

Moshiach's Letter through the Shliach Ya'akov to the Brit Chadasha Kehillah

Introduction

This letter may be the earliest writing in the Brit Chadasha. Of royal blood, Ya'akov Bar Yosef Ben Dovid, like Rav Sha'ul, was an unbeliever until he came to faith by the appearance of the Risen Moshiach (see 1C 15:7). He died al kiddush ha-Shem 62 C.E. according to Josephus. His brother Yehuda wrote the letter called Yehuda; see Mt 13:55.

¹ Ya'akov,* eved (*servant*) of HASHEM and of Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach Adoneinu Yehoshua; To the Shneyim Asar HaShevatim (*Twelve Tribes*) in the Golus, Shalom!†

² Consider it all simcha, my Achim b'Moshiach, whenever you fall into various nisayonos (*tests, trials*),

³ Because you have da'as that the emunah you have, when it is tested, produces savlanut (*patient endurance*).

⁴ And let savlanut be shleimah in its po'al (*work*) in order that you may be mevugarim (*mature, grown up*) and complete, lacking in nothing.

⁵ But if any one of you is lacking chochmah (*wisdom*), let him direct tefillah (*prayer*) and techinot (*petitions*) to HASHEM, the One whose matanot

* 1:1 See Mt 13:55 † 1:1 Dt 32:26

(*gifts*) are given generously and without grudging, and chochmah will be given to him.‡

⁶ But let the tefillah be offered with much bitachon in emunah (*faith*), in no way doubting. For the doubtful man, wavering in emunah, is like a wave of the yam (*sea*), being tossed by the wind.§

⁷ Let not such a one presume that he will receive anything from Adoneinu.

⁸ He is an ish (*man*) of double mind, in all his drakhim (*ways*), mesupak (*uncertain, having doubts*) and unstable.*

⁹ But let the Ach b'Moshiach of shiflut (*lowliness*) glory in the da'as that HASHEM will exalt him.

¹⁰ And let the Ach b'Moshiach who has osher (*riches*) glory in his bizyoinos (*humiliation*), in the da'as that HASHEM will bring him low, because KOL HABASAR KHATZIR† (*All flesh is grass*) and so he likewise will vanish.‡

¹¹ For the shemesh (*sun*) rose with its burning heat and dried the grass and its TZITZ NAVEL§ (*flower blossom fell*). And the beauty of its appearance perished, so also the “oisher” (*rich man*) in his goings will fade away.*

¹² Ashrey is the one who stands up under nisayon (*trial*), because, having become approved, that one will be given the Ateret HaChayyim (*Crown of Life*), which HASHEM gave as a havtachah (*promise*) to those having Ahavas HASHEM.

‡ 1:5 1Kgs 3:9,10; Prov 2:3-6; Ps 51:6; Dan 1:17; 2:21 § 1:6 1Kgs 18:21 * 1:8 Ps 119:113 † 1:10 Isa 40:6,7 ‡ 1:10 Job 14:2; Ps 103:15,16 § 1:11 Isa 40:6-8 * 1:11 Ps 102:4,11

¹³ However, let no one say, when he is tempted, “From HASHEM I am being tempted,” for HASHEM cannot be tempted to crave ra'ah (*evil*), and He Himself trips up no one with nisayon (*temptation*).

¹⁴ But each one is tempted by his own ta'avah (*lust, yetzer hara*), being dragged off by it and being allured.[†]

¹⁵ Then after her conception Ta'avah gives birth to Averah (*Transgression*) and Averah, once she has fully developed, gives birth to Mavet.[‡]

¹⁶ Do not fall under a delusion, my beloved Achim b'Moshiach.

