

In depth Analysis of Rambam Hilchos Melachim perek 11 halacha 4

Iyun u'birur b'Inyan Zeh Sh'hivticha Alav Torah

By Aharon Yaakov Lieberman – Mechaber Kuntres Shmoi Shel Moshiach

We will be analyzing here the question of someone who fulfills the Halachic status of Chezkas Moshiach. Can they still maintain this status if they experience a Halachic Misa Tivis and other such scenarios.

We will not be discussing how a person reaches the status of Chezkas Moshiach, in the first place.

The Halachic opinion below is founded on the premise that Kuntres Shmoi Shel Moshiach demonstrated that ALL of Chazal held Moshiach can come from the living or the maisim, without any dissenting opinion. (Kuntres Shmoi Shel Moshiach demonstrated that both Pirushim of Rashi, Yad Ramah and Marharsha regarding Doniel Ish Chamudos is learning Rav to be teaching us Moshiach can come from the living or the maisim – with no argument raised, nor dissenting opinion.)

As the Arugas HaBoisem, Abarbanel and Mahersham state it is a SOFEK to the Amorayim if Moshiach will b'Poel, in actuality, come from the living or the maisim (all agree potentially Moshiach can come from either living or maisim). As such it is not Shayach b'metzius for a Rishon, Acharon or Posek Halacha to be Machria that Moshiach can come only from the living or only from the Maisim. Similar to that which Chazal state that Moshiach can come in a way of Zachu or Loi Zachu. i.e. ALL of Chazal hold it could be either way – Zachu or Loi Zachu, as such it is not Shayach b'metzius for a Rishon, Acharon or Posek Halacha to be Machria that Moshiach can only come in one way and not the other way. Similar is also to this day undecided the proper time for Nightfall, due to klalei HaHora'ah not enabling a posek to be Machria one over the other etc.

With the above premise in mind, it is therefore understood that the Rambam cannot rule against Moshiach coming from the maisim, quite simply as there is no Mkor to base it upon. As there is no Mkor in Chazal that states Moshiach cannot come from the maisim. (Bar Kochba that was “killed for sins. Since he was killed” will be discussed below). The question which will be examined here is, a B'Chezkas Moshiach that dies can he still maintain his halachic status of “Presumed to be the Moshiach”.

As is well established the Rambam is a Sefer Halachos Halachos. With each word chosen being meticulously precise.

We will now examine the Rambam's Hilchos Melachim Perek 11 Halacha 4, and demonstrate that it indeed appears, that a valid Halachic approach or opinion can be made based on the Rambam's meticulous wording and the context in which he is expressing with his words, that a B'Chezkas Moshiach can still maintain his Halachic status, (without reverting back to only being Raui Lehyos Moshiach) while also becoming a Halachic Mais.

Rambam states, once someone has attained the status of Chezkas Moshiach. He can lose his status due to two scenario's. Either by becoming “unsuccessful” or “killed”.

As mentioned above the Rambam's wording is meticulous and each word or expression is calculated to teach us the Halacha.

If the Rambam already stated that if Chezkas Moshiach becomes unsuccessful, he loses his status. Why then does he state "or killed".

If the Rambam would not have explicitly stated the words "or killed" and the Chezkas Moshiach was actually killed (in the wars of Hashem he is fighting). We would have assumed that he still would lose his Halachic status. As we would have said being he was killed this is included in "Unsuccessful". As very simply put Moshiach is supposed to vanquish the nations and not the other way around. There is no greater sign of being unsuccessful than the King being killed in battle. Also by Bar Kochba, Rambam could have said "since he was not successful", regarding his fighting the Romans etc.

If so it appears the words "or killed" are extraneous. And even if you will say "not successful" is referring to compelling Yidden to follow Torah and Mitzvos and killed is referring to fighting the wars of Hashem. Still the Rambam was able to say "if he is not successful" without also explicitly stating "or killed" and we would have understood that to mean either not successful in compelling Yidden or not successful in fighting the wars of Hashem, which would include being killed in battle. As simply if you are not successful in either one you still lose your chazaka of Chezkas Moshiach. As such it appears the words "or killed" are extraneous.

However, being the Rambam is meticulous with his choice of words and does indeed state "or killed" we must conclude that the words "or killed" are not extraneous. But rather coming to teach us something that without explicitly stating them we would not have known the Din.

It appears the following is the reason why Rambam writes "or killed" even though he already stated "If not successful until here".

The Rambam knows, Moshiach can come from the maisim. And the Rambam also holds as stated by the Katzos HaChoshen, that Rambam himself holds, there is Shlichus after the Meshaleiach dies. The Rambam also knows of the Yerushalmi regarding Shimshon being considered the Shofet HaDor for 20 years after his passing, as his Hashpa'ah or influence was still felt in this world, to the extent he was still considered the Shofet of the generation.

This being the case. If the Rambam would not have explicitly stated "or killed" we would not have understood the following case which appears to be addressed by the words "or killed".

If the Rambam would not have explicitly stated "or Killed" and Chezkas Moshiach was actually killed in fighting the wars of Hashem. The soldiers who are fighting along side the Chezkas Moshiach, and on behalf of the Chezkas Moshiach (either as Shluchim or due to his Hashpa'ah or influence over them). They could say: Chezkas Moshiach was killed. However being Moshiach can come from the maisim, if they will continue to fight the wars of Hashem either has his Shluchim or his continued influence over them, in a successful way. They may say that the killed Chezkas Moshiach may still be considered "successful" (as even successful wars have casualties) and not fall into the category of "not successful" and will therefore still retain his Chazaka and continue to have the Halachic status of Chezkas Moshiach.

