

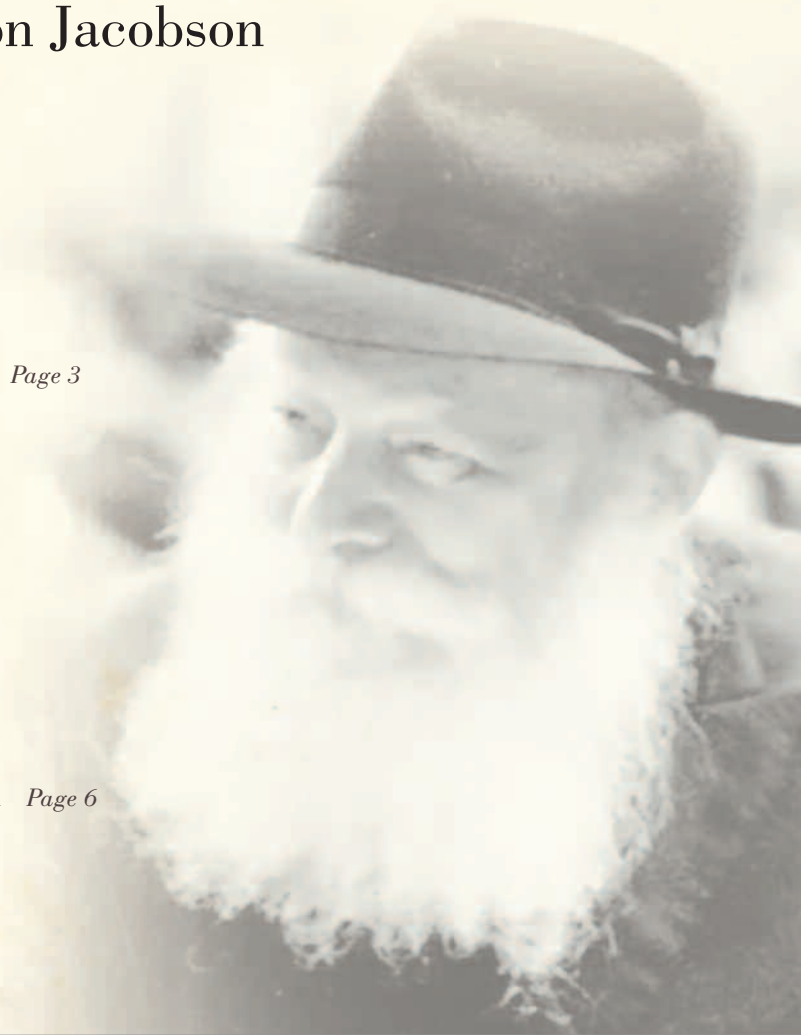


GIMMEL TAMMUZ



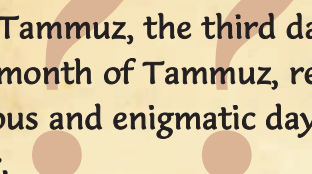
A Personal and Spiritual Guide Transforming this Enigmatic Day into Action

By Simon Jacobson

- 
- 1** What is Gimmel Tammuz? *Page 1*
 - 2** The First 21st Century Leader:
5 Principles of the Rebbe To Change Society *Page 3*
 - Mission
 - Integration
 - Persistence
 - Initiation
 - Destination
 - 3** Why Do We Need a Rebbe? *Page 16*
 - 4** Personal Encounters
 - A Soul Waiting to be Released *Page 4*
 - Earning The Right To Become A Chassid *Page 6*
 - What is a Rebbe? A Friend *Page 8*
 - To Rebuke Or Not? The Secret to
Effective Communication *Page 14*
 - 5** “I Have Done All I Can” *Page 21*

SUITABLE FOR CLASSES, SERMONS OR LECTURES RELATED TO GIMMEL TAMMUZ

WHAT IS GIMMEL TAMMUZ?



Gimmel Tammuz, the third day in the Hebrew month of Tammuz, remains a mysterious and enigmatic day in the calendar.

On this day¹, over three millennia ago (exactly 3283 years ago), Joshua miraculously stopped the sun. Joshua was leading the Jewish people in one of the battles to conquer the Land of Israel. Victory was imminent, but darkness was about to fall. *Shemesh b'giveon dom* (Joshua 10:12-13). “Sun,” proclaimed Joshua, “be still at Giv'on; moon, at the Ayalon valley” (Joshua 10:12). The heavenly bodies acquiesced, halting their progress through the sky until Israel's armies brought the battle to its successful conclusion. Commentaries explain, that the sun's movement is due to its singing praise to G-d. This song causes the sun in heaven to bow from east to west. In order to stop the sun's movement, Joshua commanded the sun to be silent and cease singing, causing it to remain standing still in its place.

The verse continues and tells us (10:14): “There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when G-d listened to a man. Surely G-d was fighting for Israel.”

3200 years later, on this same day in 1927, the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, was released from prison with his death sentence being commuted first to 10 years and then to 3 years in exile. This turned out to be the “beginning of his redemption,” since nine days later (12-13 Tammuz) he was completely released.

16 years ago, in 1994, another voice ceased. A shining sun stopped in its tracks. Leaving a new battle to be fought.

Was it redemption, or the beginning of an exile? In 1927 the commuted sentence ended up being a complete redemption. But where do we stand in regard to the events in 1994? Was it a sun being silenced and stopped, or was it allowing us to continue battling to victory?