¹⁷ Every good endowment and every matanah shleimah (*complete gift*) is from above, coming down from Avi HaOhrot (*the Father of Lights*) with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.[§]

¹⁸ Birtzon HASHEM (*by the will of G-d*), he gave birth to us by the Dvar HaEmes, that we might be a kind of bikkurim (*firstfruits*) of all he created.*

¹⁹ Have da'as of this, my beloved Achim b'Moshiach. Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to ka'as (*anger*).[†]

²⁰ For the ka'as of Bnei Adam does not accomplish the Tzikat HASHEM.

²¹ Therefore, having put away all filthiness and what remains of resha (*wickedness*) in shiflut (*lowliness*) and meekness receive the implanted Dvar HASHEM which is able to save your nefashot.[‡]

[†] **1:14** Prov 19:3 [‡] **1:15** Gn 3:6; Job 15:35; Ps 7:14; Isa 59:4

[§] **1:17** Ps 85:12; Gn 1:16; Ps 136:7; Dan 2:22; Num 23:19; Ps 102:27;

Mal 3:6 * **1:18** Jer 2:3 [†] **1:19** Prov 10:19 [‡] **1:21** Rv 3:20

²² Now be Shomrei HaDvar HASHEM and not Shomei HaDvar only, thereby causing yourselves to fall under remiyah (*deceit, deception*).

²³ Because if anyone is Shomei HaDavar and not Shomrei HaDavar, this one is like a man looking at his ponum in a mirror,

²⁴ For he observed himself and has gone away and immediately forgot what he looked like.

²⁵ But the one having peered into the Torah HaShleimah (*the Perfect Torah*), the Torah HaCherut (*the Torah of Freedom*), and there remaining, not as a forgetful listener but one who is shomer mitzvot and goes into action, this one will have a bracha on his head in all his acts. §

²⁶ If anyone considers himself to be one of the Charedim [Orthodox, G-d-fearing Jewish religious ones], yet has lashon hora and does not bridle his tongue but instead causes his lev to fall under remiyah (*deceit*), this one's chasidus (*piety*) is worthless.*

²⁷ Avodas Kodesh that is tehovah (*pure*) and tamimah (*unblemished*) before Elohim HaAv is this: to visit yetomim (*orphans*) and almanot (*widows*) in their tzoros and to be shomer against the defilement of the Olam Hazeḥ.†

2

¹ My Achim b'Moshiach, you do not with your acts of maso panim (*favoritism*) hold to the*

§ 1:25 Ps 19:7 * 1:26 Ps 34:13; 39:1; 141:3 † 1:27 Dt 14:29; Job 31:16,17,21; Ps 146:9; Isa 1:17,23 * 2:1 orthodox Jewish

emunah of the glorious Adoneinu Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach Yehoshua.†

² For if there enter into your Beit HaKnesset (*House of Assembly, shul, synagogue, shtibel*) a man with gold rings on his fingers in expensive bekeshe (*kaftan*) and shtreimel, and there enters also an underprivileged nebach, a kabtzen (*poor person*) in shmattes (*rags*),

³ and you pay special attention to the takif [influential man] wearing the bekeshe and shtreimel and say, “You sit here in the seat of kibbud” (*respect, honor*), and to the kabtzen (*pauper*) you say, “You stand there.” Or “You sit at my feet,”

⁴ did you not among yourselves differentiate with prejudice and became shofetim (*judges*) with machshavot re'sha (*evil thoughts*)?

⁵ Hinei! My beloved Achim b'Moshiach, did not Der Oybershter make the Aniyim of the Olam Hazeh in fact Bechirim of HASHEM to be rich in emunah and also yoreshim of the Malchut HASHEM, which Adoshem gave as a havtachah (*promise*) to those with Ahavas HASHEM?‡

⁶ But you dishonored the ish evyon (*poor man, pauper*). Do not the oishirim (*rich ones*) oppress you and they drag you into the Batei Din (*Bet Din courts*)?

⁷ Do they not commit Chillul HASHEM gidduf (*blasphemy*) against the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach's Shem Tov that has been named upon you?

