

The Rebbe's Discourses

Summaries of points of the Rebbe's Chassidic Discourses בלי אחריות כלל וכלל

פרשת בלק תשכ"ז ד"ה ברוך הגומל בלתי מוגה

Published for Shabbat Sedra Chukat-Balak

12 Tammuz 5783, 1 August 2023¹

THANKING G-D FOR DELIVERANCE

WHEN THE PREVIOUS REBBE, RABBI YOSEF YITZHAK, WAS MIRACULOUSLY FREED FROM IMPRISONMENT on 12 Tammuz 1927, he said two Maamarim about the blessing HaGomel which is recited in public on such an occasion². These form the basis of the discussion in this Maamar.

The Talmud says 'Four have to thank G-d (when they reach safety): those who cross the sea, who travel across the desert, one who was ill and was healed, and one who was imprisoned and went free.' (Brachot 54b). Consequently the blessing HaGomel (thanking G-d for granting good) is publicly recited in these four instances³.

One can ask why G-d acts in such a way that first the person is put in danger, and then G-d saves him. Why not prevent the danger from the beginning? It must be that from the fact that the person faced the danger, and was then delivered, an exalted attainment was achieved, which would not have been possible otherwise. This relates to the general topic, which is really the root of the matter: the idea of the soul entering the body.

The soul, before it is born, inhabits an exalted spiritual realm. It is then cast down 'from a high roof to a deep pit'. The source of the soul is in Divine 'Thought', far higher than Divine 'Speech' which is the source of the down chaining of worlds.

¹ Maamar Baruch Hagomel 5727 (1967). Printed in Dvar Malchut of Balak 5774. It was not edited by the Rebbe.

² The first on 13 Tammuz, the day of his release, and the second on the following Shabbat.

³ Most commonly it is said after travelling across a sea. See Chabad.org birkat-hagomel.

A further point is the presence of the Evil Desire, of which it says in Psalms (37:32) 'the Rasha (evil-doer) lies in wait for the Zaddik and tries to kill him', which means the internal Rasha. This is described as a fly buzzing round the entrances of the heart. Further, the force of evil has the effect of confusing good and evil, as the Previous Rebbe said, that from the time of the sin of the Tree of Knowledge there is a confusion of good and bad in every aspect of life.

All this causes the soul to fall into the problematic states mentioned in the Talmud, in spiritual terms. The Previous Rebbe explains⁴ that “ill” means blockage of the mind and the heart, being captive in prison means being enslaved to the Evil Desire, crossing the sea means lost in a sea of confusion about what one should do, traversing the desert means being focused only on the physical and material aspects of life (perhaps meaning: the barren materialist desert rather than the fruitful domain which includes spirituality). .

Since the descent of the soul below into this world, facing these challenges, is so very great, it must be that through this it comes to a very exalted attainment, far higher than that of the spiritual realm from which the soul originally came. This comes about through the person standing up to the battle with the evil desire, and conquering it, and thus also escaping from the four kinds of plight, in spiritual terms, and also the four kinds of plight in physical terms. Then, having been saved by G-d, he or she is able to express joyful thanks to G-d, declaring ‘Thanks to G-d for He is good, for His kindness is for ever’⁵.

Here again we have the question: how can the realm of negativity have such power? The answer is because in G-d’s design for the world, He has two contrasting ‘desires’, as Isaac said: ‘make me tasty food’ using the word *mataamim* for ‘tasty’, a word in the plural. This is explained as two kinds of tasty food: sweet and sharp. The sweet is the service of the truly righteous, the sharp tasty food is the service of those who sin (or might sin) and repent.

In order to create such a world, G-d formed it with the Name Elokim. This Name has the quality of severity and concealment. Thus in the account of Creation, the Torah states that ‘Elokim’ (G-d) created the world. Elokim also has the numerical value of the word *hateva*, meaning Nature⁶. G-dliness is hidden in the world and in Nature, often seemingly completely hidden.

How can this darkness be penetrated? Through the teaching in the Torah: ‘You should know today and consider in your heart that Hashem (the

⁴ At the end of the second discourse.

⁵ Psalms 107:1. This Psalm [GIVE PRECISE VERSES] includes the four kinds of plight for which one thanks G-d for deliverance.

⁶ Writing ק instead of ה, because of the sanctity of the Divine Name: אלקים = 1+30+5+10+40 = 86. הטבע ‘nature’ (with the definite article) = 5+9+2+70 = 86.

Tetragrammaton) is Elokim..' (Deut.VaEtchanan, 4:39). The Tetragrammaton expresses the revelation of G-d. Through realising that Hashem is Elokim, that the concealment and revelation are really one, a person succeeds in drawing aside the veil. Where before they saw only the hiddenness of G-d, now they see His revelation.

Through this the 'low pit' of existence becomes a dwelling for the Divine. And this is what happened on 12 Tammuz, when the Previous Rebbe was miraculously released. The Sages tell us G-d sought to create the world with the attribute of Judgement, but saw that it would not continue. So He joined with this, the Attribute of Mercy, which means the miracles in the Torah and the existence of Zaddikim, the righteous, who inspire others.

The redemption of the Previous Rebbe helps those connected with him achieve an Inner Redemption, and that itself is a preparation for the ultimate Redemption when G-d will gather the Jewish people from all corners of the earth, for the benefit of humanity as a whole.

Torah teachings are holy – please treat these pages with care