

אל תגעו במשיחי אלו תינוקות של בית רבן

The תינוקות של בית רבן, the pure, innocent, angelic Jewish children who are without a blemish, without a sin - they are compared to a Moshiach. What is the analogy between a Moshiach and tinokos shel beis raban?

Jewish tradition knows of two types of Mishichim. There is Moshiach ben Dovid. The Rambam describes Moshiach ben Dovid.

There is another Moshiach, Moshiach ben Yosef. The Rambam doesn't even mention Moshiach ben Yosef in Hilchos Melachim. He discusses in great detail the identity and the character of Moshiach ben Dovid, the attributes, the characteristics of Moshiach ben Dovid. He does not mention Moshiach ben Yosef.

Why? Our sages tell us that prior to the event of Moshiach ben Dovid, there is an event of Moshiach ben Yosef. We know very little about Moshiach ben Yosef. We only know that there will be a descendant of Yosef who will pave the world for the ultimate redemption by Moshiach ben Dovid. But, unlike Moshiach ben Dovid who is a very fortunate Moshiach, and who is able to realize the fruits of his labor, Moshiach ben Yosef is a very unfortunate and a very tragic person. He is as much of a Moshiach as Moshiach ben Dovid! But Moshiach ben Yosef will pave the way and prepare the world for the ultimate spiritual and moral redemption, along with the material and physical redemption! However, he himself cannot witness the fruits of his labor; the fruits of his sacrifices. He himself perishes before the event of Moshiach ben Dovid.

And, there are two types of תינוקות של בית רבן . Those תינוקות של בית רבן in a literal sense, those who, as a group are without a blemish, as we say עשה למען תינוקות של עשה למען תינוקות של בית רבן. And תינוקות של בית רבן also comprises certain grownup Jews, certain giants like the Asara Harugai Malchus, like the Tana'im and Amora'im, the Gedolai Olam of every generation who, in spite of the fact that they are very old, they are on the level of children, בי נער ישראל ואוהבהו, without a blemish; pure and innocent without any sin, like little children. They also comprise תינוקות של בית רבן. There are two types of tinokos shel beis raban. The tinokos shel beis raban on the whole pave the road and prepare the world for the ultimate redemption; for the ultimate spiritual, moral and the material redemption.

But there are two types of tinokos shel beis raban. There are tinokos shel beis raban who are analogous to Moshiach ben Dovid, who make sacrifices so that the world should be ready for the Geula shlaima, but they are able to have nachas; to see the fruits of their sacrifices, the fruits of their labor. And unfortunately, there are certain 'tinokes shel beis raban' like little children who were devoured by wolves, years ago, in the Eiver Hayarden, or like the children of Rabi Meir, who died at one time, in one minute on Shabbos afternoon; and who are like these two who perished in one week in such a tragic, unnatural way. They are analogous to Moshiach; but unfortunately, not to Moshiach ben Dovid. They are analogous to Moshiach ben Yosef. They pave the road for Geulah; they prepare the world for the ultimate Geulah; for a world of Torah, for an olam shekulo tov, an olam shekulo aruch, but unfortunately they were not able to see the fruits of their sacrifices, the fruits of their labor, the fruits of their dedication!

This was the answer that the bas kol gave to the melachei maalah, who cried out, זו תורה וזו שכרה:

– אם אשמע קול אחר אהפוך את העולם למים לתוהו ובוהו

The Medrash Raba in Bereshis says

ששה דברים קדמו לבריאת העולם, יש מהן שנבראו ויש מהן שעלו במחשבה להבראות התורה והנסא הכבוד נבראו, האבות וישראל ובית המקדש ושמו של משיח עלו במחשבה להבראות.

The world was created with the plan that there will be two Mishichim! We cannot understand, why was it necessary that there be a Moshiach ben Yosef in addition to Moshiach ben Dovid. According to our limited minds, a Moshiach ben Dovid would suffice! But this is beyond the inquisitive grasp of our own limited minds! God in His infinite wisdom took cognizance of the fact that there must be two Mishichim, and without the idea of two Mishichim, a Moshiach ben Yosef as well as a Moshiach ben Dovid, the world could not be created. Here when the malachei maalah, when the heavenly angels exclaimed: “Zu Torah v’zu scharah!”, it is a very strong question, but there is no answer, there is no answer for our limited minds.

But there is an answer:

אם אשמע קול אחר אהפוך את העולם למים לתוהו ובוהו

You heavenly angels, you want the world to exist on the basis of a idea of only one kind of Moshiach; of a Moshiach ben Dovid who paves the world, who prepares the world for the ultimate redemption and he’s able to see the fruits of his sacrifices, the fruits of his labor.

No! The idea of Moshiach comprises two types of Mishichim. Along with the Moshiach ben Dovid, there is also a Moshiach ben Yosef. This must happen. It is part and parcel of the Divine, cosmic plan that the Ribbono shel Olam reserved for the world in its entirety. It is beyond our inquisitive grasp. But, even though we cannot understand it at this moment, לעתיד לבא, after תחית המתים, all questions, all dissonance, all difficulties will be resolved.