

# Rosh Chodesh Tammuz



Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe by Malka Touger  
From the Sichos in English Collection

It was early Thursday morning, *Rosh Chodesh* Tammuz, in the year 5687 (1927). The Previous Rebbe, Rebbe Yosef Yitzchak, was informed that he would soon be released from prison. He would be allowed to spend six hours with his family, but in the evening, he would have to leave the city. He was to travel to Kostrama, where he was sentenced to three years of exile.

“And how long is the trip to Kostrama?” the Previous Rebbe inquired.

“You will arrive there on Saturday,” he was told.

“I will not travel on *Shabbos*,” declared the Rebbe firmly.

One of the officials who had arrested the Rebbe became furious. “If you refuse to travel tonight so that you will arrive in Kostrama on Saturday,” he raged, “I will see to it that you will not be released from prison at all!”

The Rebbe was not frightened by his threat. “If I must stay in prison — so be it,” he replied courageously. “But on *Shabbos*, I will not travel.”

“Was the Previous Rebbe really obligated to risk his life now?” one might ask. When there was a question of opening a *cheder* or a *mikvah*, the Previous Rebbe had risked his own life as well as the lives of his *chassidim* to carry out this *shlichus*. For if not, *Yiddishkeit* would not continue. But wasn’t traveling on *Shabbos* a personal matter, affecting him alone? Since he would be forced to do this against his will, and would only be a passenger, for him to travel on *Shabbos* would not be so severe a sin. Why should he have risked his life by enraging his jailors? Some of the officers held a strong personal grudge against him. Originally, he had been sentenced to death, and that order had been changed only by a decree from a higher authority. The jailors would have been only too pleased to see the Rebbe remain in their hands.

Besides, it was only Thursday. Instead of angering the Russians, one might think that the Previous Rebbe should have left prison immediately, and then tried to have others arrange for him not to travel on *Shabbos*.

Why did he show *mesirus nefesh*? Because the Rebbe never saw himself as a private individual. Everything he did was known. The Russians wanted to have him travel on *Shabbos* to show that they had control over him. “The Rebbe agreed to travel on *Shabbos*,” they would tell everyone, so they could show the Jews that they had to listen to the authorities.

The Previous Rebbe wouldn’t allow this. He wanted to show the Jews that the Russians could not budge his commitment to Torah and *mitzvos*. And for that he was prepared to risk his life.

Following the Previous Rebbe’s example and showing *mesirus nefesh* for the Torah and its *mitzvos* will soon lead us to the coming of *Mashiach*, when that type of *mesirus nefesh* will no longer be necessary. Instead, we will have *mesirus nefesh* in doing good and studying Torah, going beyond our limits to do *HaShem*’s will.