Gimmel Tammuz 1994 was a dark Saturday night, when we had just concluded reading the chapter in the Torah called Korach, and beginning to read Chukat. Korach is the story of a challenge to a Rebbe and the reaffirmation of the importance of a Rebbe. In his uprising against Moshe Rabbeinu Korach challenged the very need for a Rebbe. Moses turns to G-d Who then reaffirms and

Cont'd

¹ Seder Olam Rabba chapter 11.

demonstrates the vital role of a Rebbe. Chukat is the story of death and how we heal from death. Juxtaposed between these two narratives - the need for a Rebbe and the healing of death - is Gimmel Tammuz... Teetering on a thin line between darkness and light, between death and life, between a Rebbe and his

people, Gimmel Tammuz both challenges and empowers us to define the meaning of a Rebbe and our relationship with him.

Yet another enigma.

As you see, we have more questions than answers. Gimmel Tammuz remains unresolved - for now.

WHY? WHAT WILL BE?

“... What will be? – Do I know what the Rebbe is thinking? It is his responsibility, he will certainly take care. How? I don’t know. There are other things that I don’t know...”

– *Rebbe’s Letter, Igros Kodesh vol. 3 p. 308.*

“... When faced with formidable questions and challenges, Jews don’t ask “why?” – why these things happened? They ask “what?” – what can and must we do to move forward. G-d provides a person all the resources he needs to build a productive life. G-d does not ask us to do something we are unable to accomplish. If we needed to know why certain things happen in order to accomplish our mission, G-d would surely have informed us. Since He did not, that is clear evidence that we don’t need an answer to forge ahead...”

– *Rebbe’s Letter, Kislev 1973*

“There has never been a day like it before or since.”

16 years ago, in 1994, the sun stopped and everything changed for us. And yet we are still here - driven to fulfill the Rebbe’s mission. The sun is shining - yet it is stuck, waiting. Waiting for the battle to be finished.

We do not have a direct answer or explanation for Gimmel Tammuz. A paradox: We don’t know why. But we know what we must do: Forge ahead and bring the Rebbe’s message and inspiration, the Rebbe’s light and redemption to everyone we meet. The Rebbe provided us with a

comprehensive blueprint and charged us with a mission and tools. Now more than ever we must illuminate and transform the world - spreading the wellsprings outward, until we fill the world with Divine knowledge as the waters cover the sea.

Just as in times of Joshua, “G-d listened to a man” and stopped the sun, now too, our actions can surely entice G-d to listen to us and allow the sun to continue its journey.

We can finish the battle, cause the sun to begin singing and moving again; we can bring on the full and complete redemption.

THE FIRST TRUE 21ST CENTURY LEADER

FIVE MAJOR PRINCIPLES OF THE REBBE THAT HAVE THE POWER TO CHANGE SOCIETY

GIMMEL TAMMUZ LECTURE

Saluting the Shluchim and the Shluchos, the Rebbe's personal emissaries, who are the living arms, legs, mouthpieces, minds and hearts who demonstrate the Rebbe's eternal impact on the world.

Who is the Lubavitcher Rebbe and why is it important to know about him today? What were the Rebbe's major contributions to society?

Despite all that has been said, written and published about the Rebbe's greatness, I submit that his most revolutionary and pioneering impact has yet to truly be appreciated. And once we discover the Rebbe's approach, it will change our lives.

Personal Relevance

Before addressing any major contribution or solution, we must first define the problem.

What is the biggest challenge plaguing the Jewish people today? The one word answer is: Relevance. Whether it is an observant or non-observant Jew, the single greatest lack is the relevance of Judaism to our personal lives.

People pursue that which is relevant to them. If something has no relevance, you

will either ultimately reject it, or your commitment to it will be at best mechanical and hollow. Most Jews today, unfortunately, do not relate to Torah's personal message. That's why it should not come as a surprise that 60% of Buddhists in America are Jewish. Jews are seekers. If they don't find spiritual nourishment in their own backyard they will seek it elsewhere.

As far as observant Jews go, how many are following tradition by rote? *Mitzvat anoshim me'lumodah* - habitual and mechanical Judaism. How many look to Torah to find answers to their personal struggles and psychological dilemmas?

And yet we are told that the Torah is *Torat Chaim* - the Torah of life, *hi chayeinu v'orech yomeinu*, she is our sustenance and our length of days.

Of the millions of words uttered by the Rebbe, what was his most common and prevalent expression? What phrase did

Cont'd

the Rebbe use more often than any other? *Torah m'loshon hora'ah* - Torah is rooted in the word directive. The Torah is a guide for life. The Rebbe repeated this phrase in virtually every one of his talks, and often many times even in the same talk.

From a scholarly perspective you have to wonder: Why the need to reiterate this statement so many times, again and again? The answer is both simple and profound: Recognizing that the greatest challenge of our time is the Torah's personal relevance, the Rebbe kept driving home the key antidote - that Torah is a guide, a personal blueprint for life.

Relevance, the Rebbe teaches, is the only way to revitalize Judaism.

How do we find relevance in Torah and mitzvot? By looking into the soul of the Torah and mitzvot. The body of Torah teaches us the mechanics - the technical rules that govern when, how and what we should be doing. The soul of Torah brings Judaism to life - revealing how a mitzvah

actualizes your soul, and empowers you to perform the mitzvah with passion and warmth. **The Rebbe continuously challenged us not to follow Judaism by habit; *b'chol yehiyu b'aynecho chadoshim*, every day mitzvot should be done in a completely new way, like they were never done before!** We never do a mitzvah twice the same way; every time we don tefillin or light a Shabbat candle, for example, even if technically it's the exact same mitzvah you did yesterday or last week, you do it with a new passion and energy, with new personal relevance, addressing your present challenges. Every time you say 'Shema,' it should have a unique meaning, even for the same individual, reflecting and addressing your current state of being.

