

SICHA SUMMARY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 15

Teves

The Context:

The month of Teves includes the last days of Chanukah; the fast day of the Tenth of Teves, marking Nevuchadnezzar's siege of Yerushalayim; and the yahrzeit of the Alter Rebbe, the founder of the Chabad movement. What common theme connects these diverse occasions?

The Coldest Month:

The Talmud says that due to the frigid temperatures in Teves, is a time when "the body takes pleasure in the warmth of another body." (Rashi on Megillah 13a)

In spiritual terms, sunlight alludes to the clarity and warmth of Divine revelation. Summertime, therefore, is the time when a person's soul is more receptive to Divine illumination and he is better able to focus on spiritual advancement. The winter cold alludes to the withdrawal of G-d's

illuminating rays. During the winter months, a person's Divine service becomes focused on working with and refining the body itself, without recourse to the soul's influence.

How does a person work with the body itself without the advantage of the soul's inspiration?

The "body" refers to the essence of a given entity; it is "the thing itself." The Talmudic statement, "the body takes pleasure in the warmth of another body," alludes to the reality that the Essence of G-d — the "body" — takes pleasure in a Jew's efforts at refining his "body."

The physical body is rooted in the Essence of G-d, for G-d chose the physical bodies of the Jewish people out of His Essential choice, and not because of some tangible value or goodness inherent in the body. Thus, when the light of the soul is dimmed, then the essential connection between G-d and the Jewish body can be revealed. During this time, a person can reveal how their body is holy and connected to G-d, even without direct intervention and

inspiration from the soul. When a person works at this, he brings “pleasure” to “the body” — to G-d Himself.

The Theme of the Month:

This is the theme that unites all the disparate dates of the month of Teves. The Chanukah candles represent the ability to not only illuminate the darkness, but to cause the darkness to become a source of

light itself. The siege of Jerusalem was the inception of exile, and exile is a time of darkness when the essential bond between the Jew and G-d is laid bare. And the Alter Rebbe illustrated how the rational mind itself — the “coldest” part of the human being — can apprehend and become sensitive to Divine knowledge.
