

SICHA SUMMARY

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 28

Yud Beis - Yud Gimmel Tammuz

The Context:

On the 12th of Tammuz the Previous Rebbe was informed of his pending release from exile, yet because government offices were closed that day due to a national holiday, the actual release took place on the 13th of Tammuz.

On the 12th, he recited a *maamer* opening with the verse, “G-d is for me with my helpers, and I shall see [revenge] in my enemies (Tehillim 118:7).” On the 13th, he recited a *maamer* opening with the blessing of thanksgiving, “Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d... Who bestows kindness upon the culpable...”

The Question:

The first discourse is centered on a plea for the future, for G-d to take revenge on one's enemies, while the second discourse is centered on giving thanks. Seemingly, it would be more appropriate to first thank G-d for the miraculous salvation, and then to entreaty Him for further victories?

Preface to the Explanation:

Overlooked in the drama of the Previous Rebbe's release from Soviet prison is an astonishing miracle. Many people within the Soviet Union worked to secure the Previous Rebbe's release through public letters and direct intervention with government authorities and offices. To attach one's name publicly to an “enemy of the state” in the Soviet Union was an act of self-sacrifice. Even after international pressure secured the Previous Rebbe's release, any of these characters residing in the Soviet Union could have expected economic punishment, imprisonment, or death. Yet none of those who advocated for the Rebbe were harassed or harmed for their efforts. This despite the obvious fact that those who engaged in religious activity were punished.

How was this possible? Perhaps the Previous Rebbe's discourse on the subject of G-d helping “my helpers” caused, or was an effort at explaining, this phenomenon.

The Explanation:

The discourse explains that even if it appears that a person has many advocates

and helpers, in reality all aid comes directly from G-d, "G-d is for me, with my helpers." With this explanation, the Previous Rebbe revealed that those who helped him were messengers of G-d. In a sense, their individual identities are subsumed within G-d Himself. This being the case, they are not individuals who can be harassed because of their activism — just as G-d Himself cannot be targeted by the Soviets, so, too, these advocates are invulnerable. (This does not discount their exercising of their free choice to place themselves in danger, and the consummate reward that G-d will give them.)

The discourse then questions the latter half of the verse, "I shall see [revenge] in my enemies." Why do we pray for revenge and decimation of the enemy, would it not be more fitting to pray to G-d that the enemy be transformed into a force for good? The Previous Rebbe then offers a homiletic reading of this verse: "I shall see," we attain a visionary experience of the Divine,

through "my enemies," the challenges that we face in our Divine service. In other words, not only does the Previous Rebbe avoid hatred of the enemy, he is grateful for the Divine awareness engendered in him through the confrontation with the enemy.

This appreciation derives from the central idea of the discourse, that the "helpers" are agents of G-d. The enemy, too, it follows, is an agent of G-d. When this perspective is internalized, we can see G-d as the source of salvation, and the source of the confrontation itself which begets spiritual advancement.

This is why the Previous Rebbe first recited this discourse, which secured the safety of his "helpers" by revealing that they were one with G-d and not separate individuals subject to the regime. After this, he could offer thanks to G-d for the salvation itself, and recognize fully that is G-d alone who "bestows kindness."