Relevance. In every personal encounter with the Rebbe, in every *fabrenge* with the Rebbe, in every *sicha* delivered by the Rebbe, you'll always find the focus on the personal dimension - the personal relevance of Judaism to our daily lives.

A Soul Waiting To Be Released

A Shliach brought an English professor from London to see the Rebbe. The professor sat very cold and silent. To break the ice, the Rebbe turned to him and asked, "Tell me, when you look at me what do you see?"

He was stunned, but remained quiet. Recognizing that the professor won't say anything, the Rebbe continued, "I'll tell you what I see when I look at you. I see a divine soul waiting to be released." Then he turned again to this professor and said to him, "so now what do you see when you look at me?" The professor replied, "I see an observant Jew." The Rebbe responded, "That's not who I am."

FIVE PRINCIPLES

Here are five fundamental principles that the Rebbe used to express Judaism's universal and personal relevance to our lives:

1. Mission: Each and every person has an indispensable mission to accomplish.

2. Integration: Finding unity and common denominators in every aspect of your life, in every life experience, and in all knowledge.

3. Self-initiating effort: Be proactive. Generate opportunities. Do not wait for someone to give them to you on a platter.

4. Persistence: Relentless and unwavering commitment to growth. Even if you face setbacks, even if at times it may not make sense, always persist in your good commitments.

5. Destination: The journey of life, the journey of history, with all its twists and turns, ups and downs, is leading to a destination: Moshiach. Our behavior and actions play a vital role in reaching the destination.

These five core messages, which permeate all the Rebbe's teachings, respond to the five greatest challenges facing us today. And they serve as a blueprint to find spiritual relevance in a secular world.

1. MISSION

You are indispensable. Therefore everything you do matters now and forever.

One of the critical elements missing in many people's lives today is a sense of calling and mission. Due to a variety of reasons, including prosperity and its resulting complacency, we take many of our freedoms for granted, and do not feel a sense of urgency beckoning us. Our highly technological universe has also made many of us feel insignificant. Can I, one person among 6 billion, really make a difference?

Declares the Rebbe: "Birth is G-d saying that you matter." Each one of us was specifically chosen and sent to earth with an indispensable mission to fulfill. How many times did we hear the Rebbe emphasizing this recurrent theme? "Everyone gathered here," the Rebbe once said at a farbrengen of thousands of people, "Every one of you, without exception, has something to contribute that you and only you can accomplish! No one else that ever lived or will ever live - not Moses, not the greatest of the greats - can accomplish the mission you were charged with."

You are indispensable. This is the single most important and powerful message that you will ever hear. Because remember: If you don't matter, then everything you do doesn't really matter...

Cont'd



However, since you do absolutely matter - G-d chose you to fulfill a unique mission - then the consequences of your actions are far-reaching, they have the power to change the world forever!

This message is critical at all times. But the Rebbe realized that it was especially relevant to our modern times. We live in an insecure world. Many people grow up today with a profound feeling of insignificance; that they don't really matter. The paradox is great:

With all our scientific breakthroughs, advanced communications and technologies, we live in a profoundly depersonalized universe. **In our increasingly interconnected universe we have never felt so disconnected- desperately seeking healthy intimacy and enduring relationships. Our workplace has never been so efficient; our homes never so deficient.** A deep spiritual void exists within most of us. People are plagued with low self esteem and unparalleled personal emptiness.

The antidote to this profound vacuum is the Rebbe's first principle: You are on a mission - absolutely indispensable. And it behooves you - you carry the responsibility - to find out what unique contribution you must make. There's no question that you have a unique mission. You simply have to discover what it is.

Cont'd



Earning the Right to Become a Chassid

Zalman Jaffe, a businessman from London, England, had a very interesting, and we could even say entertaining, relationship with the Rebbe. The first time he came to the Rebbe was in the early '60's. When he went into the Rebbe's room for *yechidus*, a personal audience, the Rebbe, as was his custom, showed him a chair to sit down. He refused the invitation and remained standing; he wouldn't sit.

After a few introductory words, the Rebbe said to Mr. Jaffe "I'm uncomfortable with you standing." He responded, "I can't sit down." The Rebbe asked, "Why can't you sit down?" "I was told not to sit." "Who told you?" the Rebbe asked. "The man who told me, wouldn't want me to share that." The Rebbe smiled and said, "Listen, if you won't tell him, I won't tell him." Mr. Jaffe said, "well, it was Rabbi Ben-Tzion Shemtov, one of the Rebbe's emissaries in London. Rabbi Shemtov instructed me, "I won't tell you much, but when you go see the Rebbe you should know that a Chassid doesn't sit in the Rebbe's presence. The Rebbe's the Rebbe. A Chassid stands with *derech erez*, with respect."

After listening closely, the Rebbe said to Mr. Jaffe: "To be a Chassid does not come automatically. You have to earn it. You come three times to see me and then you can decide. You want to be a Chassid? Then you'll stand. Meanwhile you can sit."





2. INTEGRATION

An underlying thread runs through and unites all the details of our lives.

The second principle is unity, which means that your life is not just a composite of many fragments, but every piece is part of one unifying mosaic. At times life may appear splintered. But always know that an underlying script connects all the dots - every moment and space, every detail, of your life. We call it *hashgacha pratis*, divine providence. Sometimes you may see the picture emerge only in retrospect, but there's an order to your life. **Why are you here just now? Who are you going to meet later today or tomorrow? Where will you travel to in the next few days? Who will you encounter?** Some things may seem random, yet you have been led there, because that is exactly where you need to be at that moment to finish the unifying circle of your life. It's not our man-made plans that make the difference. Sometimes the most special experiences in life are the spontaneous events that happen when you are unprepared. Be open to the opportunities that come your way.