Therefore in order to address this scenario the Rambam must add the words “or killed” in order to forewarn the above case. As we would not have known that such a case would indeed remove the status of Chezkas Moshiach.

That even though Moshiach can come from the maisim. And even though there can be continued Shlichus or influence. Nonetheless being “killed” removes the halachic status of Chezkas Moshiach.

As the underlying reason is not due to the difference between dying of natural causes (be’dei Shamayim) versus being killed (be’dei Odom). Of which there is a logical difference between dying a natural death and being killed:

When fighting the wars of Hashem, b’Chezkas Moshiach must show signs of success to the extent that, as Rambam states by Vadei Moshiach “and he was victorious over all the nations around him”. However there is no greater proof of lack of success than being killed in battle. i.e. being killed is a form of “not successful” that the Rambam has to explicitly state and forewarn of, on its own due to above mentioned reason.

Rather the underlying theme at play here in the Rambam is “Success” or lack thereof. As Rabbi Eli Kaminetzky Shliach to Taos, New Mexico writes. There is a Posuk in Shmuel HaNavi that states once Dovid was Anointed, he became an “Ish Matzliach” a Successful man. “Bais Dovid would grow stronger as they went etc”.

This is why the Rambam uses the word Hatzlocho multiple times. “if he did this and was Successful” and “if he was not Successful until here”.

As Rambam is codifying how Klal Yisroel can recognize the Ultimate Redeemer if he comes naturally, without wonders and miracles.

If Moshiach comes without wonders and miracles how will the Jewish People know its him. How will they know it is not a fraud or false Messiah, how will they know the Geula is unfolding in a natural way?

Therefore Rambam specifically codifies how to recognize, as the Rambam states: “Zeh She’hivticha Alav Torah” – “This One that the Torah Promises” i.e. “The Ultimate Redeemer”, if he comes without wonders and miracles.

That if Moshiach comes in a natural way, this is the order and these are the signs he must present, and once he fulfills these signs he then has the Halachic status of Chezkas Moshiach. We then know we are on the path to the Geula via natural means, by means of successfully compelling Yidden to perform Mitzvos and fighting wars of Hashem etc. As the Rambam stated in Halacha 1 Moshiach will bring to completeness of Torah and Mitzvos (Geula). Therefore compelling Yidden to keep Torah and Mitzvos and fighting the wars of Hashem, in a successful way, to vanquish the nations who might be opposed and oppressing Torah observance, is therefore considered the actual journey and path to Geula which will have completeness of Torah and Mitzvah observance via natural means.

And this is why the Rambam is m’Chadesh the Halachic status of Chezkas Moshiach.

Why does the Rambam give Halachic status to Chezkas Moshiach. Especially if he can lose his status by becoming not successful or killed. Surely we only need to know how to recognize the Vadei Moshiach?

However being the Rambam is coming to codify how to recognize The Ultimate Redeemer if he comes without Wonders and Miracles in a totally natural way. The Rambam is forced to m'Chadesh the halachic Geder of Chezkas Moshiach.

As according to Rambam, who builds the 3rd Bais HaMikdosh? Its not Vadei Moshiach. As according to Rambam you do not have the Halachic status of Vadei Moshiach until AFTER you build the Bais HaMikdosh and AFTER you do Kibutz Golios. Only then do you have the status of Vadei Moshiach.

Who builds the Bais HaMikdosh and performs Kibutz Golios, according to Rambam? Chezkas Moshiach does. This being the case the Rambam is forced to innovate the Halachic status of Chezkas Moshiach.

As without the Halachic status, who should build the Bais Hamikdosh? Someone that is Raui Lehyos Moshiach (potentially there maybe many Tzadikim that are Raui Lehyos Moshiach in the same Generation). Why should Klal Yisroel allow him to do this, being he is not presenting Wonders and Miracles and we are not assured (via tangible proof) the Geula is unfolding in a natural way. Being there are stringent and meticulous halachos involved with rebuilding the Bais haMikdosh. And being there is someone that is Raui Lehyos Moshiach in each generation and none of the previous Raui Lehyos Moshiach's attempted to build the Bais HaMikdosh, such as Rashi and Rambam etc. Why should we allow or help him to do such a thing? What proof is there he is the Ultimate Redeemer? What proof is there we are on the path to Geula via natural means?

Therefore the Rambam is forced to innovate the Halachic status of Chezkas Moshiach. That once klal Yisroel recognize and place the Halachic status of Chezkas Moshiach on him. Then they are obligated Halachically to listen to him and of course allow and even help him to build the bais haMikdosh and do Kibutz Golios (which Kibutz Golios also has stringent and meticulous halachos involved etc). When we see the B'Chezkas Moshiach fulfill the Rambam's simanim, this is an indication we are on the way to the Geulah in a natural way. i.e. without Wonders and Miracles. And this must therefore be codified into Halacha and have the weight and significance that comes with Halacha, vis a vis a recognized Halachic status of "B'Chezkas Sh'hu Moshiach".

Understanding Rambam's Context

What happens if we do **not** see someone that is a King from Bais Dovid that is learning Torah Diligently and occupied with Mitzvos that is also compelling Yidden to keep Torah and Mitzvos and fighting the wars of Hashem. Does this mean that Moshiach cannot come that very day?

However, Rambam poskens by someone who takes an oath to become a Nazir the day Moshiach comes, that he is prohibited from drinking wine immediately. As Rambam holds Moshiach could come that very day. We also know the Rambam states we should await his coming each day.

