



Likkutei Sichos

Volume 24 | Chai Elul

From Womb to World

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Preface

It is self-understood that most ideas consist of their overarching theme, subject matter, underlying meaning, and details and finer details.

This is especially true of such a foundational event as Chai Elul,¹

First and foremost, when reflecting on a single detail {of any idea}, at the very least, its subject matter and underlying meaning are recalled. This then results in this {detail too} leading to a takeaway² and concrete practice, for practice is the essential thing.³

The same is true when contemplating Chai Elul — for what is discussed below⁴ is a doctrine⁵ of the Baal Shem Tov's, shared on a particular Chai Elul. {This, too, will come to fruition} when a person visualizes and ponders the underlying meaning behind Chai Elul, connoted in “the name by which it is called in the Holy Tongue”⁶ — **Chai Elul**. In the words of the leader of our generation, my father-in-law, the {Previous} Rebbe:⁷

- a) Chai {lit., “the life of”} Elul is the day that injects, and continues to inject, life into the month of Elul.
- b) Chai Elul injects life into the *avodah*⁸ of “אֲנִי לְדוּדִי וְדוּדִי לִי” — I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine.”¹⁰

¹ {Chai Elul is the colloquial way of referring to the date of the 18 of Elul by inverting the order of the Hebrew characters used to make the number eighteen. It is so called on account of its translation “life of” (see below).}

² {In the original Hebrew, “*bechein*”; lit., “*thus*.”}

³ {Cf. *Avos* 1:17.}

⁴ Section 5, and further.

⁵ {Lit., “*Tora*” (sing.); The Baal Shem Tov would share his teachings in short insights known as *Toros* (pl.) , or each individual teaching known as a *Tora*.}

⁶ *Tanya*, “*Shaar HaYichud VeHa’emunah*,” ch. 1.

⁷ *Likkutei Dibburim* vol. 3, p. 946; *Sefer HaSichos* 5705 p. 112.

⁸ {Divine service. Alternatively, it refers to the specific service of sacrifices or that of Prayer, as indicated below.}

⁹ *Shir HaShirim* 6:3 — for which אלוּל is an acronym (*Avudraham*, “*Seder Tefillas Rosh HaShanah*”; *Pri Eitz Chaim*, “*Shaar Rosh HaShanah*,” ch. 1; *Shaar HaPessukim* on *Shir HaShirim* 6:3; et al).

¹⁰ See also *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 4, p. 1351, ff.; vol. 9, p. 337, ff.; vol. 14, p. 347 ff; vol. 19, p. 250, ff. See there, that these two versions are respective to the two features of this day: the birthday of the Baal Shem Tov — founder of the general doctrine of Chassidus, and the birthday of the Alter Rebbe — founder of the doctrine of Chassidus Chabad.

We may further say that possibly the **general** *avodah* of “אֲנִי לַדּוֹדִי”¹¹ (which leads to the **general** idea of “וְדוֹדִי לִי”) may be further divided into particulars, all which are alluded to by the acronym of Elul — אֶלּוּל:

Elul — an acronym for the biblical phrase,¹² “אֶנָּה — {Hashem} לִידּוֹ וְשָׁמַתִּי לָךְ”¹³ brought about to his hand, I shall provide for you,” referring to the cities of refuge. In terms of *avodah*, this is the **path of Torah**, for the words of Torah provide refuge.¹⁴

Elul — an acronym for the biblical phrase,¹⁵ “אֲנִי לַדּוֹדִי וְדוֹדִי לִי” — I am my Beloved’s, and my Beloved is mine,” refers to the **path of *avodah*** that is *tefillah*, prayer.¹⁶ This is especially pertinent nowadays when the only available *avodah* is the “*avodah* performed with the heart — that is prayer.”¹⁷ *Tefillah*, cognate to the word *tofel*,¹⁸ attaches and connects a Jew to his Father in Heaven.

Elul — an acronym for the biblical phrase,¹⁹ “אִישׁ לְרֵעֵהוּ וּמִתְּנוּת לְאֶבְיוֹנִים” — a man to his fellow, and gifts to the poor,”²⁰ the **path of administering kindness**.