This integrated approach to life counters the fragmentation and compartmentalization that so many of us suffer from today. A multitude of forces tug us in all different directions. Always look for the unifying thread that runs through our

lives connecting the details - and directing them to a higher cause.

In all his talks the Rebbe would strip ideas down to their bare bones and find the unifying elements that connected them all. When discussing any Torah concept the Rebbe would weave together all the different methods and dimensions of interpretation (pshat, remez, drush, sod) and demonstrate how they were all part of one larger picture. The Rebbe used the same approach in addressing life: We are charged with bringing harmony into our fragmented psyches, tranquility into our split communities, peace into our divisive world. We must integrate all forms of duality - mind and heart, form and function, matter and spirit, body and soul.

3. SELF-INITIATING EFFORT

Do not wait until you are called upon; do not be a passive observer; initiate, take charge and lead the way.

The third principle is, in the words of the Rebbe, "*avodah b'ko'ach atzmo*," self initiated effort. Observe the Rebbe's structure of the entire *shlichus* system. The Rebbe clearly inspired it and inspired his students to become shlichim. But, as the Rebbe made absolutely clear (in his first talk upon assuming formal leadership. Yud Shvat 5711):

Cont'd

What Is a Rebbe? A Friend

At the encouragement of others, a psychologist came to see the Rebbe. At outset of their meeting, the psychologist was not saying much. The Rebbe asked him if he had anything on his mind, to which he replied, “not really.” “So, why are you here?” the Rebbe inquired. The professor responded, “I really don’t know why I’m here. I was told by a few people that it’s important to come to see you. So I said, why not? I’m in New York; I might as well.” The Rebbe said, “You know, I’m not comfortable with someone sitting here who doesn’t want to be here. But since you’re already here, there is a concept called hashgacha pratis, divine providence, which states that everything has a reason and purpose. There’s surely a reason why we are meeting. Maybe you have something to ask, something to share?”

The psychologist replied, “Okay. I have a

question. Why am I here? Who are you? What is a Rebbe?” The Rebbe turned serious and said to him, “I’ll tell you. A Rebbe is a friend.” The man looked at the Rebbe, anticipating hearing something more, but the Rebbe didn’t continue. Perplexed, the psychologist asked the Rebbe: “A friend - is that it? I have many friends.” The Rebbe replied, “Allow me to define what a friend is, and then you’ll tell me how many friends you have.”

The Rebbe explained, “A friend is somebody who you can speak to as you speak to yourself - no defenses, no fear of judgment, no condescension, heart to heart as you speak to yourself, absolute trust. Tell me, how many friends like that do you have?” The fellow said, “I don’t have any such friends. I don’t think many people have friends like that.” The Rebbe continued, “That’s what a Rebbe is. A true trusting friend. All the layers, all the masks that we put up to maneuver and negotiate the world, disappear when you’re with a Rebbe.”



“Our faith demands that everyone must do good on their own, and not depend on their Rebbe. Don’t deceive yourselves into thinking that I will lead and you will suffice with singing songs and toasting “I’chaim” and that that will be enough. Each of you has your own load, your own battle. I do not decline from helping, but nothing - even heaven - can replace personal responsibility.”

Why do you think Chabad continues to thrive today, despite it being 16 years after Gimmel Tammuz? Because 16 years

ago no one suddenly argued, “The Rebbe’s not here. The boss is not here (at least physically), so I quit.” Because the Rebbe cultivated leaders, not followers, proactive innovators, not passive bystanders. The Rebbe **empowered** us to feel the personal responsibility of continuing our vital work. We are not hired guns; each of us is forever bound with the institutions, schools and communities that we build. The place you were sent to is for life.

Intrinsic to the Rebbe’s leadership style was to instill confidence and empower

Cont’d



others to lead the way. The Rebbe would often not answer a question and would not get intervene, even in disputes which he could resolve. “Solve it, work it out yourselves. Find objective parties to mediate,” were common answers from the Rebbe to those seeking advice in conflict resolution. **Restraint is the wisdom of a true leader. Knowing when not to intervene so as not stunt the growth and confidence of the student.** Allow your child to learn to walk on his own. Yes, be there for the child; show him that you are there to support him, but don’t allow your misplaced compassion to stop him from walking on his own feet. (Obviously, even as we are “on our own” we derive energy from the Rebbe, but the energy manifests through our efforts). Shluchim make decisions on a daily basis - based on the Rebbe’s directives, but still, this decision making requires effort and analysis in assessing the situation on location.

A favorite expression of the Rebbe capturing this theme is Rashi’s statement at the beginning of the Torah portion of Behaalotcho: **Raise** the flames, we are commanded, not just kindle them. When lighting of the menorah the high priest was required to wait until the “flames rise on their own.” This a lesson in all of life: When educating, inspiring, guiding your student, your child, anyone you come in contact with - make sure that you don’t just give them light, but that they can burn and rise on their own - with their

own unique light. Don’t just give them facts and answers, give them tools and methodologies, which will allow them to resolve future challenges even when the teacher may not be available).

Indeed, in the last Behaalotcho talk that the Rebbe edited (1991), we asked the Rebbe a question regarding something that he had said in his talk. The Rebbe replied - this is the only time that the Rebbe ever answered this way: “The entire theme of this farbrengen was *shalheves oleh m’aleho* (the flames rising on their own), and you’re asking **me** to answer **your** questions?”

