

Part V

Skeptic: Okay, so in 2000 the mind and heart of humanity is finally fertile ground for a real New World Order, not only one that unites against “naked aggression” when the price of oil is at stake. Your theory sounds great but, as I understand it, Moshiach is a lot more than a great theory---you actually expect it to happen. So where do we go from here? What happens next?

Believer: You tell me: What has to happen?

Skeptic: Well, first of all, everyone has to buy your story.

Believer: Do you buy it?

Skeptic: Whether or not I buy it is irrelevant---in order for it to happen, everyone has to buy it. As you pointed out, Moshiach would score very high on a Gallop poll---anyone who doesn't want a world free of ignorance, hate and strife is crazy. But anyone who begins to act as if the world has achieved this is even crazier---try leaving your car unlocked in South Bronx for five minutes. You have to figure out some way to convince everyone together.

Believer: That's exactly what and who Moshiach is. A person with the vision and message to inspire all of humanity.

Skeptic: The ultimate salesman, eh? He knocks on your door with a “Let's All Be Good” policy in his briefcase and signs you up in five fast-talking minutes flat. Do you think the best salesman in the world can sell his product to every human being on earth?

Believer: He doesn't have to sell us on anything we don't already understand and want. If anything, he is like the child who cries out “The emperor has no clothes,” causing everyone to snap out of their artificial, superimposed behavior and embrace the truth of their own convictions.

Skeptic: It seems that in our case the issue is far more complex than the simple fact of an unclothed emperor striding the streets. Throughout the generations, many “Moshiach's” have sounded their calls (or had a good PR man do so for them) for a better world, yet humanity did not instantaneously see the light.

Believer: You're right in that it's far more complex in our case, but the issue is, in fact, the same in the story. Moshiach's message, in a nutshell, is indeed that “The emperor has no clothes.”

Skeptic: Huh? What do you mean?

Believer: The emperor, of course, is G-d; the clothes are what He dresses up in when He wants to disguise Himself.

Skeptic: Well, does He or doesn't He have clothes?

Believer: He does and He doesn't. Just as in the story: the emperor is clothed--at least everyone acts as if he were clothed--as long as we choose to see things that way.

Skeptic: So how does G-d dress up---or appear to dress up?

Believer: He has all kinds of illusory clothes: chance, fate, the survival of the fittest, Murphy's Law, the Stock Exchange---all those things which give us the impression that the world is going everywhere at once and nowhere at all. G-d “dresses” Himself in these clothes. His involvement in history is shrouded in them---yet the meaning and purpose of it all are discernable nary a scratch beneath the surface. The same is true on the individual level: life is a series of disjointed events---until one takes a deeper look. The moment we open our eyes, the “clothes” dissipate into thin air...

Skeptic: So we're all going to have this great prophetic vision of G-d without His "clothes" and this will instantaneously transform us all into Boy Scouts...?

Believer: To perceive G-d as He is means many things on many levels. The most basic implication is that the true purpose of our lives will become as obvious as the fact of our being. The dumbest animal does not leap into fire. When man will openly perceive the purpose of his existence, he will be no more inclined to act against it than he is to destroy himself.

Skeptic: Until that kid comes along, I'm still locking my car.