⁸ If indeed you are shomer regarding the Dat HaMalkhut (*Royal Decree*), as it is written

† 2:1 Dt 1:17; Lv 19:15; Prov 24:23 ‡ 2:5 Job 34:19

in the Kitvei Hakodesh, V'AHAVTAH L'REI'ACHA KAMOGHAŠ(*And thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*) you do well.

⁹ But if you show maso panim (*favoritism*), you are chote'im (*sinnners*) committing averos (*transgressions*) against the Torah.*

¹⁰ For whoever is shomer over kol haTorah but stumbles in one mitzvah, such is condemned as ashem (*guilty*) of averoh (*transgression*) of kol mitzvot.

¹¹ For the One having said, LO TINAF (*You shall not commit adultery*) said also LO TIRTZACH (*You shall not murder*). Now if you do not commit adultery but you do murder, you have become a Poshei'a al mitzvot HaTorah (*Transgressor of the Torah*).†

¹² So let your devarim (*words*) be and so let your ma'asim (*deeds*) be as those who are about to come under the judgment of the Torah HaCherut.‡

¹³ For the Din (*Judgment*) will be without rachamim (*mercy*) to the one not having shown rachamim. Rachamim wins the nitzachon (*victory*) over HaDin.

¹⁴ What is the revach (*gain, profit*), my Achim b'Moshiach, if anyone claims to have emunah but does not have ma'asim (*deeds*)? Surely not such “emunah” is able to bring him to Yeshe'u at Eloheinu?

¹⁵ If an Ach b'Moshiach or an Achot b'Moshiach is dressed in shmattes (*tatters*) and lacking “lechem chukeinu”§(*our daily bread*),

§ 2:8 Lv 19:18 * 2:9 Dt 1:17 † 2:11 Ex 20:13,14; Dt 5:17,18

‡ 2:12 1:25 § 2:15 Mt 6:11

¹⁶ and anyone of you says to them, “Go in shalom! Be warmed and fed!” but you do not give to them the physical necessities, what is the revach (*profit*)?

¹⁷ So also Emunah, if alongside it there is not in its company Ma'asim, is by itself niftar (*deceased, dead*).

¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have emunah and I have ma'asim.” You make known to me the Hisgalus haSod (*the revelation of the mystery*) of your emunah without your ma'asim, and I'll show you, Chaver, from my ma'asim, the Emunah.

¹⁹ So you're impressed with yourselves that with your emunah you can recite the kri'at Shema, nu? O you do so well... why, even the shedim have your da'as and emunah! But they shudder!*

²⁰ Are you willing to have da'as, O hollow man, that “Emunah”† unharnessed to Ma'asim, stands idle?

²¹ Avraham Avinu, was he not YITZDAK IM HASHEM (*justified with G-d*) by his ma'asim when he performed the akedah (*binding*) and offered up Yitzchak Bno (*Isaac his son*) upon the mizbe'ach?‡

²² Hinei! While Avraham Avinu's Emunah was working, working right alongside was Avraham Avinu's Ma'asim, and by Ma'asim the emunah was made shleimah!

²³ And the Kitvei Hakodesh was fulfilled, Avraham Avinu V'HE'EMIN B'HASHEM V'YACHSHEVEHA LO TZEDAKAH§ (*believed HASHEM and it was accounted to him for*

* **2:19** Dt 6:4 † **2:20** of dead orthodoxy ‡ **2:21** Gn 22:9,12

§ **2:23** Gn 15:6

righteousness). He was even called “Ohev HASHEM”* (“Friend of G-d”).

²⁴ You see that from Ma'asim† a man is YITZDAK IM HASHEM and not from‡ “Emunah” alone. §

²⁵ And likewise also Rachav the Zonah – was she not made YITZDAK IM HASHEM from Ma'asim, having received the messengers and having sent them out a different way?

²⁶ For just as the *guf* (body) without the *ne-shamah* is *niftar* (deceased, dead), so also is *Emunah* without Ma'asim.

