

The Rebbe's Discourses

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

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ON THAT NIGHT

ON THAT NIGHT THE KING'S SLEEP WAS DISTURBED². WHY does the Megilah say 'on *that* night'? We would know which night it was, from the context. Note this verse is specially significant as a turning point in the story, and there is a custom to raise one's voice when reading it 'because it expresses the force of the miracle'. A discourse by the Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzhak³, will help us understand more about this. It explains that the King here refers to G-d, the King of the Universe. G-d's 'sleep' is disturbed, so that He could act on behalf of His people and save them from destruction.

The Sages tell us that G-d is described as 'asleep' when the Jewish people are likewise 'sleeping' in terms of their observance of Torah. The Divine 'sleep' allows persecution and suffering of the Jews. The fact that G-d's 'sleep' was disturbed enabled the miracle of the rescue of the Jewish people from Haman's decree.

Now we consider the meaning of "*that* night". 'That' indicates something more hidden, as opposed to 'this' which suggests something obvious and revealed. 'Night' expresses Exile, as opposed to day, which denotes freedom and redemption. By using the words 'that night' a double kind of concealment is expressed.

We can contrast this with our Exile in Egypt which came to an end with the Exodus. At the Pesach Seder we use the words 'this night', as in the Ma Nishtana: 'why is this night different from all other nights..?' The words 'this night' suggest that it is exile, but the exile is revealed, we know that we are in

¹ *Balayla Hahu* 5725, published in *Dvormalchut Tzav-Purim* 5776, *Vayikra* 5782. The Hebrew text is *mugah*, finally edited by the Rebbe.

² Esther 6:1.

³ *Balayla Hahu* 5700 (1940).

exile and we want to go free, as was the case in Egypt. We were slaves, and wanted to go free from slavery.

It was very different in ancient Persia, where we lived in comparative luxury. We were part of general society. Many of us did not feel any lack of freedom. We were in exile, which is termed Night, but we were not aware of the Exile. Hence it is called '*that night*'.

This deeper level of concealment is not simply a negative aspect of our consciousness, that as Jews we were not even aware that we were in Exile. Paradoxically, it means we were relating to a deeper aspect of the Divine, which cares for us as Jews even when we are completely unconscious of our Jewish role.

Thus the second Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that the hidden level of 'that' as opposed to 'this', expresses the deeper dimension to be revealed in the future. We see that with the idea that the words 'this day' are used to describe our redemption from Egypt ('on this very day the hosts of G-d left Egypt' [Ex.12:41]), and also our acceptance of the Torah ('on this day G-d commands you' [Deut.26:16]). But with regards to the future Redemption, the word 'that' is used: '[we] will say on *that day*' (Isaiah 25:9).

What was happening at the time of Ahasuerus and the evil Haman's decree, was that the Jewish people came into relation with the very essence of the Divine, utterly beyond revelation. It was that hidden face of G-d which caused the 'disturbing' of the sleep of the King, both the Divine King and the human King Ahasuerus, and the unfolding of events in such a way that the Jewish people were saved.

Chassidic teachings tell us that this revelation was triggered by our standing up for being Jewish. As a people, half-assimilated in the Persian empire, we did not become 'religious' overnight. But we did admit and commit to being Jewish and when Haman's decree was sealed with the King's seal, making it law, we stood up for ourselves as Jews.

As a result there was a revelation of the Divine essence, beyond revelation, joining the realms of the 'hidden' and 'revealed', and from this came the miracle that 'for the Jewish people there was light and joy and honour'⁴. So should it be for us today!

Torah teachings are holy – please treat these pages with care

⁴ Esther 8:16.