vayigash, s.v. Vayigash 5677 (s.v. venireh od, p. 298bf.). [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Emunot Vede'ot VIII:ch. 5-6. See also the commentary on Shir HaShirim attributed to R. Saadia Gaon, published in Chamesh Megilot im Perushim Atikim (Miginzei Teyman), ed. Y. Kapach, on Song 7:12-14 (p. 115; and also, in Midreshei Geula, p. 131f.; as noted already by the editors, this passage is most probably based on Sefer Zerubavel). [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. See his extensive responsum, cited above note 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Or Hashem, Maamar III, klal 8: end of ch. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Mixed multitude [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Source Dr Bar, Eitan. Refuting Rabbinic Objections to Christianity & Messianic Prophecies (p. 35). [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Rashi agrees Zee 12:10 is about Messiah in his commentary on tractate Sukkah 52 [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Heb. יהוסף formed by the addition of ה to the usual יוסף. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. I.e. Joseph. E.V. ’He’, i.e. God. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Tehillim (Psalms) 81:6, The rendering is based on the Midrashic interpretation. E.V. ’The speech of one that I knew not did I hear’. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Bereshit Rabbah [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Bereshit 50:22, Yehoshua 24:29. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. in pasuk 32 [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Kol HaTor 1, 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Shemot (Exodus) 17 [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. see Kol HaTor 2 at length [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Kol HaTor 1, 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Kol HaTor 2, 36 [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. 1 Shmuel (Samuel) 1:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. I Shmuel (Samuel) 9:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. In Shemuot HaRe'iyah VaYishlach (5691), quoted in Peninei HaRe'iyah, 'Eulogy in Jerusalem' from Ma'amarei HaRe'iyah. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Redemption is identified with the attribute of Yesod. Redemption refers to an outpouring of an abundance of Divine blessing and revelation. Thus, it is associated with the Sefirah of Yesod which is the medium that will convey this influence to the lower realms (*Torat Menachem,* Vol. 5, pp. 101-102).] [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Righteous one, who never sinned in the first place. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Those who return to HaShem, acknowledging their mistakes. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. The Sfat Emet *Vayigash* 5658 [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Rabbi Akiva is the essence of the Oral Law. Moses brings the written Law down to the world; Rabbi Akiva is the nucleus around which the Oral Law is transmitted and generated within the world. There are many parallels between Moses and Rabbi Akiva (Sifrei, Debarim 357; both lived 120 years...); but Moses comes from within, Rabbi Akiva from without (he is the offspring of converts; Moses descends from Jacob, Rabbi Akiva from Esau). Jacob is the root of the Written law; Esau is the root of the Oral Law (Genesis 25:28 ki tzayid b'piv). Jacob and Esau are twins; at one level Esau is the firstborn, at another Jacob fulfils that destiny. (This is also the root of Moses’ apparent inability to understand the Torah of Rabbi Akiva and his suggestion that the Torah be given through Rabbi Akiva; in fact, in a very deep way, it was.) [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. The son of Yosef. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Ibid. 5 [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. *Above the Zodiac: Astrology in Jewish Thought***,** By Matityahu Glazerson. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Rosh HaShana 3a–b and cf. Gittin 8:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Mishna Rosh HaShana 1:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. A “complete tzadik” [tzadik gamur] who not only vanquishes in full his innate evil inclination, but even transforms it into good [for which reason he is referred to as *tzadik v’tov lo*”, a tzadik who possesses only good]. The path of tzaddikim is focused within the realm of holiness and defined by the observance of the Torah and its mitzvot. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. The path of teshuva reflects the efforts to transform evil to good and, in a larger sense, to elevate worldly entities to holiness. A characterization used by Chazal in connection with Yehuda’s descendant, King David (Moed Katan 16b; Avodah Zara 5a). [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) 32:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Redemption is identified with the attribute of Yesod. Redemption refers to an outpouring of an abundance of Divine blessing and revelation. Thus, it is associated with the Sefirah of Yesod which is the medium that will convey this influence to the lower realms (*Torat Menachem,* Vol. 5, pp. 101-102).] [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. The connection between Yosef and Zionism appears multiple times in the Sfat Emet, and is further developed by Rav Kook. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Yehuda’s self-nullification can be seen when he offered to be a substitute for Binyamin. Bereshit (Genesis) 44:33. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Zeir Anpin (Aramaic: זְעֵיר אַנפִּין meaning “Lesser Countenance/Small Face” [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Malchut is the tenth of the sephirot in the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. It sits at the bottom of the Tree, below Yesod. This sephirah has as a symbol the Bride which relates to the sphere of Tiferet, symbolized by the Bridegroom. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. The son of Yosef. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Ibid. 5 [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. *Above the Zodiac: Astrology in Jewish Thought***,** By Matityahu Glazerson. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Rosh HaShana 3a–b and cf. Gittin 8:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Mishna Rosh HaShana 1:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Sefer Yetzirah – The Book of Creation In Theory and Practice, by Aryeh Kaplan. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)