3

¹ Not many of you, Achim b'Moshiach, should be Morim for Moshiach, als (since), as far as concerns Mishpat HASHEM, you have da'as that we Messianic morim will have the *chomer haDin* (rigor of the Law) fall on us more severely.

² For all of us stumble variously. If anyone as far as *lashon hora* is concerned, does not stumble, this one is an *ish tamim* able to bridle also the entire *guf* (body).*

³ And if we put bits into the mouths of *susim* (horses) to bring them into *mishma'at* (obedience), in just this way we direct their whole *gufot* (bodies).

⁴ Hinei, also the *oniyot* (ships), even though gedolot and driven by gales, are guided by a very small rudder wherever the impulse of the one steering directs.

* 2:23 Gn 15:6; Isa 41:8; 2Chr 20:7 † 2:24 of Emunah ‡ 2:24
sterilely unpartnered § 2:24 i.e., mere intellectual assent * 3:2
1Kgs 8:46; Ps 39:1; Prov 10:19

⁵ So also the lashon (*tongue*), an evar katon (*small member*) speaks of RAVREVAN[†](*boastful things*).

Hinei, an eish ketanah (*small fire*) and yet how great a forest it can set ablaze![‡]

⁶ And the lashon is an Eish, the lashon is made an Olam HaAvel (*World of Iniquity*) among our evarim (*members*), defiling with a stain kol haGuf (*whole body*), and setting ablaze the course of life, and is itself set by eish in Gehinnom.§

⁷ For every species both of wild animals and birds, reptiles and marine creatures is tamed and has been tamed by humankind.

⁸ But the Lashon no one of Bnei Adam is able to tame, an uncontrollable ra'ah (*evil*), full of deadly zuhamah (*contamination*).

⁹ With this we say a bracha to HASHEM, Adoneinu and Avoteinu, and with this we put a kelalah (*curse*) on Bnei Adam, who have been created according to the demut Elohim.*

¹⁰ Out of the same PEH comes forth bracha and also kelalah. My Achim b'Moshiach, these things ought not to be.

¹¹ Surely not out of the same makor (*fountain*) pours forth mayim both sweet and bitter?

¹² Surely an etz te'enah (*fig tree*) cannot yield olives, my Achim b'Moshiach, or a grape vine figs? Neither can salt water yield sweet water.

¹³ Who has chochmah and binah among you? Let him show by his hitnahagut hatovah (*good*

[†] 3:5 Dan 7:8,20 [‡] 3:5 Ps 12:3,4; 73:8,9 § 3:6 Prov 16:27 * 3:9 Gn 1:26,27f

conduct) that the ma'asim of him are of the shiflut (*lowliness*) of chochmah.

¹⁴ But if bitter kina (*jealousy*) you have and anochiyut (*selfishness*) in your levavot, do not boast and speak sheker against HaEmes.

¹⁵ This is not the Chochmah coming down and descending from above, but is of the Olam Hazeh, of this world and of shedim.

¹⁶ For where kina and anochiyut are, there is tohu vavohu (*disorder; chaos*) and every ra'ah.

¹⁷ But the chochmah from above is berishonah (*in the first place*) tehorah (*pure*), then ohevet shalom (*peace-loving*), then eidel (*gentle*) and considerate, then full of rachamim and p'ri tov, and without maso panim and tzevi'ut.

¹⁸ And the p'ri haTzedek is shalom sown by the ones making shalom.†

4

¹ From where do milchamot (*wars*) come? What is their goirem (*driving force*)? And from where come fights among you? Is it not from here, from the ta'avot (*lusts*) of you warring in your evanim (*members*)?

² You lust for something and you do not have it; you kill and you envy and you are not able to obtain. You get involved in machalokot (*divisions of dissensions*) and fights. You do not have because you fail to daven with your request.

