



From Maimonides

| Melamed, Zalman Baruch

The Rambam, Maimonides (1135-1204)

JUST PREPARING FOR THE REAL THING

by Zalman Baruch Melamed

At First Glance

It sometimes appears that we see certain processes taking place, in the spiritual realm, that are harmful and offensive to Jewish belief. On deeper thought, however, we know that G-d's actions are more elevated and more sublime than ours - as are His "thoughts" from ours. When we look more closely at these "harmful" processes, we see that in fact, the same events that appear to be damaging - are precisely those that prepare the way for the revelation of the G-d of Israel in the world in a more perfect and complete way.

Christianity, for instance. At first glance, it appears that Christianity brought tragedy and catastrophe upon Israel, and that its entire essence has been only bad. Maimonides, however, says that Christianity and Islam came to the world in order to prepare the way for the true Messiah, the King of Israel from the House of David.

The Rambam's Words

These are Maimonides' words, written in his Laws of Kings (11,4):

"Even Jesus the Christian, who thought he was the Messiah... was the subject of a prophesy in the Book of Daniel (11, 14): "...also the renegades of your people will exalt themselves to fulfill the vision - but they will stumble." Could there be a greater stumbling block than this [Jesus]? For all the prophets spoke of the Messiah who will redeem and save Israel, who will ingather all its exiles, and who will strengthen them in the fulfillment of the Torah's commandments - while he [Jesus] caused Israel to be killed by the sword, their remnants to be dispersed and humiliated, the Torah to be switched for something else, and most of the world to worship a G-d other than the G-d of Israel! But - the thoughts of G-d cannot be fathomed by human minds. For our ways are not like His, and our thoughts are not like His. All these activities of Jesus the Christian, and the Ishmaelite who came after him, are all for the purpose of paving the way for the true King Messiah, and preparing the entire world to worship G-d together, as is written (Tzefaniah 3,9): "For then I will convert the nations to a pure language, that they may all call in the name of G-d and serve Him together."

"How will this work? For by then, the world will already be filled with the idea of Messiah, and Torah, and commandments, even in far-off islands and in closed-hearted nations, where they engage in discussions on the Torah's commandments: some say that the Torah's commandments are true but are no longer binding in these times, while others say that there are hidden, deep meanings to them, and that the Messiah has come and revealed their hidden secrets. But when the true King Messiah arrives, and will succeed and will raise them up, all the peoples will immediately realize that they had been taught lies by their forefathers, and that their ancestors and

prophets had misled them."

Preparing the Way

From these words of the Rambam, we learn that even though Christianity negates the Torah, and promotes a different redemption and a different redeemer – even so, the very discussion of these issues arouses thoughts and anticipation throughout the world of great events. And even though these are misdirected, the hearts are still ready and waiting. When the Messiah, King of Israel, reveals himself, everyone will immediately recognize him, and will realize that "Moshe is true, and his Torah is true."

Similarly, this is how we must view the upcoming visit of the Pope in Israel, and its accompanying disquiet. At first glance, we ask ourselves, who needs this visit? What does it help us? It seems to only do damage and cause confusion! But this is only at first glance. In deeper truth, this is just another step in the preparation of the Jewish people's complete redemption, which will lead to the redemption of the entire world and their understanding that "The L-rd, our G-d, is One, and His Name is One."

Shalom, shalom.

Maimonides (1135-1204) is known by the acronym RaMBaM (**R**abbi **M**oses **B**en **M**aimon). He wrote the most renowned commentary on *halakha*. His codification of Jewish law is called the *Mishneh Torah*.

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