Perhaps this is the reason why the Rambam starts the Halacha with the words "AND IF". (In contrast to Halacha 1, which does not begin with the words "and if") Meaning "and if" you do see someone that is a King from Bais Dovid that is learning Torah Diligently and occupied with Mitzvos that is also compelling Yidden to keep Torah and Mitzvos and fighting the wars of Hashem. I.e he is not performing wonders and miracles. Then the order and signs to know he is indeed the Ultimate Redeemer and that the Geulah is unfolding in a natural way, is such and such. However "AND IF" you do NOT see someone that fulfills this criteria do not think Moshiach cannot come that very day. As Rambam did not come to rule out Moshiach coming in a way of wonders and miracles. Nor can the Rambam rule out Moshiach coming with wonders and miracles. As mentioned above ALL of Chazal held Moshiach could come in a way of Zachu or Loi Zachu – with wonders and miracles or without. Which also includes Moshiach coming to us on Clouds from Heaven or from the Maisim, or without miracles, in a natural way.

Rather Rambam is only coming to codify how to recognize the Ultimate Redeemer if he comes without Wonders and Miracles. Rambam did not intend nor can it be inferred from his words that he came to rule out Moshiach coming with wonders and miracles. Which can also be explicitly seen from his words "Moshiach does NOT NEED to make Wonders and Miracles" he doesn't need to. It is not required. But we are not being halachically obligated to reject Moshiach if he comes with Wonders and Miracles. Such as, if the Bais HaMikdash miraculously comes down from Heaven as stated in Gemara Sukah, Rambam is not coming to say it is posul or lacking, or that we should reject it G-d forbid.

Scenario of Dying in a natural way or becoming ill, captured or disappearing

Rambam lists two ways (not being successful or killed) someone with Chezkas Moshiach loses his Halachic status and reverts back to Raui Lehyos Moshiach.

What about other scenario's that according to Chazal could also happen to the Ultimate Redeemer, such as a bchezkas Moshiach that becomes ill, or even dies a natural death. It was explained above the logical difference between being killed versus dying a natural death see also

אגרות קודש כ"ק אדמו"ר ח"ב ע' תלד. ח"ג ע' כז (גב' נתינת שם לילד אחר מי שנאבד במלחמה)

There is also another scenario that Chazal say is possible. See Rashi to Sefer Doniel 12:12 quoting Medrash Rus, and mentioned in other places. That Moshiach could be revealed, then concealed then revealed again. The concealment of Moshiach maybe a significant amount of time including several years.

Why does Rambam not explicitly state what the din is in the above scenarios. The Derech of the Rambam is to teach us the Halacha in edge cases such as the case of a Tumtum and Anderoiginois in certain circumstances like fulfilling ones obligation of sitting in the Sukkah etc.

The answer I believe is as follows. Firstly and simply put the Rambam only poskens the din when there is a mkor in chazal on which to rely on. The cases of a Tumtum and Anderoiginois are mentioned by Rambam as there are mkoros for them in chazal.

However, to posken that a B'Chezkas Moshiach that dies, affects his status to the extent that we will know "He is not the one the Torah promises". There is no mkor in chazal that says such a thing upon which to rely upon (Bar kochaba that was "killed for sins" will be discussed below). As stated above ALL of Chazal hold Moshiach can come from the living or maisim. So dying in and of its self is not to be understood that we therefore know "He is not the one the Torah promises". As Moshiach can come from the maisim, and while in the status of mais one is still considered Raui Leheyos Moshiach according to chazal, as was demonstrated in Kuntres Shmoi Shel Moshiach.

However, the Din regarding cases of dying, becoming ill, being captured or becoming concealed which are all mentioned by Chazal as possibly occurring to the Ultimate Redeemer (without dissenting opinions). Indeed can be inferred from the meticulous words of the Rambam and also the context with which he is expressing, with his meticulous wording.

By Rambam teaching us how to recognize the Ultimate Redeemer if he comes without Wonders and Miracles and thereby also teaching us when we see the B'Chezkas Moshiach it means we are on our way to the Geula Sheleima by the ACTIONS of the B'Chezkas Moshiach in Compelling Yidden to do Mitzvos and fighting the wars of Hashem. We can now understand by way of his earning the Status of Chezkas Moshiach and specifically how he loses his status (which would mean we are no longer headed towards the Geula by the natural means of the actions of the B'Chezkas Moshiach) that these Simanim, signs, are how we know he is the Ultimate Redeemer and that we are on our way to Geula.

Being that the Rambam teaches us, based on the Actions b'chezkas Moshiach takes, this is how Rambam is teaching us the Din in the above scenario's.

Whats relevant to the Din, are the actions of B'Chezkas Moshiach. Is he showing signs of success or not?

If he dies, becomes ill, is captured or becomes concealed. This has no impact to knowing if "He is the one the Torah promises" or not. None of these scenario's in and of itself let us know that if it happens to him then "He is **not** the one the Torah promises" as if Moshiach comes in a natural way and has already earned the halachic status of Chezkas Moshiach to the extent Halacha is obligating us to assume with Chazaka that "He is the one the Torah promises". The above scenario's do not remove his Chazaka according to Rambam. As there are places in chazal (without dissenting opinions) that state these scenario's could happen to "the one the Torah promises".

However, if he dies, becomes ill, is captured, or becomes concealed. Rambam rules "if he is not successful to this point" i.e. according to Rambam we know "He is not the one the Torah promises" if he is not showing signs of success. With these words the Rambam is indeed teaching us the Din in all of the above scenario's. We judge his status based on his success in the ACTIONS.

Such that in a case of dying a natural death, becoming ill, or being concealed. We can still know his halachic status based on whether he is still showing success in the actions of Chezkas Moshiach. Whereby we also understand we are still heading toward Geula due to his actions.