³ Or you make techinot (*petitions*) and you do not receive, because you ask wrongly, that on

† 3:18 Prov 11:18; Isa 32:17; Hos 10:12

your ta'avot (*lusts*) you may spend what you receive.*

⁴No'efot (*adulterers*)! Do you not have da'as that to have shaichus (*closeness, friendship, intimacy*) with the Olam Hazei is eyvah im HASHEM (*enmity with G-d*)? Therefore, whoever chooses to make the Olam Hazei his Oihev is made an Oyev (*Enemy*) of HASHEM.†

⁵Or do you think that in vain the Kitvei Hakodesh attests that HASHEM yearns jealously over the Ruach Hakodesh He causes to dwell in us?

⁶But He gives all the more Chen v'Chesed! Therefore it says, HASHEM LALETZIM HU YALITZ V'LA'ANAYIM YITEN CHEN‡ (*HASHEM opposes the proud mocker but gives grace to the humble*).

⁷Submit yourselves in mishma'at (*obedience*) to HASHEM. Resist HaSatan, and he will flee from you.

⁸Draw near to HASHEM and HASHEM will draw near to you. Cleanse your yadayim (*hands*), you chote'im (*sinner*)! And purify your levavot, you anashim of double mind!§

⁹Lament and mourn and weep. Let the tzechok (*laughter*) of you be changed to avelut (*mourning*), and the simcha of you be turned to tugah (*sadness*).

¹⁰Be humbled before HASHEM and He will exalt you.*

¹¹Do not speak lashon hora against an Ach

* 4:3 Ps 18:41; 66:18 † 4:4 Isa 54:4; Jer 3:20; Hos 2:2-5; 3:1; 9:1

‡ 4:6 Prov 3:34 § 4:8 Ps 73:28; Zech 1:3; Mal 3:7; Isa 1:16; Ps 24:4;

119:113; Jer 4:14 * 4:10 Job 5:11

b'Moshiach. The one speaking against an Ach b'Moshiach or setting himself up as a shofet (*judge*) of his Ach b'Moshiach speaks against the Torah and sets himself up as shofet of the Torah. Now if the Torah you judge, you are not Shomrei HaTorah but a shofet.

¹² One is the Mekhokek (*Law-Giver*) and HaShofet (*The Judge*), the One who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you, the one who has set yourself up as the shofet of your re'a (*neighbor*)?

¹³ Come now, you who say, “Hayom (*today*) or makhar (*tomorrow*) we will go into this or that city and we will do business there a year and will sell and make a revach (*profit*).”

¹⁴ Yet you do not even have da'as of what tomorrow's “yom” may bring. Look at your life! Are you not an ed (*mist*), appearing a short time, then indeed disappearing?[†]

¹⁵ Instead of this, you ought to say “Im yirtzeh HASHEM” (*if the L-rd wills*) “we will live, also we will do this or that.”

¹⁶ But now you boast in your pretensions. All such ravrevanut (*boastfulness*) is ra'ah (*evil, wickedness*).

¹⁷ To the one having da'as, therefore, knowing to do tov and not doing it, to him it is chet.

5

¹ Come now, you who have osher (*riches*), weep, howling over your miseries coming upon you.*

[†] 4:14 Job 7:7; Ps 39:5; 102:3; 144:4; Isa 2:22 * 5:1 Isa 13:6; Ezek 30:2

² The osher of you has rotted and your malbush has become moth-eaten.[†]

³ The gold of you and the silver has been corroded and the corrosion of them will be for a solemn eidus against you, and will eat the basar of you as Eish. You stored up otzar (*treasure*) in the Acharit Hayamim!

⁴ Hinei, the wages of the po'alim (*workers*) who cut your fields, the wages you fraudulently withheld, those wages cry out, and the cries of the harvesting po'alim have reached the ears of Adonoi Tz'vaot.[‡]

⁵ You lived in indulgence upon ha'aretz and lolled in a life of luxury, you fattened your levavot as in a Yom Tivchah (*Day of Slaughter*).[§]

⁶ You condemned, you killed the tzaddik, who does not resist you.