A true teacher teaches a student tools, methodology, not just knowledge. So even when you are, so to speak, not in his presence, you have the tools. You’re an adult; you’re not a child running and waiting blindly, “what do I do next?” That’s an unbelievable art and skill. Any leader that can train people in this manner, ensures an impact that will perpetuate forever.

4. PERSISTENCE

The key to all success is never to stop a good thing. Keep at it, relentlessly, and you will prevail.

The fourth principle is persistence. If you start something good, never stop it. How many great things never came to be simply because people got lazy or just gave up? Small little things, little moves that you don’t even always notice - stick with

Cont’d



it and you cannot believe the impact it will have.

Look at the Rebbe, himself - farbrengen after farbrengen he would pour his heart out. He would repeat different themes countless times. His patience was legendary, and his persistence relentless. Though he would often complain, "I've said this so many times and still to no effect" - the Rebbe never gave up on us. The Rebbe knew and taught us the secret power of water drops. As in the famous story of Rabbi Akiva, who wondered whether a 40 year old like himself can ever begin studying Torah. Until he observed water dripping onto a stone, and he noticed a perfect hole bored through the stone. Leading him to appreciate the power of persistence: Drop by drop the water ultimately pierces even a hard stone.

Persistence - try it out. Then see what kind of accumulative impact it has.

5. DESTINATION

All our actions are leading to a destination. Keeping our eye on the destination infuses each step in that direction with profound urgency.

And, finally, the fifth principle: destination. The word Moshiach is embroiled in

all kinds of controversy; fraught with stereotypes. But let's think of it in simple terms. For thousands of years our ancestors paid a steep price to live virtuous lives and often dying for their beliefs, for their commitments and mitzvos. Was it all to waste? Did their mitzvos die with them? A very big question.

Imagine your child asking you this question: "If at the end of life we are all buried in the same ground, what difference is there if I live a life of virtue or vice? Who cares?" The usual answers given to this include: "It's the right thing to do. It's morality. G-d said so." But are these answers adequate?

The true answer is this: Your life choices matter because the good deed never dies. A mitzvah is forever. And the journey continues even after death, even as history rolls on, and will reach a final destination. If there was no destination then one could strongly argue that there is no enduring power to a life of virtue. But since there is a destination - our lives are heading somewhere - then every act we do is either helping pave the road to the destination or, G-d forbid, not.

All the sacrifices made by Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, Leah - and all the countless people whose names we don't know - all the prices paid by our parents and grandparents - lives

Cont'd



on forever. Every mitzvah they performed created another eternal building block. These building blocks accumulated over the generations, slowly but consistently, building up a great giant structure. Until the day comes - and the Rebbe tells us that the day is here - when this enormous amount of positive energy will erupt creating an enormous surge, bringing on a spiritual revolution that will transform the universe into a world of peace and harmony.

Knowing about this destination is critical to the effort, justifying the struggles and making the hard work and the entire journey worth the effort. **When we know the journey is not endless and that every act we do is leading us to this destination, it infuses each step of the way with confidence and spirit to forge ahead.** Think of the difference between fighting a battle haunted by the doubt that it may never end, or fighting a battle that you know will surely end and you contribute in bringing it to fruition.

History is a long marathon. Every generation carried the baton for its leg of the race. The Rebbe declared that we are the seventh generation that is charged with carrying the baton to the finish line. We are but like midgits standing on the shoulders of giants; mere midgits, but standing on the accumulative shoulders of those before us, we can see farther than they, precisely because we stand on their shoulders.

Cont'd

How to Communicate

One of the most phenomenal aspects of the Rebbe's personality was his effectiveness as a communicator and motivator. The untold thousands who were privileged to meet and correspond with him personally, all felt the Rebbe's ability to relate to them in a most personal and individual manner. No matter that he or she was but one of the many hundreds to meet with the Rebbe for a brief minute or two that night; no matter that his or her letter was all but lost in the three mail sacks that daily arrived at the Rebbe's office—the Rebbe would immediately focus upon their individual situation, address their needs and abilities, and proceed to enlist them in his relentless efforts on behalf of the Jewish people and of all humanity.

In all communication the most critical component is the effect you have on the person you are speaking with. Your intentions and brilliance is not the focus; the key is whether you are reaching the other person. Even if you are saying the greatest things, but if they don't touch the other person, then it is a clear sign that you have not communicated effectively, that you did not speak words coming from your heart.

Often, when the Rebbe would present a directive he would say: "Repeat it in my name or not in my name. Whatever will most impact the other person." The bottom line is the effect." One of the biggest stereotypes when it comes to

Cont'd



Destination. This means that every thing that we do is infused, not just as “I’m doing a good thing right now” - but as something more. It has an impact on the world and a cumulative one. Each one of us must offer our indispensable contribution. Like musical notes - each one of us playing our note accumulatively creates a symphony where we are both indispensable in what we have to play and also complements each other because none of us can do it alone.

Among all the thousands of the Rebbe’s teachings the one that stand out most is focusing on the destination: A vision and model for life in the future, which informs and shapes how we live in the present. How keeping our eye on the destination infuses each step in that direction with profound urgency.



religion in general and Judaism, in particular, is that the one who’s speaking thinks he knows better. He assumes a condescending or even judgmental attitude. Of all people, the Rebbe, a tzaddik, had of course the highest standard. And yet he would always speak sensitively addressing the specific person where he or she was at. The wisdom of sensitivity dictates that you speak to people where they are, not where you are. It’s not about you. This is not a showcase, a platform for you to express your wisdom and your benevolence in sharing with others Torah and mitzvos. It’s about helping another - and sharing a resonating and motivating message.

