



A man with a cardboard sign

Words and music by Kobi Oz

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Every morning he is a pillar of salt
beside the Ayalon Highway
Always against the traffic, every driver
makes a bumper face
A hat with Na Nach Nachm Nachman
Me'Uman and a pompom too
His heart's mission he holds in both
hands on a cardboard sign

1 כִּל בְּקָר הוּא נָצִיב שֶׁל מְלַח מוּק
נְתִיב בְּאַיִלוֹן

הַתְּנוּעָה תִּמְיֵד תִּבּוֹא נִגְדוֹ, וְכָל נֶהָג
עוֹשֶׂה פְּרָצוּף טִמְבוֹן

2 כּוֹבֵעַ נֶה נַח נַח נַחְמֵן מְאַמֵּן וְגַם
פּוֹנְפוֹן

מִשָּׂאת לִבּוֹ מַחְזִיק בְּשֵׁתֵי יָדָיו עַל
לִבּוֹ בְּשֵׁלֵט מְקָרְטוֹן

And there is written:

"Moshiach, Messiah
I want Messiah"

And the sun and the rain and the wind in
his face

"Moshiach, Messiah
I want Messiah"

And the mockery and the scorn strokes
his cheeks

וְשֵׁם כְּתוּב :

"מְשִׁיחַ מְשִׁיחַ"

אֲנִי רוֹצֶה מְשִׁיחַ"

וְהַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְהַגֶּשֶׁם וְהַרוּחַ עַל פְּנָיו

"מְשִׁיחַ מְשִׁיחַ"

אֲנִי רוֹצֶה מְשִׁיחַ"

וְהַלַּעַג וְהַקֶּלֶס מְלַטְפִים אֶת לְחָיָיו

Cars wink at him with a futuristic shiny
metallic honk of the horn

He shrinks back against the swathe of
signs in forests of phallic towers

This guy seems to be a bit 'off', neither
here nor there, a little loopy

I open the electric window and sing out
to him a tune that comes to me:

מְכוּנִיּוֹת קוֹרְצוֹת אֵלָיו בְּצִפְצוּף
עֵתִידָנִי מְנַצְנָצוֹת מְטָאֵלִי
הוּא מְצִטְמָצֵם מוּל שֶׁלֵּל שֶׁלְטִי
חוֹצוֹת בַּיַּעְרוֹת שֶׁל מְגִדְלֵי הַפְּאֵלִי
הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה הוּא כְּנֶרְאָה קֶצֶת OFF,
לֹא בְּשֵׁר לֹא חָלָב קֶצֶת מְטוֹרְלֵלִי
אֲנִי פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת הַחֲלוֹן הַחֲשֵׁמְלִי וְשֵׁר
אֵלָיו לְפִי לַחַן שֶׁעֵלָה לִי

"Moshiach, Messiah
I want Messiah"

And the sun and the rain and the wind in
his face

"Moshiach, Messiah
I want Messiah"

And the mockery and the scorn
Play with his side-curls

"מְשִׁיחַ מְשִׁיחַ"

אֲנִי רוֹצֶה מְשִׁיחַ"

וְהַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְהַגֶּשֶׁם וְהַרוּחַ עַל פְּנָיו

"מְשִׁיחַ מְשִׁיחַ"

אֲנִי רוֹצֶה מְשִׁיחַ"

וְהַלַּעַג וְהַקֶּלֶס מְשַׁחֲקִים בְּפִאוֹתָיו

While we wait around for the holy red
 heifer he demands
 and he draws our attention
 For a second away from
 the trivia of the present
 Through the smog he is revealed
 I am certain that it is
 Him standing alone
 He is the savior,
 thank God, he is the guarantor
 For the yearning itself
 sets up the solace
 It's the longing that is Messiah

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בְּעוֹד אֲנַחְנוּ מְחַפִּים לְפָרָה אֲדָמָה
 הוּא מְתַעֲקֵשׁ וְהוּא מְסִיחַ
 אֶת דַּעֲתָנוּ לְשִׁנְיָה מְשֻׁטִיּוֹת שֶׁל הַנְּיָה
 הוּא מְתַגַּלָּה מִתּוֹךְ עֲרָפִיחַ
 אֲנִי בְּטוֹחַ שֶׁזֶה הוּא שְׁעוֹמֵד לְבָדוּ
 הוּא הַגּוֹאֵל תּוֹדָה לְאֵל הוּא
 הַמְּבִטִּיחַ
 כִּי הַפְּמִיָּה עֲצָמָה הִיא הַכְּנָה
 לְנַחֲמָה
 הַגְּעֻוֹעַ הוּא מְשִׁיחַ
 "מְשִׁיחַ מְשִׁיחַ..."

1. The song is written about a real person who does stand by the Ayalon Highway in Tel Aviv, holding his cardboard sign.
2. Among the followers of Rabbi Nachman of Breslav, there is a belief that this combination of letters and half-words have sacred powers. They are painted on many walls throughout Israel, and decorate many of the white hats Breslavers tend to wear.
3. It is believed that the birth of an unblemished red heifer (cow), such that would be appropriate for sacrifice at the Temple, is the heavenly sign that the Messiah is due.

- Is the man holding the cardboard sign crazy? A hero? Both?
- Have you come across people who insist on proclaiming their beliefs and desires in the face of unanimous opposition?
- How do you relate to them?
 (Do you 'drive past'? 'Sing along with them out of the window'? Join them by the side of the 'road'?)

If you were in the place of the man with the cardboard, holding up a sign that states your most strongly held beliefs in the face of huge opposition, what would be written on it?

Sometimes it feels that the State of Israel is a little bit like the man in the song... standing against the global traffic, challenged by international mockery, a little crazy?

- How do you see the song as analogous to Israel in the world?