

CHAPTER 3 - PART 3

by Rabbi David Sykes

When a person says Tehillim, he suddenly feels that the Tehillim "represents" him and makes his legal arguments to our Father in heaven. It seeks not only mercy, but also justice, and a different way of looking at the distressed and "complaining" son. The Tehillim calls out from the groan of its heart: "What is man, that You should remember him, and what is a person that You should be mindful of him?" Beloved great Father in heaven, at whom and what are You angry, God forbid? What are we, born of a woman, dust and ashes, that You should be angry at us and retain such prolonged enmity towards us? What are we vis-à-vis You, great and merciful Father? Or the question, the terrible cry, "Why, God, do You stand far away, hide Yourself in times of trouble?" The Tehillim forgets for a moment how much we have sinned and rebelled and have distanced ourselves from God, and it asks and cries out and wonders at God why He stands so far away, why He distances Himself, why He hides Himself, and why He leaves us, His small and weak children, to be made to suffer in our troubles. It is indeed true that we did what we did, but we are children, Your children, and how can You distance Yourself from us for so long? How can You stand so far away at such a difficult time?

And in that chapter there also appears the cry, the complaint, "You used to help an orphan." At one time, in the past, previously in Israel, You, God, were crowned with the title "Father of orphans and Judge on behalf of widows." You were not able to restrain Yourself and not react to their trouble; You would demand justice for them and arise and support them and save them. But today, Master of the Universe, what happened to You, Master of the Universe? Where is the Father of orphans and Judge on behalf of widows? Why do You not rise again to help Your orphaned children, Your abandoned orphaned nation, the Congregation of Israel, which has become like a widow?

What believing and loyal Jew would be able to bring forth words like these from his mouth were it not for the fact that David, King of Israel, put them in our mouths, if not for the fact that he created the warm and pleasant framework, the intimate framework, into which a Jew enters when he says Tehillim? In this framework, the Jew immediately feels that he is right next to God's Throne of Glory, and that he speaks to a Father Who is so close that it is possible to sigh in His presence, to cry beside Him, to say beside Him what the heart feels, whether it is more or less justified, whether I am more or less guilty. Who would be able to turn to our Father in heaven and cry out, "For how much longer will You completely forget me? How long will You hide Your Face from me? How long will I have to come up with strategies for myself?" Who would be able to so "accuse" the Creator of the world and say that, as it were, He forgets and hides Himself, and dare to ask Him how long He has in

mind to continue to do so? Who would be able to ask how long He supposes that we will be able to contend with our difficult struggle for existence, our seeking strategies, every day anew, as to how to be saved from our enemies and how to remain alive? How long will we be able to bear the burden of our enemies? "How long will my enemy rise above me?"