Language, we are taught, is communication. It opens up channels. But language can also be a trap. You use a word, and for you it’s an innocent word, but the other person hears it as a word that causes him to go ballistic. The sensitivity is to put yourself in the shoes of another person. Do not speak by script and rote. Speak to a person’s heart. The Rebbe was fond of saying, “*devarim ha’yotzim min ha’lev, nichnasim al ha’lev,*” words that come from the heart enter the heart. If they come out of the mouth or the brain, they go into one ear and out the other.



RESOLUTION: PROBE THE REBBE'S TEACHINGS FOR RELEVANT MESSAGES TO OUR LIVES

These are just five powerful principles taught by the Rebbe, which can radically impact our perspective on life, Torah and Judaism. But as a true visionary, it's quite obvious that the Rebbe's teachings - virtually thousands upon thousands of pages - offer many more vital lessons applied to our personal lives, helping us face our present challenges.

Perhaps the most appropriate resolution we can make in connection with Gimmel Tammuz is to commit to begin studying the Rebbe's teachings on a consistent basis, with the specific objective of combing through these wealthy treasures and finding relevant messages that speak to our individual life situations.

The sheer volume of the Rebbe's output is simply incredible. We literally have hundreds of thousands of pages that address every life issue from a-z. At times, the Rebbe's Farbrengens would go on for seven or eight hours! From 1950 to 1992 the Rebbe delivered over 3000 Farbrengens. Not to mention over 30 volumes of correspondence, hundred of thousands of personal answers, hundreds of pages of

the Rebbe's personal journals, thousands of hours of private audiences and other platforms through which the Rebbe expressed himself.

Most amazing is that all these teachings - beyond their brilliant erudition and scholarship - are notable for their **relevance**, their personal relevance to our lives - to you, to me to all of our friends, families and communities, to all people of this world. They offer us a vast and diverse blueprint addressing virtually every possible issue that humans face - on all fronts: personal, psychological, political, scientific and historical.

This is not a miraculous feat. Through his entire life the Rebbe was concerned with the human condition. The Rebbe dedicated his entire being to probe the Torah and find within it direction and guidance for all the issues facing the people of our generation.

We may not understand the significance of Gimmel Tammuz - the "why?" But we know the "what" - what the Rebbe would tell us we must do: To intensify like never

The Rebbe dedicated his entire being to probe the Torah and find within it direction and guidance for all the issues facing the people of our generation.

Cont'd



before our commitment to the Rebbe's teachings and directives.

So on this 16th anniversary of the significant and mysterious Gimmel Tamuz, let us all commit, to delve into these teachings and discover answers to questions that each of us is grappling with. Whether it is a personal issue, or one affecting our families, relationships, work, or other questions - the Rebbe's thoughts have answers for us.

Let us each bring to the table our dilemma and challenge ourselves to find and answer in the Rebbe's words. "Here's my dilemma. Can I find an answer in the Rebbe's talks for this?" I guarantee you that with a bit of effort, you'll find a true and relevant answer,

not a generic one, to the issue you are struggling with!

There are three types of people: Those that make things happen, those that watch things happen and those that ask "what happened?" The Rebbe taught us that each of us, with our indispensable mission, can and must make things happen. Not passively watch or wait for things to happen, but to initiate and generate forward movement.

On this unique day, let us recommit to the Rebbe's five principles - discover your mission, integrate, initiate, persist, and above all: keep your eyes on the destination, and let our actions lead us to the final redemption, with Moshiach Tzidkeinu. ■■■



To Rebuke Or Not? The Secret to Effective Communication

Rav Tzvi Greenwald, a beloved Israeli orator and askan (activist), would travel around Israel to inspire Jews in different communities and kibbutzim, including many very secular environments. But he was criticized by many of his religious

colleagues: "How can you speak to these audiences, many of them anti-religious and even outright hostile, without saying some words of rebuke? By not criticizing them you in effect are allowing them to think that you endorse their secular and anti-religious lifestyle."

Rav Tzvi at this point - this was back in the 60's - had never been by the Rebbe, but he was a devoted follower of the Rebbe's teachings and directives. As such, he told his critics: "Listen, my understanding is that the Rebbe wants us to visit these Jews



and speak to them in a loving and inspiring way. I follow only the path that my Rebbe has laid out for us. I believe that the Rebbe's way is not with rebuke and negativity." A while later, in 1967, Rav Tzvi traveled for the first time to New York to spend the holidays with the Rebbe. Before returning back to Israel he had the opportunity to go into *yechidus*, for a private audience with the Rebbe. He decided that this was a good opportunity to ask the Rebbe his opinion on the critique he had received about his method of speaking with secular Jews.

Rav Tzvi wrote a three-page letter, in which he asked various personal questions, requested blessings for his family and other individuals etc. At the end of his note, at the bottom of page 3, he concluded with the question whether his positive approach is a correct one, because there are some who are suggesting that this approach is not appropriate and he should be reprimanding those who do not follow a Torah-observant lifestyle.

After scanning the entire letter, the Rebbe looked up and responded only to Rav Tzvi's final question (without addressing everything else he wrote in his long letter). The Rebbe raised his hand and said to Rav Tzvi: "nu, oib du vest mit zei azoi redder, vos vet zayn? Du vest oifboyen a vant, a chomeh, tzevishin zich mit zei, azoi az zei velen dir nit velen oder kenen heren. Du bist dort gekumen nit zei tzu zogen ver zai zaynen. Dos veisen zai on dir. Du bist zai gekumen dertzeilen vos du host zai tzu geben..."

