

BS”D

## Mobileye, Mikdash and Mashiach

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~ מובילאיי ~

Greetings from Mobileye, what I call, the poster child of the Start-Up nation.

As I imagine many of you are aware, Mobileye was brought by Intel for the largest sum of money in Israeli history. It is the greatest success story of the start-up nation, and represents what I would call a Paradigm shift in the way the world looks at Israel.

- **Paradigm Shift**

- "Over the last couple of weeks, since the Intel-Mobileye transaction, all hell has broken loose," says Jon **Medved**, CEO of OurCrowd, an Israel-based crowdsourcing platform for accredited investors. "The country is being overrun in a positive way by investors, corporations, strategic partners, all sorts, who simply want to get a piece of this."
- Intel CEO Brian **Krzanich**: "We think of ourselves as an Israeli company as much as a U.S. company" [

Wow. You realize that even Israeli companies don't advertise they are Israeli – not good for business. But now it IS good for business. The world wants to be associated with us!

When they asked founder Ziv Aviram, "how did we do it?", he said, "I like to quote Thomas Jefferson. Thomas Jefferson said: I believe in luck; and I believe the harder you work, the more luck you have." As one of the founding engineers but also the Rabbi of Mobileye, I would like to modify this slightly: I believe the harder you work, the more *Siyata DeShmaya* (help of heaven) you have.

If there is anything that my time at Mobileye has taught me, indeed my whole life has taught me, is that success lies at the intersection of human endeavor and divine assistance (*hishtadlut* and *siyata dishmaya*; *mesirut nefesh* and *hashgacha pratit*). I believe that this confluence is the heart of our meditations on Rosh Hashana. I believe that it is this understanding that will bring us to the goal of creation.

It is to this goal that we end our prayers three times a day, quoting the prophet Isaiah:

וְהָיָה יְקִיָּק לְמֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יְהִי יְקִיָּק אֶחָד וַיִּשְׁמוּ אֶחָד :

“And the Eternal shall be King over all the earth; On that day shall the Eternal be one and his name one”

What is this business about God being King? In a nutshell, it is really saying that we human beings recognize that we are part of something truly grand – it's called the creation of the universe. There is a Creator – a King – and he has a plan – to perfect the world, to redeem humanity.

So “making God King” is just religio-speak meaning that we believe there is a purpose: to make the world a better place.

Creation is about God being King. Rosh Hashana is about God being King.

Now REB, one of the great modern Jewish philosophers of the 20c) notices something very important about this verse:

R. Eliezer Berkovits writes:

**R. Eliezer Berkovits, *God, Man and History*, p. 155-6**

... “And the Eternal shall be King over all the earth; On that day shall the Eternal be one and his name one,” cannot be the Eternal’s doing alone, without reference to man’s success or failure in history. If it were altogether the work of the Eternal, it would have been more logical to dispense with all history from the very beginning and start with the day on which “the Eternal shall be King.”

That is, God wanted the world to live in peace and harmony, Garden of Eden. But if he didn’t want man to have any part of that, he would have just put us in the Garden without freewill. Rather God wants us to make the Garden of Eden on earth.

There is a human responsibility in making the Eternal King over all the earth by placing all life under his sovereignty. **The striving for this goal is the meaning of history.**

What he is saying here is that all of human history has a purpose – to fulfill God’s plan of making the world a better place. And if we strive to fulfill God’s plan, if we strive to be moral people acting according to God’s plan to perfect the world – this is called making God King.

So this is the explanation of history - man striving to perfect the imperfect world. Seems reasonable enough, but then R. Eliezer Berkovits says something quite astounding...

Man’s redemption is, therefore, within the scope of human responsibility.

**Man** is responsible for redemption?! But I thought:

- God redeems man,
- God sends the Mashiach,
- God brings the mikdash from on high?!?!)

If we look into our sources a bit more carefully, we will see that R. Eliezer Berkovits is quite right, God has placed upon man full responsibility for his own redemption.

~ **Messiah** ~

One of the more well-known sources on the issue of Mashiach is a Gem. (San 98a) that brings two verses about the final redemption.

One verse is in **Daniel**, says that the Messiah will come swooping in on **clouds** of glory; the other verse is in **Zecharia**, says that the Messiah will come haltingly on a **donkey**.

**תלמוד בבלי מסכת סנהדרין דף צח עמוד א**

אמר רבי אלכסנדר: רבי יהושע בן לוי רמי, [בישעיהו (ס: כב)] – “אני יקוק בעתה אחישנה”  
כתיב בעתה, וכתיב, אחישנה! זכו - אחישנה, לא זכו - בעתה. אמר רבי אלכסנדר: רבי יהושע בן לוי רמי, כתיב [בדניאל] וארו עם ענני שמיא כבר אגש אתה, וכתיב [בזכריה] עני ורכב על חמור! - זכו - עם ענני שמיא, לא זכו - עני ורכב על חמור.

