

## LEADERSHIP WITH LOVE Leadership and Delegation II

By Simon Jacobson

You must be kidding if you're asking whether I received any response to last week's article. Response is not the word. Hundreds of responses are more like it. A few want to 'kill' me. Others want to hug me. 98% of the responses have been extremely positive. Quite a number wrote to me about their newfound respect for the Rebbe and his shluchim (emissaries); they now appreciate more than ever the great challenges and accomplishments of their local shliach. But the few critics argue that my premise undermines all authority. I never received such two opposite reactions to one and the same article!

Allow me to share with you one example of this week's correspondence, which captures the essence of what many others have written to me.

"... I must commend you for a brilliant and powerful article. I have discussed the piece with many of my colleagues and friends and they too share my feelings. Though I am sure that some in the 'establishment' will initially criticize your words (for obvious reasons), and I too have some questions which I will address later, it is obvious after reading your article that we must first acknowledge your courage and clarity in addressing these issues from a Torah perspective - issues that have great bearing on all of us.

I also appreciate the fact that you cited sources that can be corroborated and invited others to do the same, so that we can perhaps all gain a better understanding as to the Rebbe's intentions in the shlichus system he built.

What really made me think - and I heard this from some others as well - are the words you wrote that the Rebbe's approach to shlichus provides us with a blueprint for future infrastructures. I would appreciate if you could elaborate on this point.

Now, so as to ensure that you don't allow my compliments to get to your head, I will say this:

Notwithstanding the merit of many points you make, the question is: do shluchim have accountability only to themselves, the Rebbe and Torah, and not to any other hanhala (authority)? Isn't it true that the Rebbe wanted that shluchim send reports to central headquarters? What role does headquarters play?

Also: Shliach oseh shliach means that the first shliach appoints the next one. What responsibilities do they have to each other?

Needless to say, much more can be said on this topic, but I will suffice with these questions for now.

Keep up the excellent work. We avidly await your weekly e-mails, which bring much inspiration to our community, as I am sure to many others.

Brocho v'hatlza..."

My reply:

Thank you for your very kind and moving words.

Before further addressing these issues, I want to qualify my thoughts with the following disclaimers:

My objective in writing the article was in response to the request of many to try bringing some clarity in understanding the Rebbe's intentions, based on his words and teachings. I attempted to do so to the best of my ability by searching in the Rebbe's talks and writings. By no means should this be seen as the complete picture - it was really about putting the main issues clearly on the table, with the invitation to anyone that has more facts to come forward and share any of the Rebbe's writings or public talks that can help shed more light on these issues.

Even after reaching a measure of clarity in the Rebbe's approach, there inevitably will still remain questions and issues that may arise case by case. As the Rebbe directs us, these issues should be addressed amongst Chassidim, and being that they are interested in the truth, they will surely be able to resolve any questions. Should the need arise Rabbonim can be consulted, as is the Jewish way in all matters of life.

Now, to the questions you pose, beginning with the model for the infrastructure of the future. One of the defining features of the future - 'l'osid lovo' - is that "the world will be filled with Divine knowledge as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9. See Rambam at the end of his Mishne Torah). The prophet Jeremiah elaborates: "I shall put my teaching in their inward parts and write it in their heart... They shall no longer teach one another... saying 'know G-d,' for they shall all know Me - from the least of them to the greatest of them" (31:32-33. See also Joel 3:1-2. Vayikra Rabba 1:14. Tanya ch. 36).

If "they shall no longer teach one another... for they shall all know me" why does the verse say that there will be a distinction between "the least of them" ("ketanom") and the "greatest of them" ("gedolom")? Explains the Rebbe that diversity will remain, there will be both young and old, smaller and greater, yet each will know Me - G-d's Essence ("Oisi") will permeate each according to his/her level (see also Likkutei Levi Yitzchak on Zohar vol. 3 p. 210).

And even then there will be a need for a teacher and leader (Moshiach) who will reveal even deeper dimensions (see Tzemach Tzedek, Derech Mitzvosecho, the end of Mitzvat Minui Melech).

Today, we have obviously not yet reached this level of equality and balance, but it does it give us insight into the infrastructure of the future: Individuality - and avodah b'koach atzmo of each individual - will be integrated with the Divine Will. In less perfect times individuality can contradict the common goal of the community. Not so in the future. [More on this, see Individualism and G-d]

A foretaste of this is in the shlichus infrastructure, with each individual location becoming so permeated with Torah and Mitzvot that each place itself becomes like an independent, self generating source of light (similar to the concept of 'metziuso m'atzmuso' of the yesh ha'nivra) - see Sichat (the talk of) Parshat Vayeishev 5752.

This leads us into the other issues you raised. There is no doubt that central headquarters can play a key role - as we see the remarkable results of their dedicated work in the new Chabad centers springing up in Europe and Asia and many other locations. Witness also the great Kiddush Hashem at the annual International Shluchim and Shluchos Conference.

Central headquarters can additionally offer a powerful service by helping shluchim with funding, provide them with materials and services, coordinate efforts between shluchim and more.

The same is true for 'shliach oseh shliach': Enormous credit must be given to the first shluchim who pioneered the way by selflessly and without question accepting the Rebbe's mission to become shluchim - they took the lead, broke the initial ground and helped forge the way for those that followed through their initiative of building institutions in their respective communities. Further credit is due to them for not sufficing in transforming their own territories, but in expanding the work - as the Rebbe instructed - by recruiting new shluchim, who in turn built additional new communities.

The Rebbe clearly wanted and expected warm cooperation between shliach and shliach and between shluchim and headquarters. But the Rebbe trusted his shluchim, and did not impose authority. His deepest wish is that Chassidim - shluchim - would be united, and be able with true bittul sit down and address all issues that may arise. Not through force and litigation, but in an environment of chassidishe warmth and compassion.

The pioneer shluchim, precisely because they came first and have the experience of seniority, should lead the way as role models demonstrating this Chassidishe bittul. I submit here that the greater the shliach - the more bittul he has to the meshalayach - the more compassionate he will be, the more loving, the more he will motivate others, including the shluchim that came after him, the more he will be loved and respected.

Obviously, shluchim need to work well with each other, and when one shliach brings out another there must be healthy coordination and cooperation between them, which is built on a fundamental trust. Their detailed responsibilities to each other have to be worked out between them at the outset, but it will always be successful when built upon mutual trust and confidence.

May we all learn from the Rebbe how to lead with love - how to inspire and motivate with passion and compassion.

May we all together reach a true clarity - 'yisbariru v'yislavnu ha'devorim' - in understanding what is expected of us.

Finally, may we refine our existing infrastructures and align them to the infrastructure of the future, thereby helping prepare for the world that "will be filled with Divine knowledge as the waters cover the sea" and "they shall no longer teach one another...for they shall all know Me - from the least of them to the greatest of them."