"What will be if you speak this way [with words of rebuke]? You'll build up a wall between you and them and there will be no communication, they will be unable or unwilling to hear you. You came to this place not to tell them who they are. They know who they are. You're coming to tell them what you have to offer to them to actualize their potential and become greater people."

"You came to this place not to tell them who they are. They know who they are. You're coming to tell them what you can offer them to actualize their potential and become greater people."



WHY DO WE NEED A REBBE?

Korach vs. Bureaucratic Hierarchies

'Why do we need a leader' is the precise theme of Parshas Korach. Korach and his cronies challenge Moshe with the following argument: "All the people in the community are holy, and G-d is with them. Why are you setting yourselves above G-d's congregation?"

The fact that Korach's argument is documented for posterity is proof that his position has merit. Indeed, Korach was a 'pikach,' a wise man. Thus his argument is not to be easily dismissed; it is a wise viewpoint that requires deliberation and consideration.

Korach was essentially arguing against bureaucratic hierarchies. The Torah and Judaism are built on the firm and unwavering principle that all people have a Divine soul (created in the "image of G-d"), and by that virtue have direct access to G-d at all times. Where then, Korach asked, is there room for leaders that are "above G-d's congregation".

No one individual owns the Torah. It belongs to all people. Why, because Torah is not a product for marketing, nor is it a corporation. Torah is Divine truth - a

blueprint for life, consisting of knowledge and information given to all people to guide them in finding their way in this world. As such, Torah is free. No one has monopoly on Torah and no one can demand 'royalties' for its study. Indeed, the **Talmud says that every child is taught the Torah in its mother's womb during pregnancy; in each of our psyches is ingrained**

the Divine will and wisdom - all the tolls that we will need for our life's journey.

This powerful fact can be appreciated by seeing the effects of the converse approach. "From my enemies I become wise." Whenever a fascist or totalitarian regime comes to power, the first thing it establishes is a 'bureau of

truth and information.' Why, because to control a population you need to control the minds of the people. 'Propaganda' is what they call it. With this, the regime will control the media and the airwaves, to ensure that the people hear and see only the information that the leaders want to convey. Free press - the free flow of information is anathema and definite suicide to any dictatorial power. As Thomas Jefferson said, that given the

Free press - the free flow of information is anathema and definite suicide to any dictatorial power.

Cont'd

choice, he would choose a free press to free government. Because without a free press there is no free government.

Whenever you hear that there is a “bureau of truth and information,” rest assured that it neither ‘truth’ nor ‘information’...

Korach argued just that. “All the people in the community are holy, and G-d is with them. Why are you setting yourselves above G-d’s congregation.” Why do we need leaders and teachers and run the risk of abuse. As we have so often seen, lately as well, how so called ‘authorities’ have abused their position, and have not taught the pure truth, but their distorted version of the truth. **How many people have been hurt by innocently believing in their teachers, only later (some later than others, and some have yet) to find out how those teachers misrepresented the truth?!**

So Korach argued, why risk it? Torah was given by G-d to all the people, and they are all holy, why give exclusive power to leaders, power that can be abused?!

3322 years ago the Torah was given in the Sinai wilderness precisely to pre-empt the possibility of fascist abuse. By giving the Torah in a wilderness, which is no mans’ land, G-d was telling us that “no one city can lay claim to the Torah. I have

given My truth to all of you, and you each have access to it.” Incredible fact. The Bible - the Torah - is the biggest best seller in history. Yet, no one owns it. No one can claim royalties for it!

And the Torah was passed on from generation to generation, in an unbroken chain, with no corporate transitions and bureaucratic infrastructures. Moses did not appoint a ‘board of directors’ and a new “CEO.” Moses left us the Torah and his students, and so it continued from generation to generation. As delineated in the Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers): “Moses received the Torah from Sinai and passed it on to Joshua; Joshua to the Elders; the Elders to the Prophets...”.

Torah was given by G-d to all the people, and they are all holy, why give exclusive power to leaders, power that can be abused?!

A True Leader

What then was Korach’s mistake, and grave mistake at that? His argument seems plausible and even true. What is the answer to his question: Why do we need leaders, and what will prevent them from abusing their power?

Korach’s serious error was in his understanding of the nature of a true leader. In his mind a leader meant a powerful person who serves as a human intermediary between G-d and the people, between the

Cont’d

Torah's truth and the students. He thought that a leader is defined by his strengths - his wisdom, his charisma, his wealth, all the qualities necessary to lead a large group of individuals.

A true leader is precisely the opposite. He is defined not by what he is, but by what he is not. The single most important quality of a true leader is: *bittul* - humility ("Moses was the most humble among all people on Earth"). He is invisible, and therefore becomes a vehicle (*merkavah*) to G-dliness; he is a living example and the epitome of how G-d wants a person to be.

Deifying individuals is anathema to Judaism. Idolatry is a cardinal sin. We only worship G-d and G-d alone. The greatness of a Tzaddik, a Rebbe, a Moses is not the power of the individual, but the power of G-d that is working through that person. Indeed, there cannot be even the slightest tinge of individual ego or personality that gets in the way and does not allow the inherent G-dliness to shine through.

And the reason we need Moses, and a Moses in each generation (Moses passed on the Torah to Joshua, etc.), is because we as individuals are consumed and over-

whelmed by material life, we have our egos and personalities that get in the way to accessing G-d and the Torah's truth.

We need a selfless leader, a teacher to guide us and show us the way to access our souls and G-d. And when Moses guides us he does not show us how *he* (Moses) accesses G-d, but he shows us how we have direct access to G-d through our Divine souls.