The Gemara asks how these two prophecies can both be true. The Gem resolves the apparent contradiction by explaining that the two prophecies speak of two different scenarios: if the Jews are meritorious (i.e., they do what they're supposed to do in perfecting the world), then God will speed the redemption and send the Messiah like rushing in on clouds, and if the Jews are, h"z, not doing what they're supposed to be doing, then God will bring the Messiah haltingly, like a donkey.

R. Eliezer Berkovits learns from this Gemara that:

**R. Eliezer Berkovits, *God, Man and History*, p. 157**

The goal is preordained [i.e., the world *will* be redeemed, the Messiah *will* come]; the path to it, however, must be blazed by man, and the time required to reach it will depend on him.

So, while God is certainly in control and will affect the redemption when and how He sees fit, this does not reduce our RESPONSIBILITY to work toward it.

What is further amazing, in terms of man's responsibility, is that according to the RMBM even the very acceptance of the Messiah is entirely in our hands - whether the Messiah comes on a donkey or on a cloud, it is **man** who will have to accept him according to the parameters – criteria delineated by the RMBM.

Side note: Before we get to that, it is important to make clear that the Messiah is not some supernatural phenomenon. He is a political/military leader. The name Messiah from the Hebrew "Mashiach" which simply means "annointed" – it's the natural means of symbolically inaugurating a king. All the kings in Israel were annointed, were Mashuach.

So how do we know who is the Mashiach? How do we know one of our current leaders is not the Messiah? The RMBM explains.

RMBM first explains to us what the Messiah is supposed to do...

**רמב"ם הלכות מלכים פרק יא**

הלכה א - המלך המשיח עתיד לעמוד ולהחזיר מלכות דוד ליושנה לממשלה הראשונה, ובונה המקדש ומקבץ נדחי ישראל, וחוזרין כל המשפטים בימיו כשהיו מקודם, מקריבין קרבנות, ועושין שמטין ויובלות ככל מצותה האמורה בתורה, ...

The Messiah will be a king who will return the political sovereignty of Israel to its former glory, build the temple (we will discuss why this is of value in a minute), and will ingather all the Jews scattered in the diaspora.

Then he explains to us what the Messiah is NOT supposed to do...

הלכה ג - ואל יעלה על דעתך שהמלך המשיח צריך לעשות אותות ומופתים ומחדש דברים בעולם או מחיה מתים וכיוצא בדברים אלו, אין הדבר כך, שהרי רבי עקיבא חכם גדול מחכמי משנה היה, והוא היה נושא כליו של בן כוזיבא המלך, והוא היה אומר עליו שהוא המלך המשיח, ודימה הוא וכל חכמי דורו שהוא המלך המשיח, עד שנהרג בעונות, כיון שנהרג נודע להם שאינו, ולא שאלו ממנו חכמים לא אות ולא מופת, ועיקר הדברים ככה הן, ...

That is, don't expect him to make miracles, raise the dead; that's not his thing.

And now Rambam puts things together for us, and explains how we are to accept the Messiah...

**הלכה ד - ואם יעמוד מלך מבית דוד הוגה בתורה ועוסק במצוות כדוד אביו,**  
He will be a political leader from the Davidic line who understands God's plan, that there is a purpose to human history.

**כפי תורה שבכתב ושבעל פה, ויכוף כל ישראל לילך בה ולחזק בדקה,**  
And he will teach all of Israel about this divine plan.

**וילחם מלחמות ה', הרי זה בחזקת שהוא משיח,**  
And he will fight against evil in the world, against all those who reject the plan that wants humanity to live in peace and harmony. If he does all this then he is a POTENTIAL MESSIAH.

**אם עשה והצליח ונצח כל האומות שסביביו ובנה מקדש במקומו וקבץ נדחי ישראל הרי זה משיח בודאי...**  
Following this, if he is SUCCESSFUL in bringing peace, building the Temple in Jerusalem, Ingathering the Jewish exiles, THEN we know he is indeed the awaited Messiah.

What is amazing here, notes Bar Ilan Prof. Rabbi Tzachi Hershokivitz, is that we cannot even have a POTENTIAL Messiah without a significant infrastructure in place. The potential messiah has to be the political leader of the Jewish people – that means we need a government of a country. He has to wage military campaigns – that means we need to have a Jewish Army.

