

# **Torah Talk: A Journey Through the End of Days — Moshiach, Resurrection, and Olam HaBa**

## **Part I: The World Will Change — But How?**

When people speak of the “End of Days,” they often mix together several different concepts:

- the coming of **Moshiach**,
- the **resurrection of the dead**, and
- the entrance into **Olam HaBa**, the World to Come.

But these are not the same thing. And while all agree that a better world is coming, the how, when, and what differ greatly depending on who you ask.

Let’s explore the stages — through the lens of some of the greatest Torah sages.

## **Part II: Stage One – Moshiach Will Come**

Everyone agrees: When Moshiach comes, the Jewish people will return to their land, the Temple will be rebuilt, and peace will reign.

The **Rambam** explains this in simple, rational terms. In *Hilchot Melachim*, Chapter 12, he writes:

☆ **Hebrew:**

"אל יעלה על הלב שבימי המשיח יבטל דבר ממנהגו של עולם... אלא עולם כמנהגו נוהג."

☆ **English:**

"Let no one think that in the days of Moshiach, the world will change from its natural order... Rather, the world will continue as usual."

To Rambam, **nothing supernatural** needs to happen. Moshiach is a king from the line of David, who restores peace, justice, and Torah law — not a miracle worker.

But others disagree.

☆ **Ramban, Ramchal, and many Midrashim describe an age filled with miracles, healing, and even changes in the natural world — like the wolf lying with the lamb (Isaiah 11).**

### **Part III: Stage Two – Techiyat HaMetim: The Resurrection**

After the days of Moshiach, there is a time when the dead will rise — known as Techiyat HaMetim. All Jewish thinkers affirm this. It's even one of Rambam's 13 Ikkarim (principles of faith).

But here comes a major disagreement: Is this the final stage? Or just a step on the way to something greater?

☆ **Rambam's View:**

Resurrection is real — but temporary. In his letter *Iggeret Techiyat HaMetim*, Rambam says:

☆ **Hebrew:**

"התחייה אינה תכלית אחרונה... אלא אות מן האותות שיעשה ה'."

☆ **English:**

"The resurrection is not the ultimate purpose... but a sign and a wonder that God will perform."

According to him, those resurrected will eventually die again, and their souls will return to a pure spiritual existence, which is the real reward — Olam HaBa.

### **Part IV: Stage Three – Olam HaBa: The Eternal World**

Here, the opinions diverge even more dramatically.

☆ **Rambam:**

Olam HaBa is **not** a future physical world. It's a realm of pure soul — no body, no eating, no physical activity. It begins **after death**, and it is **eternal**.

From *Hilchot Teshuvah* 8:2:

☆ **Hebrew:**

"אותה טובה היא חיי העולם הבא שאין מוות עמה, אלא חיי הנפשות בלבד."

☆ **English:**

"That ultimate good is the life of the World to Come — where there is no death, only life of the soul."

So according to Rambam:

- After death → Soul enters Olam HaBa
- Later: Some are resurrected → live again physically for a time
- Eventually → All return to Olam HaBa — eternal, spiritual life

☆ **Ramban, Crescas, Albo, Ramchal:**

They reject this idea of a purely spiritual reward.

Instead, they say:

- Olam HaBa begins after resurrection
- It is eternal and includes both body and soul in a refined, elevated form
- The reward is not abstract intellect but divine closeness in a perfected physical-spiritual state

Among them is **R. Chasdai Crescas**, a noted 14th-century philosopher and Torah scholar — and a **disciple of the Ra"n (Rabbenu Nissim of Gerona)**. He challenged the Rambam's rationalist model in his work *Or Hashem*, arguing that the final reward must include the body. His student, **R. Yosef Albo**, continued this approach in *Sefer HaIkkarim*.

Ramban (in *Shaar HaGemul*) writes:

☆ **Hebrew:**

"כי עולם הבא הוא אחר התחייה... ויהיו בו הנשמות בגופותיהן"

☆ **English:**

"For the World to Come follows the resurrection... and the souls will be in their bodies."

## Part V: The Bigger Picture – Charting the Timeline

Here's a simplified roadmap of the views:

Stage	Rambam	Ramban / Ramchal
1. Death	Soul enters Olam HaBa	Soul enters Gan Eden (temporary)
2. Moshiach	Natural redemption, no miracles	Miraculous age of global peace
3. Resurrection	Temporary miracle, followed by death again	Permanent, eternal bodily life
4. Olam HaBa	Final reward = disembodied soul	Final reward = soul in perfected body

## Part VI: So What Do We Believe?

According to halachah, one must believe in:

- Moshiach
- Techiyat HaMetim
- Olam HaBa

But how exactly those things unfold? That depends on your teacher.

Rambam gives us a **rational, philosophical** version.

Ramban and Ramchal give us a **mystical, integrated** vision.

In the end, as the Gemara says:

"כל הנביאים לא ניבאו אלא לימות המשיח — אבל עולם הבא, עין לא ראתה אלוהים ולותך"  
(Berachot 34b)

**"All the prophets prophesied only about the days of Moshiach — but the World to Come, no eye has seen it but Yours, O God."**