The true leader, in other words, is not an intermediary that stands in the way between us and G-d; his selflessness and *bittul* allows him to be a transparent channel in helping us connect to G-d in our own unique way. A true teacher

does not teach you his *own* truth, he teaches you that it is a Higher truth and that it belongs to you as much as it does to the teacher. The true teacher has no ego, he recognizes at all times that he is merely a messenger passing on truth from a greater place. **Indeed, the greatest title of a Torah scholar is not "chacham," a wise person, but "talmid chacham," the student of a wise person.** The scholar always feels the *bittul* that he is merely a student of Divine wisdom. "Reishis chohma yiras Hashem" (the beginning and foundation of wisdom is awe of G-d).

Cont'd

Korach's reasoning was accurate in the fact that all people are holy and have direct access to G-d. There was also justification in his questioning the role of leadership, exposing its potential abuse and distortions. That is why the Torah documents Korach's argument.

But even if his arguments had merit, Korach's intentions were wrong. Indeed, though he challenged Moses' leadership, he demanded leadership for himself (very reminiscent of the fact that though Communism theoretically argues the equality of all classes, Communist leaders were the most notorious abusers of leadership) - all the more reason for needing a true selfless leader!

Korach was absolutely wrong because he did not understand the true nature of a leader - one who is totally humble and selfless. Leadership is not about power and ambition; it is about bittul and selflessness. And that is the only reason that we can trust a true leader, and the reason G-d trusted Moses. When G-d chose Moses to be the leader, Moses strongly resisted. "I am a man of no words" was one of the many arguments Moses offered in refusing to be the leader. G-d replies: "Who then gives a man the mouth to speak if not I." G-d essentially chose Moses pre-

cisely because he did not want the job, and because he would not speak his own words; he would speak G-d's words.

This type of leader was completely new to Korach and his men. No one had ever met a leader like that. So they challenged the very concept based on their limited experience. But as a result of their argument

...we owe Korach a great debt for allowing the role of true leadership to be clarified for us, and exposing the distortions of false leadership.

we gain a new understanding of the nature of a true leader. **This is the value of Torah relating to us the story of Korach, and we owe Korach a great debt for allowing the role of true leadership to be clarified for us, and exposing the distortions of false leadership.**

The Rebbe; Our Leader

This story offers us a very relevant message today.

Many of us are simply skeptical about a true leader - a Rebbe - because we never met one. The so-called 'leaders' around us - political, business, sports, entertainment - are essentially at best nothing more than good administrators, or people driven by aggressive ambition that allowed them to climb the leadership ladder. This is without even addressing the rampant corruption surrounding leaders that we are all aware and reminded of continuously.

Cont'd

Many of us, however, had the distinct privilege and honor to meet such a leader. A G-dly man entirely dedicated to the Higher Cause. His name was Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson. Or simply: The Rebbe - the leader.

As a true leader, humility was his personality. A man in whose presence you felt not him, but yourself - you felt that you belong, that you matter and have an indispensable contribution to make in this world.

With all the current upheaval in a world that is rapidly changing right before our eyes, the void of true leadership is glaringly obvious. From the Rebbe we learned how to access our own souls. We learned how to access the Torah - thousands of years of history and scholarship - to understand our lives today and the forces reshaping our geopolitical as well as our psycho-spiritual landscapes.

On Motzei Shabbat Parshat Korach, Saturday night of Tammuz 3 5754 (June 12, 1994), Korach's challenge to Moses manifested itself. We have all been challenged to understand the role of a Rebbe-leader in our lives today.

In the last sixteen years the world has changed dramatically, with many more changes to come. We are desperately in need of true leadership - and there is no question that G-d would not challenge us without providing us with the necessary

tools. Even as Korach questions the role of leader, the continuing Torah portion provides us with the power to find the answer, that yes, we need a leader, and yes, Moses is G-d's chosen leader.

We turn to our Rebbe and his teachings - explaining the times in which we live from a

Torah perspective - to make sense of the unsettling events surrounding us today. And we find enormous strength and clarity in the Torah vision.

We each are challenged today to answer Korach's argument. If we do not want to be left floundering amidst countless questions in an increasingly confusing world, it behooves us to turn to Moses and his teachings for hope and direction. We need to discover the selfless leader that can help us see through the haze.

Oh, how we are in need for such a leader today...

We turn to our Rebbe and his teachings - explaining the times in which we live from a Torah perspective



I HAVE DONE ALL I CAN

On Thursday evening, Nissan 27, 5751 (April 11, 1991), the Rebbe issued this impassioned call to his followers and to the entire Jewish and world community. This unusually strongly worded message, and the anguished voice in which it was delivered, shocked and roused his chassidim to a heightened initiative in the Rebbe's campaign to bring the world to an awareness of and preparedness for the Redemption.

“How is it that Moshiach has still not come? Why are we still in a state of galut (exile)?

Why is our world still a place in which evil and suffering still prevail?

Why is it acceptable that the Redemption should not come tonight, nor tomorrow, nor the day after, G-d forbid? The Jewish nation are "a stiff-necked people." Were there to be found even a few individuals who would adamantly insist on bringing Moshiach, he would have certainly long arrived!

What more can I do? I have done all I can to bring the world to truly demand and clamor for the Redemption. But it seems that all my efforts have been in vain. We are still in exile and, more significantly, in an internal galut of clouded vision and distorted priorities.

I have done all I can. I am handing over the task to you: Do everything in your power to bring our righteous redeemer, immediately!

It is not sufficient to mouth slogans. You must take action. It is my fervent hope that amongst you there will be found one, two or three people who will figure out what to do and how to do it.

I'm leaving it to you. It is up to each and every one of you to bring about the Redemption. It is in your hands to bring Moshiach.”