**ר' צחי הרשקוביץ, פרוף' לפילוסופיה יהודית, אונ' בר אילן**  
[משיח אינו נשלח ע"י השם אלא הובא ע"י ישראל. רק אחרי שנראה שהאדם שהתקבל בחזקת משיח הצליח בכל משימותיו נבין שאכן הוא המשיח שהקב"ה שלח. המשיח הוא האדם שאדם מחליט שהוא נשלח ע"י אלוקים. לפי הרמב"ם יש לנו חובה הלכתית לטפח, לאפשר ולקבל את המשיח. ובכן, יש צורך חיוני שיהיה קיים התשתית המאפשרת את המשיח בפוטנציאל].

So we can't just sit around in LA, NY or Paris and say, I'll go to Israel when the Messiah comes. He's not going to come if we don't work toward his coming.

And so beyond man's responsibility in history to bring about redemption through perfecting his ways (teshuvah), here we see man's TOTAL responsibility in the redemptive process even when God has decided it is time (B'TTA).

We need a country, we need a government, we need an army.

But wait a minute: we have a country, we have a government, we have an army!

Indeed, the State of Israel has laid the infrastructure to allow for the Messiah.

R. Aaron Soloveitchik noted exactly this in his 1968 essay in which he explains that the State of Israel is PRE-Messianic.

**R. A. Soloveitchik, Geshet 4:1, Israel's Day of Independence (1968), p.13**

How is redemption reached on a natural level? By full dedication to the upbuilding of the land of Israel – through colonization, through settlement, through reclamation of the land. [These are "Pre-Messianic" Days].

R. Eliezer Berkovits agrees, but calls it by a different name - he calls our return a "messianic moment":

**R. E. Berkovits, Essential Essays, On Jewish Sovereignty (1973), p. 188**

Is this the Messiah already? It is enough to look out the window to realize that nothing could be further from the truth... But it is a **messianic moment**, in which the unexpected fruits of human endeavor reveal themselves as the mysterious expression of a divine guidance which the heart always knew would come. [So here we see again that confluence of human effort and divine assistance]... Having found our way back to Zion in a messianic moment, we know that God is doing "a new thing; now shall it spring forth" (Isaiah 43:19) ...

I would like to offer that the Intel/Mobileye buyout is "a messianic moment".

Now before you fall off your seats laughing, hear me out.

We saw in the Rambam that certain things need to be in place to accept the Messiah. We saw that the State of Israel has given us the infrastructure to accept a POTENTIAL Messiah. But what do we need to accept the true Messiah (Mashiach Bevadaï)? The Rambam taught that ultimately it is the total INGATHERING of the exiles and the building of the MIKDASH that will confirm the Messiah.

To perform the ingathering we have El Al, so that's taken care of. What needs to be in place so that the Mashiach can build the MIKDASH? Is the Mikdash just a building on a hill in a city? Is bricks and mortar all that is needed to fulfill this last messianic element?

~ מקדש ~

To answer this question we need to understand what really is the Mikdash. For this, I turn to R. Joshua Berman's book, "The Temple." In it he explains that the Torah refers to the Temple no less than 21 times in the book of Devarim as:

... "הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר יְקֹוֹק אֱלֹהֵיכֶם בּוֹ לְשֹׁן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם ... " (דברים פרק יב:יא)

Based on this he explains:

**R. Joshua Berman, The Temple, p.63**

When the Torah refers to the Temple as the place where God's name will be established, it is a telling statement of the Temple's purpose: *the Temple* – "a house for God's name" – symbolizes a public declaration of God's sovereignty. [There is that term again, making God King. Again, the idea is that we want to live in a world of peace and harmony, in a world of moral order – to do so we sign up to God's plan of fixing the world – and we call it "making God king"]. The ambition of declaring God's sovereignty in the world ... is the calling of the Jewish people... [as we saw in the words of R. E. Berkovits].

The plan of fixing the world is the mission of the Jewish people. But we don't go running around the world saying "God is King, God is King" – they'll lock us up in a loony bin. No, we work on fixing the world, and we are a "light unto the nations" by teaching the nations of the world that there is a plan to make the world a better place. The SYMBOL of that plan is the Temple in Jerusalem. That is why we want to build this building.

Now, if that is the goal of the people of Israel and the Mikdash is the central symbol of our purpose, I would have expected that the first thing the Jews would do upon arriving in Israel would be to build the Temple – I mean, that is goal of the Jewish people. But it didn't happen in 1948 and it didn't even happen back when the Jews left Egypt to come to the land of Israel the first time!

That is, the Jews were in the desert for 40 years and it then took Joshua 14 years to conquer the land, so I would expect that 54 years after the exodus the Jews would have built the Temple. But instead we read in the book of kings that it wasn't until Shlomo HaMelech came to build the Temple – 480 years after the Exodus!