Due to the Rambam's meticulous words of "not being successful until this point or killed" lets us understand the din, in all of the above cases. Even though he doesn't explicitly state each case on its own. As explained above its because there are mkoros in chazal that state the above scenario's are indeed possible to occur to the Ultimate Redeemer – to "the one the Torah promises".

To also state the other way around. There are no mkoros in chazal that state the above scenario's cannot and must not happen to the Ultimate Redeemer – to "the one the Torah promises". Therefore its not even possible for Rambam to therefore state if the above does occur we now know "He is not the one the Torah promises".

How can one Jew fight wars of Hashem and compel all yidden by himself

To become Chezkas Moshiach klal Yisroel needs to see someone fit to be Moshiach compel ALL Yidden and fight WARS of Hashem.

How can one person do these actions? Especially as being the Rambam states Moshiach will perform in gathering of the Yidden it is understood that Yidden live all around the world. And also fighting wars in order to be victorious over ALL the nations around is also every difficult (impossible) for one person to accomplish especially without wonders and miracles and only in a natural way.

However we can see from the case of Bar Kochba that was fighting the wars of Hashem that he had a whole army fighting along side him either considered as his Shluchim or acting due to his influence over them. Such that we can see the Rambam acknowledges and even assumes that someone who attains the Halachic status of Chezkas Moshiach may have many people following his directives and acting under his influence in regards to fighting wars and reaching Yidden all over the world to compel their Torah observance. To the extent that the actions of his followers are attributed to him, such that he can then earn the halachic status of chezkas moshiach. Which is similar to the case of Bar Kochba.

While alive and well this is the measuring stick with which we ascertain his status of being successful or not. That if Yidden increase their observance of Torah and Mitzvos due to his actions then he is considered successful. However if they do not follow or stop following then he falls into the category not successful etc.

So too is this the measuring stick with which we determine chezkas Moshiach's status in a case of dying, becoming sick or being concealed. That just as when he was alive and well its his followers acting under his influence or Shlichus that earns and keeps his chazaka, so too in the above cases. If his followers continue to act under his influence over them and continue to be successful in compelling Torah observance and fighting the wars of Hashem a halachic argument can be made that he maintains his chazaka of Chezkas Moshiach. As stated above, dying, becoming sick or being concealed are all scenario's that chazal say can happen to the Ultimate Redeemer and if it in actuality occurs then in and of itself, it is not a sign that this is not the one promised by the Torah.

Furthermore once someone has attained the Halachic status of Chezkas Moshiach via natural means. There is nothing in the Rambam that says the Geula cannot take a miraculous turn and then unfold with wonders and miracles in which the b'chezkas moshiach can be healed miraculously, or come back from concealment via clouds from heaven or come back from the

dead via an individual and miraculous resurrection, which Rambam in Igeres Techiyas haMaisim says is a possibility even before Geula. However taking on a miraculous turn of events is not referred to by Rambam, it is also certainly not ruled out by Rambam as stated above. As such the possibility for a B'chezkas Moshiach that experiences ill health and especially death has no natural means of continuing to the status of Vadei Moshiach if not for a Miraculous event.

As such even though such a scenario is not dealt with in the Rambam explicitly due to the context being that we are on the path to Geula without wonders and miracles and only via natural means. (Rambam states if we can avoid calling something a miracle we do so... and if need be, he has no issue with limited miracles occurring, as explained in Lekutei Sichos chelek 27 page 194 footnote 31 and page 199 footnote 64)

Being it would appear to be a halachic argument. Due to the context of the Rambam and the necessity of a miraculous event to progress to becoming Vadei Moshiach, and not Rambam's explicit words. In order to lean to one side of the Halachic argument over the other side. One must also take into consideration all other circumstances surrounding the events of Chezkas Moshiach and the path towards Geula.

Rambam states in Hilchos Melachim chapter 12 Halacha 2 that Before the beginning of the days of Moshiach a Prophet will arise to inspire the Yidden and prepare their hearts. And Rambam continues to state that there are also some of our sages that say before Moshiach comes Eliyahu HaNavi will come. Rambam again is speaking in the context of Moshiach coming without wonders and miracles. As he explicitly states in Chapter 12 Halacha 1 "Do not presume that in the days of Moshiach any facet of the worlds nature will change or there will be innovations in the work of creation. Rather, the world will continue according to its pattern". i.e. the world will continue its natural course, without wonders and miracles.

Again at the beginning of Halacha 2 Rambam states "Our Sages taught: There will be no difference between the current age and the days of Moshiach except the emancipation from our subjugation to the gentile kingdoms".

The Rambam continues in Halacha 2 and states (in the context of natural order of the world, without wonders and miracles) a Prophet will come to inspire the Yidden to prepare their hearts and continues to say that some of our sages stated that Eliyahu HaNavi will come before Moshiach comes too.

If the Prophet and or Eliyahu Prophesize, that the B'chezkas Moshiach is indeed the Ultimate redeemer. And Prophesize that "The time for your Redemption has arrived" and that Geluah is imminent. Ostensibly such a prophecy has no bearing on the halachic status of B'chezkas Moshiach. What has a bearing on his status, is as Rambam states. His actions of compelling mitzvah observance and fighting wars of Hashem. However it would appear that the context of heading towards Geula is, in this scenario etched in stone by way of Prophecy. Such that the context of the Rambam would clearly acknowledge that the Geula is indeed unfolding.

As such the case of a Halachic B'Chezkas Moshiach that experiences extreme ill health or even death. Such that a miraculous event would be necessary to heal him or resurrect him. Now put in the context involving Prophecy of imminent Geula and even that the Prophet Prophesizes that he is indeed the Ultimate Redeemer. Under such circumstances I believe

this could provide a strong basis for a posek halacha to now lean towards opining that the b'chezkas Moshiach maintains his Halachic status.

