

# SICHA SUMMARY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



## Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 16

*Chof Daled Teves*

### The Final Essays:

In the days leading up to his passing on 24 Teves, 1812, the Alter Rebbe wrote two profound essays, one lengthy and one short — that dwelled on the subject of the superiority of the material over the spiritual. One was later included as section 20 in his Iggeres Hakodesh, the shorter essay was titled “The Humble Soul.”

In section 20 of Iggeres HaKodesh, the Alter Rebbe addresses the issue of the centrality of the physical mitzvos to the divine purpose in creation.

G-d is the only true being, a being not preceded by any cause, who exists to no end other than itself. Other than G-d, there is only one other being that sees and presents itself as such—the physical object. But the physical object sees and presents itself as such only because it was instilled

with this self-perception by its Creator. And in granting it this self-perception, G-d has imbued the physical object with a quality that is uniquely His.

If we delve deeper into the essence and origin of the material world, we find the essence of G-d.

This is why the mitzvot—the building blocks of G-d’s home in creation and the ultimate facilitators of our relationship with G-d—are physical deeds enacted with physical objects: Because physical matter is the most divine of G-d’s creations.

### The Humble Soul

This is also the thrust of The Humble Soul: “For the truly humble soul,” he wrote, “its mission in life lies in the pragmatic aspect of Torah, both in studying it for himself and explaining it to others, and in doing acts of material kindness in lending an empathizing mind and counsel from afar regarding household concerns—though the majority,

if not all, of these concern things of falsehood.”

Why engage in the “falsehood” of the world? The Alter Rebbe continues:

“Truth said: “He should not be created, for he is full of lies.” Benevolence said: “He should be created, for he is full of kindness” . . . What did G-d do? He took Truth and threw it to the ground. Thus it is written (Daniel 8:12), “And You cast truth to the ground.” Said the ministering angels to G-d: “Master of the Worlds! Why are You insulting Your signet?” [Said G-d:] “Truth shall ascend from the earth.” Thus it is written (Psalms 85:12), “Truth shall sprout forth from the earth.” (Bereishit Rabbah 8:5)

### The Question:

Why did the Alter Rebbe dwell on the importance of the material world as he was preparing his soul to leave it?

### The Explanation:

The truth of G-d’s essence that lies at the core of every being, even the apparent falsehood of materiality, is uncovered through the process of teshuva, repentance out of love. When the sinner unearths the divine potential, the truth, even within the darkness of his sin, he has exposed the divine truth that permeates all of reality.

The tzaddik accomplishes this by inspiring others to engage in teshuvah. The Alter Rebbe was intimately involved in aiding others to do teshuvah, this was a core pillar of his life’s work. As the tzaddik’s soul prepares to pass, the focus of his life’s work gains full expression and leaves its trace and imprint on the world he leaves behind. Thus, as the Alter Rebbe prepared to pass on, he focused on the importance of material world, for the work of teshuvah, of revealing the essential divinity of the material, was his life’s mission.

\*\*\*