And as precursor and foundation for all of these paths:

Elul — an acronym for the biblical phrase,²¹ “(Hashem, your L-rd, will circumcise) אֶת לִבְכָּךְ וְאֶת לִבְּךָ — your heart and the heart of (your offspring)”²² — ***teshuvah***.

¹¹ {The *avodah* of אֲנִי לַדּוֹדִי, man striving to cultivate a relationship with Hashem, is generally associated with the month Elul. This then leads to the idea of וְדוֹדִי לִי, Hashem’s reciprocated response, during the following month of Tishrei. See *Likkutei Torah* 33a.}

¹² *Pri Eitz Chaim*, loc. cit.; *Shaar HaPessukim* on *Shemos* 21:13; see, as well, *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 2, p. 623.

¹³ {*Shemos* 21:13.}

¹⁴ *Makkos* 10a.

¹⁵ See above fn. 9.

¹⁶ See Rambam’s *Sefer HaMitzvos*, Positive Mitzvah 5, et al.

¹⁷ *Taanis* 2a.

¹⁸ See Rashi on *Bereishis* 30:8 and *Or HaTorah*, ad loc.

¹⁹ {*Esther* 9:22.}

²⁰ *Sefer Arugas HaBosem* citing from *Sefer Amarel*.

²¹ {*Devarim* 30:6.}

²² *Baal HaTurim* on *Devarim* 30:6.

CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS

Chai Elul is the birthday of the two great luminaries:²³ Monday, the 18th of Elul, 1698 (תו"ה) is the birthday of the Baal Shem Tov, and Wednesday, the 18th of Elul, 1745 (תק"ה), is the birthday of the Alter Rebbe.²⁴

Our Sages mention in a number of places that a tzaddik's birthday is a time to celebrate. This is noted particularly regarding our patriarch Yitzchak,²⁵ and Moshe Rabbeinu.²⁶ There is even precedent for a practical commemoration. The Midrash explains why the Mishkan's erection was delayed and not carried out immediately upon the completion of its construction.

Because²⁷ the Holy One wished to join the celebration of Mishkan's inauguration and our patriarch Yitzchak's birthday. Yitzchak was born on the first day of Nissan — the Holy One said: "I will combine your celebration with another."

Moreover, we find that Moshe Rabbeinu's birthday on the seventh of Adar counteracted Haman's decree, which he had scheduled for the month of Adar. "Haman did not know that Moshe died on the seventh of Adar and was also born on the seventh of Adar."²⁸

Nevertheless, we do not find, in the actual practice of all Jews, that birthdays²⁹ are {celebrated} conspicuously and publicly as special days. [And according to *Shulchan Aruch*,³⁰ the seventh of Adar is marked by a fast since it is the anniversary of Moshe's passing.]

²³ {Cf. *Bereishis* 1:16}

²⁴ *Sichah* delivered by the Previous Rebbe (*Sefer HaSichos* 5703 p. 141) — quoting his father.

²⁵ *Tanchuma*, "Pekudei," sec. 13; *Shemos Rabbah* sec. 52, par. 2.

²⁶ *Megillah* 13b; See also *Rosh HaShanah* (11a) concerning **the month** in which the patriarchs **were born**. See also *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 5, p. 86 in footnotes and marginal notes (and citations there) concerning the birthdays of each individual Jew. See also *Sefer HaSichos* 5748, vol. 1, p. 331, ff.; vol. 2, p. 398, ff.

²⁷ *Tanchuma*, *ibid.*; see as well *Shemos Rabbah*, *loc cit.*

²⁸ *Megillah*, *loc cit.*; see at length *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 16, p. 343, ff.

²⁹ This is true of **regular** birthdays, unlike when one becomes bar mitzvah (*Zohar Chadash* 15c {states that} it is like a person's wedding day), sixty years old (*Moed Katan* 28a) and others. — See also *sichah* delivered on 11th of Nissan, 5722 (*Likkutei Sichos* vol. 5, p. 132, ff).

³⁰ *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch*, "Orach Chaim," sec. 580, par. 2; see also *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 16, p. 342, fn. 5.