And the fact that he would need a miracle to proceed to the status of Vadei Moshiach. In such a context I do not believe that Rambam would hold we should NOT pray for and expect a miraculous recovery or resurrection. As is well established among all Yidden and throughout our history. We do not rely upon miracles. However when there is no other natural means for any given Yeshuah. Minhag klal yisroel is to besiege our father in Heaven to perform a miracle. Rambam is certainly no exception to this rule. As stated Sheetas haRambam is if there is no other way to explain something then we call it a miracle. And that Rambam did not rule out a limited amount of miracles which would include a miraculous recovery or individual resurrection. As after all we are dealing with the Halachic "B'Chezkas Shu Moshiach" "Zeh Shevticha alav Torah" – the one the Torah promised. The Ultimate Redeemer. Furthermore, how can a posek Halacha, under these circumstances say he loses his Chazaka, if he wasn't killed and is still showing signs of success, similar to that which earned him his Halachic status to begin with. What mkor would he be relying on?

For the above mentioned reasons and reasoning, it appears that a legitimate halachic opinion regarding B'Chezkas Moshiach can be made, that the Chezkas Moshiach still maintains his Chazaka even while in a state of ill health, captive, concealed and even natural death.

Ultimate Redeemer vs Raui Leheyos Moshiach

Rambam is not referring to Raui Leheyos Moshiach. Rambam does not discuss someone that is Fit to be Moshiach, as someone that is Raui Leheyos Moshiach has no halachic status. As shown in Kuntres Shmoi Shel Moshiach. Chazal state someone can be considered Fit to be Moshiach while alive or mais. Rambam is coming to codify how the Jewish people can recognize the Ultimate Redeemer. We can see this from the Rambam's words when he says if Chezkas Moshiach is killed or unsuccessful we then know "He is not the one the Torah promises" the Torah doesn't "promise" that there is (always) someone who is fit to be Moshiach. The Torah promises the Ultimate Redeemer that will in actuality redeem the Yidden. Furthermore, when Rambam states "He is not the one the Torah promises" ie he is not the Ultimate Redeemer, he continues and states Hashem orchestrated this in order to test the many.

Someone who is only fit to be Moshiach and is killed or not successful at bringing the Geula. It is possible no one knew who he was. As perhaps he was in the Bais Medrash learning Torah all of the day. Such that he was not well known. If he is killed or even dies. It is not possible to say "it is a test to the many". As the "many" may not even have known who he was or even that he died. Furthermore, it could be said about such a person that if he didn't bring the Geula maybe the next tzadik to take his place will have a greater chance of bringing the Geula. Such that his death is not a "test to the many", as people may be optimistic for the new Raui Leheyos Moshiach.

As such we can see clearly from the Rambam's words that he isn't coming to say that someone is no longer Raui Leheyos Moshiach if they are killed or unsuccessful. It should be

noted that there is an opinion in Chazal that Doniel Ish Chamudos was killed by Haman. And Rav chose him as an example of who could be Moshiach from the maisim and is considered while in status of mais, Raui Leheyos Moshiach.

If according to nature there is no chance of being healed minhag yisroel is to ask and expect a miracle. Rambam is NOT an exception to this rule

As stated above Rambam is not coming to rule out the possibility that Moshiach could come with some miracles. Just limited miracles that will not be considered a change to the natural order of the world. Throughout our history Hashem has made miracles either out of necessity to save those in need. Or in order to show his strength and dominion in the world.

Rambam is not coming to rule out these types of miracles. He is only coming to say one must not expect miracles to be mandatory according to Halacha. As mentioned above this can be seen from his words in Hilchos Melachim Chapter 11 Halacha 3. Moshiach “doesn’t NEED to make miracles” but he didn’t come to rule them out. Furthermore, Rambam is obviously aware that the Prophets state there will be miracles at the Redemption. Except Halachically it is not mandated to happen. Also as yidden increase their Torah and Mitzvah observance by being compelled by Chezkas Moshiach. The more Torah and Mitzvos we do the greater the possibility there is of Hashem showing miracles.

So too in a case of a miracle being necessary for Chezkas Moshiach to be healed or resurrected. Rambam is not coming to rule out such a possibility as explained above. As is minhag klal yisroel, and how much more so when we are dealing with Chazaka about the one that is “The one the Torah promises” that we should most definitely pray for whatever will be necessary to progress to Vadei Moshiach and even expect whatever miracles are necessary. Similar to davening that a sick parent should be healed etc.

To say Rambam would not opine this where would be the mkor? As stated above Chazal say clearly the Ultimate Redeemer can become ill or come from the maisim, clearly he has to become healthy and alive to build the bais haMikdash and fulfill all the Prophecies etc.

Bar Kochba was killed due to sins and not FIT

Rambam states Rabbi Akiva and all of the sages thought Bar Kochba was the “HaMelech HaMoshiach” – i.e. the Ultimate Redeemer, “until he was killed for sins. Since he was killed it was known he is not the Moshiach”. The Ultimate Redeemer must successfully fulfill all the Messianic Prophecies which includes showing success all along the way.

The reason Rabbi Akiva and the sages thought Bar Kochba was the Moshiach (anointed one / Ultimate redeemer) is that Bar Kochba was showing remarkable success in his fighting the Romans. All his success was via natural means i.e. without explicit wonders and miracles.

i.e. the whole premise of why he was thought to be the Ultimate Redeemer is due to his success in fighting the Romans. Once he was killed by the Romans. It became clear he was not successful. Thereby it became known he was not “The Moshiach” he was not the ultimate redeemer.