⁷ Have savlanut (*patience*), therefore, Achim b'Moshiach, until the Bias HaMoshiach, the Coming of Moshiach Adoneinu. Hinei, the ikar (*farmer*) awaits the precious p'ri haAdamah (*fruit of the earth*), having savlanut (*patience*) for it until it receives the Yoreh (*first autumn rain*) and the Malkosh (*spring rain*).^{*}

⁸ You must also have savlanut. Strengthen your levavot, because the Bias HaMoshiach, the Coming of Moshiach Adoneinu, has drawn near.

⁹ Do not murmur, Achim b'Moshiach, against one another, lest you be judged. Hinei, haShofet

[†] 5:2 Job 13:28; Ps 39:11; Isa 50:9 [‡] 5:4 Lv 19:13; Jer 22:13; Mal 3:5; Dt 24:15 [§] 5:5 Jer 12:3; 25:34; Isa 53:7 ^{*} 5:7 Dt 11:14; Jer 5:24; Yoel 2:23

is standing before the delet!†

¹⁰ Achim b'Moshiach, take as an example, of yissurim (*suffering*) and of savlanut (*patience*) the Nevi'im who spoke b'Shem Adonoi.

¹¹ Hinei, we call me'ashirim the ones having endured: the enduring orech ruach (*patience*) of Iyov you heard of, and the toitzaa (*outcome*) from HASHEM you saw, that Eloheinu is full of rachamim and channun HASHEM.‡

¹² But, above all, my Achim b'Moshiach, do not swear shevuot (*oaths*) neither by Shomayim nor by ha'aretz nor any other shevu'ah, but let your "ken" be "ken," and your "lo" be "lo," for fear that you fall under HaDin (*the Judgment*).

¹³ If anyone is suffering among you, let him daven. If anyone has simcha, let him sing niggunim.§

¹⁴ Are there any cholim (*sick ones*) among you? Let the choleh (*sick person*) summon* the Ziknei HaKehillah (*Elders of the Congregation*) and let them daven tefillos over him, having applied the shemen mishchah (*anointing oil*), b'Shem Adoneinu.†

¹⁵ And the tefillah of emunah will deliver the choleh (*sick person*), and HASHEM will raise him up. And if he may have been committing peysha'im, he will be given selicha (*forgiveness*).

¹⁶ Therefore, make vidduy (*confession of sin*) to one another, and daven tefillos on behalf of one

† 5:9 Ex 15:24; 16:2; 17:3; Num 14:2,29; 17:6; Ps 94:2 ‡ 5:11 Job 1:21,22; 2:10; 42:10,12-17; Ex 34:6; Num 14:18; Ps 103:8 § 5:13 Ps 50:15 * 5:14 for Bikkur Cholim (Visiting the Sick) † 5:14 Ps 23:5; Isa 1:6

another, so that you may have refuah sheleimah (*complete healing*). The tefillah of a tzaddik is powerful and effective.

¹⁷ Eliyahu [HaNavi] was a man of like nature to us, and with tefillah he davened for it not to rain, and it did not rain upon ha'aretz for shalosh shanim and shishah chodashim (*three years and six months*).[‡]

¹⁸ And again Eliyahu [HaNavi] davened, and Shomayim gave GESHEM (*rain*) and ha'aretz caused its p'ri to sprout.[§]

¹⁹ My Achim b'Moshiach, if anyone among you wanders vait (*astray*) from HaEmes and someone turns a choteh (*sinner*) to become a ba'al teshuva,

²⁰ You should have da'as that the one having helped a choteh (*sinner*) to become a ba'al teshuva and to turn from the toyus (*error*) of his derech, and from setiyah HaDerech HASHEM (*turning aside or deviating from the Way of HASHEM*), will save the neshamah of him from mavet and will cover a multitude of chatta'im.

[‡] 5:17 1Kgs 17:1 § 5:18 1Kgs 18:45

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