

# CHAPTER 1 - PART 3

*by Rabbi David Sykes*

Along the difficult twists in the road, on the dark and winding paths among the trees of the forest, under the heavy snow, the Jewish wagon travels. The people sitting in it are not always properly equipped; sometimes, they are simple and ignorant folk. These Jews, still far from the warm and illuminated inn, plod along and sink in the thick mud of earning a living, of persecutions and pressures. Even for Torah scholars, it is not always the case that "their hour is good"; they are not always free to diligently study their Torah. Many times, they are forced to close the Gemara and flee for their lives because of the anger of the oppressor. And meanwhile, the soul freezes .... From where does one take a little brandy? With what does one warm the heart?

I believe that the book that has stood at the right hand of the Jewish nation on its long and hard road is the Book of Tehillim. This book, more than any other book of our Written and Oral Torah, has escorted the Jewish people in the terrible hours and days of the exile. It lit up the nights of the heavy darkness; it warmed the hearts trembling under the piled-up snow. It was the supporting staff on which the bent-over body leaned in order to draw strength, to gather a little bit of faith, a little bit more hope for the tarrying Redemption, in order to continue its weary steps, step after step, until the Redeemer comes. It restored the spirit and the vitality to the afflicted body, so that the Jew would be able to continue to walk, continue to move forward, without falling and bowing in the terrible forest of his troubles.

King David, the anointed king, was the one who put the tiny pages of Tehillim into our satchel of wandering, so that they would go with us, and from them we would draw the drops of a life-giving potion when the tongue is parched and the soul is yearning. He did this so that we will have a vessel into which we will be able to pour our tears and our pained heart, until the Messiah will come and redeem us, so that the suffering Jew will have a close brother who is always at his side - a listening ear that is always bent to his sighs and pains - and so that he will have a friend and Redeemer who will always find the right words to console and encourage him.

---