While being killed in war demonstrates lack of success i.e. failure. This failure is the way it becomes “known he is not Moshiach”. However if being killed is the only failure a candidate that is Fit to be Moshiach experiences. Then while it is a proof that he is not the ultimate

redeemer that is on the scene bringing about the Geula. Being killed either in battle as Bar Kochba or being brutally tortured and killed like Rabbi Akiva himself and the Asara Harugei Malchus. Such a martyr that is killed al Kiddush Hashem is still FIT to be Moshiach. As Moshiach can come from the dead as chazal state. In fact being killed al Kiddush Hashem is known to be one of the greatest levels in piety and speaks to the worthiness and fitness of the martyred. However being killed is not something that could happen to the Ultimate Redeemer when he is in the process of bringing the Geula. i.e. the Ultimate Redeemer is sent by Hashem to the extent "the Torah promises on Him" if this is the case he must show success in his mission. If he is killed or not successful it is a proof he is not the Ultimate Redeemer sent by Hashem to bring about the final Redemption such that we can say "He is the one the Torah promises". However even in a case of being killed or being unsuccessful although it is clear he is not the Ultimate Redeemer promised by the Torah. He is nonetheless still FIT to be Moshiach. As our sages state one is fit to be moshiach whether alive or mais. However it is known that the Torah's promise is that there will be the Ultimate redeemer.

However regarding Bar Kochba, the main reason they thought he was the Ultimate redeemer was due to his incredible success in fighting. Once he was killed, that reason was completely removed. Such that it became known is not 'The Moshiach'.

Furthermore Rambam's meticulous wording is he was "killed for sins" some learn that Bar Kochba himself sinned in which case he is not even "Fit" to be Moshiach any more.

And as the Rambam continues "Since he was killed" Rambam was able to use the words "since he died / mais" but he did not. In addition he could have also said "since he was not successful" and then he would not also need to mention by b'chezkas Moshiach " or killed".

However as explained above. Moshiach can come from the maisim. And dying in and of itself is not a proof that he is not the one the Torah promised. However being killed is a proof that he is unsuccessful and therefore obviously not the one the Torah promised. Even though he could still be considered Fit to be Moshiach similar to Rabbi Akiva and the other Asara Harugei Malchus (as mentioned by the Minchas Elazar regarding why Rav chose Doniel Ish Chamudos and not the Asara Harugei Malchus)

As such we can see the case of Bar Kochba is not coming to teach that Chazal or Rambam do not hold Moshiach could come from the dead. The case of Bar Kochba is (another such) proof that the Ultimate Redeemer must be completely successful whereby we know he is the one the Torah promised and therefore not be killed in battle or exhibit lack of success. As mentioned above the posuk in Shmuel stated once Dovid was anointed he was an Ish Matzliach.

Similar lashon as the Story obviously is not at the expense of the Din neherag vs mais

It is a known klal that Rambam uses a similar expression in stating the Din similar to the case or story that he just brought. As it relates to Chezkas Moshiach Rambam brings in Halacha 3 the case of Bar Kochba and states he was "killed for sins. Since he was killed it was known he is not Moshiach". In Halacha 4 Rambam teaches us the din of Chezkas Moshiach and states "if he is unsuccessful until this point or killed, it is known he is not the one the Torah Promises." Rambam continues and says what his status now is being he is no longer

considered Chezkas Moshiach. "And behold he is like all the kings of the house of Dovid that are complete and kosher that died."

Some argue that when Rambam states the word Neherag, killed. Really he means "died", mais, and he is only using the word Neherag as that is what happened to Bar Kochba in the case he just brought. Therefore he uses the same expression here by Chezkas Moshiach. But really means died, even of natural causes and not only specifically killed.

However to say when Rambam states by chezkas Moshiach, killed really he means died, mais, this appears to be a mistaken understanding for the following reasons.

It was explained above the reason why Bar Kochba being killed they then knew he wasnt Moshiach. As the Ultimate Redeemer must show consistent signs of success. Being killed however is a type of failure, or lack of success. As was explained in Kuntres Shmoi shel Moshiach. All of chazal hold Moshiach can come from the living or the dead. i.e. dying is not a proof that "this is not the one the Torah promised".

As such we can see that logically Neherag is not the same as mais. And is also not viewed the same by Chazal, as the story of Bar Kochba is brought in Medrash Eicha Rabba and Yerushalmi. Also brought in Medrash Eicha Rabba, Yerushalmi and Bavli are explicit statements stating Moshiach can come from the living or maisim. And none of chazal argued with this statement. More specifically none of chazal brought the story of Rabbi Akiva and Bar Kochba as a refutation to the statement Moshiach can come from the maisim.

As such we can see chazal also readily understood the logical difference between being Rau Leheyos Moshiach that can come from the living or maisim and the Ultimate Redeemer that must show continuous success in his G-dly mission to bring about the Geula. Furthermore as mentioned above, there is an opinion that Daniel was actually killed by Haman. i.e. even someone that was killed can still be considered Fit to be Moshiach and is actually used as the example by which to teach us Moshiach can come from the maisim in the Bavli.

However more to the point of the klal Rambam uses a similar expression in the Din as he used by the case or story he brought. When Rambam brought the case of Bar Kochba he states, that Rabbi Akiva "and all the sages of his generation thought that he [Bar Kochba] was 'the King the Moshiach' [Ultimate Redeemer] until he was killed for sins" i.e. as explained above they thought he was the Ultimate redeemer. Rambam concluded the case at hand or story, then continues with his next sentence by saying "Since he was killed, it was known he is not Moshiach" i.e. the Ultimate Redeemer. As mentioned above Rambam could have used the word since he "died", mais. And then by Chezkas Moshiach he could have then also used the word mais instead of neherag. As according to those who argue Neherag means the same as mais this is a strong question.

