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Reflections of Redemption

Essays on the Weekly Torah Reading and Moshiach,
Based on the talks of the
Lubavitcher Rebbe,
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Korach, 5784
(Vol. 38)



VAAD L'HAFOTZAS SICHOS
788 EASTERN PARKWAY • BROOKLYN, NY 11213
5784 • 2024

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
 Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** ע"ה
 ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** הי"ד
Shagalov
 Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766
 Reb **Dovid Asniel** ben Reb **Eliyahu** ע"ה
Ekman
 Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765
 Mrs. **Devora Rivka** bas Reb **Yosef Eliezer** ע"ה
Marenburg
 Passed away on the second day
 of Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5766
 Reb **Yitzchok Moshe** (Ian)
 ben Reb **Dovid Asniel** ע"ה
Ekman (Santiago, Chile)
 Passed away on the 24th day of Shevat, 5769
 ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.
AND IN HONOR OF
 Mrs. **Esther Shaindel** bas **Fraidel Chedva** שתחי
Shagalov
DEDICATED BY
 Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y.** and **Gittel Rochel** שיחי
Shagalov

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
 Reb **Reuvein** ben Reb **Mordechai Yaakov HaKohen** ע"ה **Caplan**
 Passed away on 11 Tishrei, 5778
 ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

AND IN HONOR OF HIS WIFE - שתבלחט"א -
 Mrs. **Elka** bas **Raizel** שתחי **Caplan**
 May she go from strength to strength
 in health, happiness, Torah and *mitzvot*.

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Executive Director

Printed in the U.S.A.

time has thus arrived, that notwithstanding the need for supernatural changes (the miracles and wonders of the true and complete Redemption), these supernatural energies permeate the nature of the world itself, so that the world itself assists in the blossoming of the Redemption.

(From the talk of Thursday, Parshas Korach, second day of Rosh Chodesh Tammuz and of Shabbos Parshas Korach, 3 Tammuz, 5751)

Reflections of Redemption

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by
Rabbi Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann, Ph.D

Korach

THE MYSTERY OF GIMMEL TAMMUZ

Past events that occurred on Gimmel Tammuz reveal its inner meaning for our time. The Torah reading of Korach always occurs around Gimmel Tammuz. Korach rebelled not against the institution of a kohen gadol, but the appointment of Aaron. He wanted the kohen gadol to be totally separated from the people, and Aaron was a pursuer of peace. Joshua's silencing of the sun allowed the Jewish people to sing G-d's praises instead of the forces of nature. The miraculous relationship of the Jewish people with G-d channels G-dliness into the physical realm. The release of the Previous Rebbe from Communist imprisonment is also a miracle, one that proved that the "Moses of the generation, who is the Moshiach of the generation," unites the spiritual and physical.

In almost every year, Gimmel Tammuz – the third of Tammuz – occurs in proximity to the Torah portion of *Korach*. Prior to our generation, two miracles, both critical to Jewish history, occurred on Gimmel Tammuz: Joshua commanded the sun to be silent, and the Previous Rebbe, who had been condemned to death by the Communists for teaching Judaism, was freed from imprisonment. Since everything occurs because of Divine Providence, there must be an inner connection between Joshua's commanding the sun to stop, the Previous Rebbe being released and *Korach* rebelling against Moses. And of course the connection reveals an insight into the times of Moshiach, as the Previous Rebbe indicates (see *Likkutei Diburim*, vol. 4)

We must first ask about the Torah reading itself. Why is it called "*Korach*," considering that *Korach* rebelled against Moses, against the Torah, against G-d?

The Announcement Of The Redemption

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One might still raise a question, as others have done. Even if one were to do one's work to perfection, even reaching the level of "dissemination" (which implies total commitment and self-abnegation), one might question to what avail is it considering the fact that "you are the least among the nations,"¹ and that there are the "seventy nations" who so outnumber the "one lamb"² -- Israel.

In other words, what will be the world's and the nation's response to the Jewish efforts at "disseminating the wellsprings to the remotest reaches," in an effort to hasten the true and complete Redemption, since they do not understand what all this means?! Granted, these efforts are noble and sublime, but one might object, we have to consider the world's reaction!

The answer to these questions is:

The world is ready and completely receptive! When a Jew performs his work properly, transcending all limits and constraints, and simultaneously channeling these efforts within the parameters of nature, he will see how the world, nature and the nations of the world will assist him in his work.

...This is particularly true now that so many of the impediments are no longer here. (And as was noted earlier, even the Soviet Union has undergone significant changes for the better.) On the contrary, we are witness to the miracles and wonders that have occurred, specifically in the last two years (of "miracles" and of "wonders I shall show him, 5750 and 5751, respectively"). The

1. *Vo'eschanan* 7:7.

2. *Tanchuma Toldos* 5. *Esther Rabbah*, 10:11. *Pesikta Rabbasi*, 9:2.