**מלכים א פרק ו, א**  
(א) וַיְהִי בְשָׁמוֹנִים שָׁנָה וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה לְצֵאת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּשָׁנָה הָרְבִיעִית בְּחֹדֶשׁ זוֹ  
הוּא הַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁנִי לְמִלְדָּ שְׁלֹמֹה עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּבְנוּ הַבַּיִת לַיהוָה:

WHY?!

Why did God want to wait for King Solomon? RJB answers:

**R. Joshua Berman, The Temple, p.63**

**God's acclaim in the world is a direct function of how Israel is perceived.**

[That is, if we are God's representatives in this world, if we are the one's telling people there is a divine plan, so our status is a direct reflection on how the world sees God. If we are a poor weak bunch of nomads in a desert country, who is going to listen to us about God. If we can't put a falafel on the table for dinner, who is going to listen to us about God]. The events that culminated with the building of the First Temple need to be seen in light of the following question: under what conditions would a nation – any nation – command broad respect? In this regard, we need only look at the hallmarks of a great country today. A great country should possess political stability at home and should be at peace with its neighbors. It should possess a **strong economy** and should be home to a culture that boasts strong virtues.

So there you have it, without a strong economy the people of Israel are in no position to be a light unto the nations, are in no position to build the Mikdash.

~ Intel/Mobileye buyout is “a messianic moment” ~

And so, if our return to Zion, its resettlement and establishment of a government and army are – in the words of R. E. Berkovits – a messianic moment, then so too is the flourishing of the Israeli economy.

I believe that the Intel/MBLY deal in particular is a grand reflection of that “moment” because of its astounding impact on the country. Beyond the sheer numbers of the deal (\$15.3B, 130 PE):

- People are clamoring to **invest** in Israel.
- People want to be **associated** with Israel
- People want to **learn** from Israel.

I have been giving talks to groups coming to learn about Israel from all over the world: China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Zurich, London, NY, Chicago, ...

And if you find it too much to call this one deal a "messianic moment", then it is certainly the biggest deal in total economic growth that brings our attention to realize the moment of the new strong economy.

~ המכשול ~

But with this great success comes a GREAT TEST: Arrogance/Humility.

Indeed, REDessler (Michtav MeEliyahu) says is Arrogance is the last and greatest test before the coming of the Messiah:

**מכתב מאליהו, חלק ג', עמ' 207, הגלויות ועקבות משיחא**

זה הוא הנסיון של תוכו הוטל עם ישראל ב. עקבות דמשיחא. ה' יתברך משיב יהודים רבים לארץ ישראל ושולטים בה. ופורקי עול התורה מתגאים כאילו הם עשו ופעלו זאת בגבורתם, וככל שתגדל גאותם תגדל חוצפתם. ויגבר רצונם להשליט את האפיקורסות ח"ו. זהו הנסיון האחרון של גלות השכינה, הנסיון הקשה ביותר. אם נכיר את הנסיון הזה בכל הקפו, נדע

Indeed, it is easy to say man did it all – the Zionist enterprise, the MBLY enterprise, were all the result of blood, sweat and tears. But I believe this takes hubris beyond hutzpa.

There are many miraculous stories to show the divine hand in the story of the State of Israel. But, since we are talking about Mobileye, indeed, having lived the MBLY story let me tell you a story. I can assure you there many times where the company could have been shut down and by luck – or by miracle – depending on your perspective, we survived and succeeded, like the Jewish people, beyond all proportions.

Let me share with you ONE example from many: 2007, company out of money, take \$10M loan – with NO WAY to pay back. Goldman Sachs comes to invest \$110M, but lawyer hanging up deal. Ziv slams on the desk says sign now or we don't need your money! They signed.

Some people call it luck, I call it Siyata Dishmaya.

As I said in the beginning, success is found at the intersection of human initiative and divine assistance. This is precisely what the Psalmist tells us of the building of the Temple:

**תהלים קכז (א) שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת לְשִׁלְמֹה אִם יִקְוֶה לֹא יִבְנֶה בַּיִת שְׂוֹא עֲמָלוֹ בּוֹנֵיו בּוֹ ...**

“If God will not build the Temple, the workers toil in vain.”

~ Conclusion ~

To conclude, it is with this vision, this understanding, of human endeavor AND divine assistance that we have merited many messianic moments, may we continue to merit many more till that fill day when witness the fruition of the prophecy:

**וְהָיָה יְקֹוֹק לְמֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יְהִיָּה יְקֹוֹק אֶחָד וְשִׁמוֹ אֶחָד :**

“And the Eternal shall be King over all the earth; On that day shall the Eternal be one and his name one”

Shana Tova.