However the question is even stronger. The rambam was also able to say by Bar Kochba "since he was not successful" and avoided using the word Neherag (or mais) altogether. And then by chezkas Moshiach only use the words "if not successful until here" and not need to say "or killed" (or according to this approach "or died, mais") in this way it would fit well with the klal Rambam chooses an expression to teach the Din similar to the expression used in the case or story.

However as explained above Rambam has to use the words “or killed” to teach us and forewarn of the case of soldiers continuing to fight, if Chezkas Moshiach is killed. That without him stating “or killed” we would not have known the din that chezkas Moshiach loses his chazaka.

Even according to the klal Rambam chooses an expression similarly used in the case or story just brought. It is obviously not at the expense of clearly learning and understanding the din. As related to chezkas Moshiach it would be if soldiers continue to fight under the influence of the killed chezkas Moshiach that he loses his chazaka.

For all of the above reasons it appears to be erroneous to say in halacha 4 regarding Chezkas Moshiach Rambam uses the words “or killed” but really he means also dying a natural death. And that the reason he used the word killed and not “mais” is due to the klal Rambam uses the similar expression he brought in the case discussed of Bar Kochba being killed.

Furthermore as quoted above after Rambam states “if he is not successful until this point or killed” Rambam continues and states what his status now is, being he is no longer the “presumed that he is Moshiach” – “b’Chezkas Sh’hu Moshiach” Rambam states: “And behold he is like all the kings of the house of Dovid that are complete and kosher that died.” i.e. being he is no longer the “presumed Moshiach” he now reverts back to what he was before he became the B’Chezkas Moshaich, Fit to be Moshiach, Raui Leheyos Moshiach. As Chazal state Moshiach can come from the living or maisim.

However, why is a chezkas Moshiach that falls into the category of “not successful until this point” **like** all the kosher and complete kings from bais dovid that DIED? He is still alive! It would make sense to say that if he was “killed” but Rambam is saying this on both unsuccessful or killed.

Rather as was explained in Kuntres Shmoi shel Moshiach. Someone that is Raui Leheyos Moshiach has no halachic status. As such whether you are alive and “unsuccessful” or dead due to being “killed” Rambam is teaching you are still FIT to be moshiach as if you are from bais dovid and complete and kosher and dead. i.e. you no longer have a halachic status even if you are still alive and unsuccessful – he is as Rambam states “Like” all the Kosher and complete kings from bais dovid that died.

Rambam continues and states that we should not think he is G-d forbid a fraud. As Rambam states, Hashem made this unfold this way. That a Raui Leheyos Moshiach can become Chezkas Moshiach but can then lose this Halachic status and revert back to being Raui Leheyos Moshiach again. By stating “And Hashem only orchestrated this to test the many” and quotes a posuk from Daniel as proof to why this happened as “the destined time [for the Redemption] has yet to arrive”.

It appears that Rambam specifically stated by Bar Kochba “since he was killed” and not “since he was unsuccessful” (it was explained above he cannot say “since he died / mais” as dying in and of its self isn’t a proof “this is not the one promised by the Torah”). As Rambam in halacha 3 knows he must say in halacha 4 by chezkas Moshiach “or killed” to teach us the

case that even if soldiers continue to fight as explained above he still loses his halachic status and reverts back to being just Raui Leheyos Moshiach.

Therefore as per the klal Rambam uses a similar expression that happened in the case or story when teaching the din. Rambam specifically stated by Bar Kochba “since he was killed” and not “since he was not successful”. As he knows he must use the words “or killed” by chezkas Moshiach. And specifically must state “if he is not successful until this point or killed” as both expressions are needed in order to make the din clear as explained above.

An example to illustrate further the point. If the Rambam would have said by a Woman being freed from her marriage in two ways: Get or Horigas haBaal, murder of her husband.

As such it appears to be a mistake to understand Rambam states “killed” but really means natural death too. As Rambam is precise in his words and always is based on sources from chazal.

killed even after Bais HaMikdosh is built

Some argue (HaRav Moshe Shternbach Shlit'a Moadim v'Zmanim Chelek 1 daf 192) when Rambam states “if he is not successful until this point or killed” that Rambam means that even if he was successful and built the third Bais HaMikdosh but then is killed. Then we know he is not Moshiach, but rather like all the kings of bais Dovid that were complete and kosher that died.

However this appears to be an incorrect understanding of Rambam for the following reasons. Rambam is meticulous in his words and his order. If someone is successful in the actions of Chezkas Moshiach and vanquishes the nations around him, builds the 3rd Bais HaMikdash he must also do Kibutz Galios. Only if he does all of the above is he the Halachic Vadei Moshiach.

If someone that is not Moshiach builds the 3rd Bais HaMikdash. Then we would lose the whole Geder of Vadei Moshiach. As the “real” Moshiach no longer can build the 3rd Bais HaMikdash as it is already there and built by someone that “is not the one the Torah promised”. In order that the “real” Moshiach could become the Rambam’s Vadei Moshiach the 3rd Bais HaMikdash would have to be destroyed (or have its title removed) and the “real” Moshiach would then need to build the Bais HaMikdash again. In which case he would be building the 4th Bais HaMikdash. And obviously there is no source that suggests this is a possibility. So what would the Rambams source be for such an interpretation?