Tammuz (the sun's protest and the denial of leadership) is a test. Through such a test we are to reach a stronger and higher level of Divine service. Then, for the Jews, and indeed the whole world, there will be light and joy, gladness and honor.

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 8, pp. 114-122)

Obviously, *Korach's* perspective and the Torah's perspective are different. *Korach* attacked the appointment of Aaron as kohen gadol – high priest. He argued that since all the people are holy, why should Aaron be separated and elevated above everyone else? And yet, we see from events that he himself wanted to be kohen gadol. On the one hand, he attacks the institution of the kohen gadol; on the other, he aspires to the office himself.

Actually, what he was attacking was not the institution of the kohen gadol, but the appointment of Aaron to that office. The kohen gadol is supposed to be separated from all other Jews, removed from matters of this world and dedicated to matters of holiness. But through this separation, the kohen gadol becomes a conduit for G-dliness, enkindling, enflaming and enlightening other Jews with a great love for G-d, from the depths of their soul.

Korach protested against this. He wanted the kohen gadol to be lofty, set apart, totally separated from the world. In his view, the kohen gadol should have no interaction with or influence on material existence. *Korach* saw a clear distinction between the upper realms and the lower realms, between Jews devoted to holiness and Divine service, such as the kohanim, and Jews engaged with the world at large. Even though the everyday pursuits gave those Jews an opportunity to perform mitzvos, *Korach* reasoned there should be no connection.

Although G-d did intend there to be a separation between upper and lower, this was not the ultimate goal of appointing a kohen gadol. Rather, the true purpose was to kindle the flame of the soul, to arouse a great love for G-dliness in other Jews. One would normally think such a connection between the upper and lower, between the spiritual and physical, is impossible. The natural, logical objection had to be convincingly and completely refuted. *Korach's* controversy demonstrated the true nature of Aaron and

the reason for his appointment. The Torah portion is named after *Korach*, for although he created conflict, it served to reveal a higher level of unity.

This is also the theme of Joshua's command to the sun. When Joshua told the sun to be silent, it complained that then there would be nothing to sing G-d's praises. Joshua answered that he himself would sing G-d's praises. What does this mean? The very existence of the heavenly bodies testifies to G-d's majesty. Celestial motion – the movement of the spheres – is a natural song glorifying the Creator. Thus, the sun protested that if it was silent, how could nature praise its Creator?

To this Joshua answered that the song of the Jewish people, in acknowledgment of G-d's miracles on their behalf, was a higher form of praise. For there are two types of praise: one is that of nature and the world at large; the other is that of the Jewish people. The Jewish people have a miraculous relationship with G-d, one that transcends nature and creation. The very existence of the Jewish people is a conjunction of the spiritual and physical. They are the channel of G-dliness into the world. (As *Korach* said, all the people are holy.) Thus, the order of nature is sometimes nullified for the sake of the Jewish people. Such an open miracle reveals their special relationship with the Divine. When the Jewish people then acknowledge this, their song reveals the inner purpose of the laws of nature. It makes creation complete. So, although the sun's song was negated from an external perspective, its silence enabled the Jewish people to sing of G-d's miracles, thereby revealing the true unity of the spiritual and physical.

This theme is repeated in the history of the Previous Rebbe, who was freed on Gimmel Tammuz. His miraculous deliverance affected the world around him. The very communists who had arrested him and sentenced him to death, while still at the height of

their power, were forced to set him free. According to the "natural order" of things, a mighty empire intent on suppressing religion should easily succeed. When Soviet Russia decided to persecute the Previous Rebbe, there should have been no opposition. Yet the opposite happened. Indeed, the release of the Previous Rebbe was a greater miracle than the silencing of the sun. Here, those who objected to Judaism, who denied a connection between the upper and lower spheres, still had the power of speech. Both the communists and *Korach*, each in their own way, represent the ultimate in opposition; they actively sought to disrupt the conjunction of the spiritual and the physical. Yet ultimately, they served to bring about miracles that irrefutably proved that a leader of the Jewish people was the conduit for G-dliness. "They believed in G-d and His servant Moses" means simply that the leader of a generation – its Moses, its Moshiach – serves as the head that directs, influences and guides, connecting and uniting the Jewish people with their Source Above.

This of course is the task of Moshiach. The portion of *Korach* and the incidents of Gimmel Tammuz contain a valuable lesson for us. Each event of Gimmel Tammuz began with a concealment, a denial of the leader as the unifying intermediary. *Korach* rebelled against Aaron, the sun protested against Joshua, and the communists imprisoned the Previous Rebbe. Each event eventually led to a greater revelation of the G-dliness within the world. Neither natural phenomenon nor the actions of man can truly hinder a Jew's Divine service.

Our task, the result of our Torah and mitzvos, is to reveal the inner unity of the spiritual and physical. In the days of Moshiach, all flesh will see G-dliness. Therefore, nothing can truly silence or arrest our Divine service. That which appears to oppose the task of the Jewish people, such as *Korach* and the events of Gimmel