In fact following this reasoning the 3rd bais HaMikdash can be built the exiles gathered etc. and for 10 or 20 years all is peaceful and completeness of Torah has returned etc. Then "moshiach" is killed. According to this understanding we now know that really "this is not the one the Torah promised".

In fact even more so, such an interpretation completely undermines the whole Geder of the Halachic Vadei Moshiach. As even when he does earn the halachic status of Vadei Moshiach – For sure the Moshiach. Maybe in 20 years from now he will be "killed" and then we will say he never was really the Vadei Moshiach.

As can be seen this understanding appears to be erroneous. Even though it is erroneous it can be understood that it was proffered as a suggested interpretation as it is founded on and acknowledges, the principal that the Rambam is meticulous and doesn't have extra words.

In our case once Rambam states "if he is not successful until here" it now appears to be extraneous to now state "or killed". Leading to the aforementioned erroneous interpretation. However as explained above the Rambam must also state "or killed" and it is not extraneous.

Rambam can say MAIS as only Vadei Moshiach can die not a failed chezkas moshiach

Some argue and say the reason why Rambam states "or killed" by chezkas Moshiach is that Rambam holds Moshiach will die. Rambam in his pirush haMishnayos states Moshiach will die and his son will rule after him, and his son after him.

They therefore argue that Rambam cannot state explicitly "or dies / mais" by chezkas Moshiach as that would contradict his opinion in pirush haMishnayos. And therefore Rambam states "or killed" but really he means dying also removes his chazaka.

However this appears to be an erroneous understanding for the following reasons. Rambam in Pirush HaMishnayos is referring to the Ultimate Redeemer. That the Ultimate Redeemer once he proves who he is by fulfilling all the Messianic Prophecies including building the Bais HaMikdash and kibutz galios. Rambam holds that he will eventually die and that his son will rule after him.

However, regarding Chezkas Moshiach "if he is not successful until this point or killed" i.e. he failed, Rambam clearly states "it is known he is NOT the one promised by the Torah" I.e Rambam is teaching us this person is not the Ultimate Redeemer. Being he is not the Ultimate Redeemer the Rambam is definitely able to say "died / mais" as it would not be a contradiction to his opinion in pirush HaMishnayos. As there he is talking about the Ultimate redeemer and here if he would have said "mais" he is NOT talking about the Ultimate redeemer and therefore would not be a contradiction. Furthermore as explained above there is no mkor to rely upon to state that "mais" we now know he is not the one the Torah promised.

As such it appears that this interpretation is erroneous, and the words "or killed" are most definitely precise as explained above.

Harei Zeh

By Chezkas Moshiach the Rambam's expression is "**Harei Zeh** B'Chezkas Sh'hu Moshiach" – "BEHOLD THIS IS the 'presumed Moshiach'.

By Vadei Moshiach the Rambam states "**Harei Zeh** Moshiach b'Vadei" BEHOLD THIS IS Moshiach for certain"

However, as pointed out to me by my friend R' Eliyahu Friedman, by a failed Chezkas Moshiach the Rambam states in a case of "if he is not successful until this point or killed" "**B'Yadua**" – "**It is known**" "That he is not the one the Torah promised" and continues and states "**v'Harei Hu**" "And BEHOLD HE IS like all the kings from Bais Dovid that are complete and Kosher that died".

Rambam does not say by a failed Chezkas Moshiach "**Harei Zeh**" - 'BEHOLD THIS IS' not the one the Torah promised" if Rambam would have said that, then he would be Halachically Posul b'etzem from ever becoming the Ultimate Redeemer. (where would his mkor be for such a psak, that at a future time Hashem must not chose him to be the Ultimate Redeemer?)

Rather Rambam states "It is known – He is not the one Promised by the Torah" i.e. very simply if someone is not successful it is a known fact he is not the Ultimate Redeemer. As stated above the Ultimate redeemer must show consistent signs of success. And be an Ish Matzliach. And if he is not successful he is not Halachically posul b'etzem from becoming the Ultimate Redeemer if Hashem so chooses at some other point in time i.e. when it is time for the appointed time.(posuk from Doniel – "as the appointed time has not come").

Rather Rambam states "Harei Hu" BEHOLD HE IS (in contrast to Harei Zeh – Behold this is - a halachic status and geder) – he is, as an individual without a Halachic status – **like** all the kings from bais Dovid that are complete and Kosher that died.

i.e. he has no halachic status. And reverts back to that which he was before he became chezkas Moshiach – Raui Leheyos Moshiach.

As explained above Rambam is coming to teach us how to recognize the Ultimate Redeemer if he comes without wonders and miracles. If b'chezkas Moshiach loses his chazaka Rambam is not coming to teach that he can never at some future point become the Ultimate Redeemer if Hashem so chooses. As he continues to bring a proof of why Chezkas Moshiach failed from quoting a posuk from Doniel – "as the appointed time has not come". However once the "appointed time" for Redemption does arrive Moshiach will then need to fulfill the signs Rambam codifies whether he will come without wonders and miracles or even with wonders and miracles, Moshiach can fulfill all the Rambam's signs b'bas achas – immediately.

As stated above Moshiach can come from the living or maisim for as long as he is Raui Leheyos Moshiach. As our sages teach one can be considered Raui Leheyos Moshiach alive or mais.

As we have seen above there appears to be a sound and substantial bases “Yesh al Mah Lismoich” to say a B’Chazkas Moshiach can keep his Halachic status of Chezkas Moshiach even while being a mais. Such that it could be argued that Rabbi Akiva would still say about him that he is “HaMelech HaMoshiach”.

May we see the Chezkas Moshiach and Vadei Moshiach speedily in our days with the coming of Moshiach Now!