However, concerning the birthday of the Baal Shem Tov and Alter Rebbe on Chai Elul, it was revealed by the {Previous} Rebbe, in the name of his father, the Rebbe Rashab, that Chai Elul is a day of celebration. In fact, we wish one another “*Gut Yom Tov*.”³¹ The {Previous} Rebbe, my father-in-law, publicized this for all Jews.³²

Since all concepts relating to the Torah are precise, it follows that the joy and greatness of this birthday, Chai Elul, is not only on account of the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe triggering a new revelation in Torah and Divine service — the revelation of the general doctrine of Chassidus and Chassidus Chabad³³ {respectively} for the Jewish people; it was also because the very idea of celebrating a birthday is uniquely associated with the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe and the Chassidus they publicized.

Furthermore, this link applies to both of them **combined**. As can be seen from the words of the Rebbe Rashab concerning Chai Elul: “Today is the birthday of our two great luminaries.” This statement intimates that the significance of this birthday is expressed jointly by the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe.

³¹ *Sefer HaSichos* 5703, p. 140, ff.

Note that this year {of this *Sichah*’s original publication} (Chai Elul — 5743) marks forty years from then (Chai Elul — 5703). See also Rashi’s commentary on *Devarim* 29:6 — from *Avodah Zarah* 5b.

³² See *Sefer HaSichos* 5703, p. 142; see also, p. 89, ff.; end of p. 185, ff.; *Sefer HaSichos* 5705, p. 122, ff.; **et al.**

³³ {Chabad is an acronym for **chochmah**-wisdom, **binah**-understanding, and **daas**-knowledge, the soul’s three intellectual faculties. The Alter Rebbe founded the doctrine of Chassidus that focuses on explicating rationally deep spiritual concepts and ideas, as discussed below.}

2.

THE JOYS OF CHILDBIRTH

This will be understood by prefacing with a straightforward explanation as to why we celebrate a birthday:

Just before the baby is born, while still within its mother's womb, it possesses all its limbs and even has hair and nails.³⁴ Moreover, its organs are functional, "it **eats** from what its mother eats, and **drinks** from what its mother drinks,"³⁵ etc.

In certain respects, it is "stronger" inside its mother's womb than outside: In the mother's womb, the fetus is naturally protected³⁶ by its mother, etc. In contrast, to ensure the newborn remains healthy after birth, specific actions and efforts must be undertaken (As mentioned above) {while still a fetus}, it automatically eats from what its mother eats and drinks from what its mother drinks. After birth, however, this takes effort, and the infant is often distressed {in the process}, etc.

This is all the more true for the infant's spiritual state (in the case of a Jew): While in its mother's womb, the fetus "has a lit lamp over its head, and it looks and gazes from one end of the world to the other," and "it is taught the entire Torah."³⁷ However, "once the newborn emerges into the world, an angel comes and slaps its mouth, causing the newborn to forget the entire Torah."³⁸ It is only later, once the child "begins to speak," that "(his father) teaches him, {beginning with the verse}³⁹ 'The Torah that Moshe commanded us...'"⁴⁰ Subsequently, "at five years of age, he begins the study of Scripture; at ten — the

³⁴ See *Niddah* 30a — in the mishnah; and Gemara on 30b; *Yevamos* 80b.

³⁵ *Niddah* 30b.

³⁶ Note *Tanchuma*, "Tazria," sec. 3.

³⁷ *Niddah* 30b.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ {*Devarim* 33:4}

⁴⁰ In the words of the Alter Rebbe, beginning of his *Hilchos Talmud Torah* — from *Sukkah* 42a.

study of Mishnah...,” until he reaches the ultimate level of Torah study, “at forty — {he gains} understanding”⁴¹ — and very few have “studied the entire Torah.”⁴²

Accordingly, a birthday actually marks a radical descent⁴³ in comparison with the elevated spiritual state of the fetus while in its mother’s womb. Why, then, should we celebrate a birthday?

The explanation: This⁴⁴ can be understood by considering the difference in the halachic status between a fetus and a newborn. In the words of Rashi:⁴⁵ “As long as a fetus has not emerged into the world, it is not a *nefesh*,⁴⁶ and it may be aborted to save its mother’s life (in a life-and-death struggle to give birth). Only once “its head has emerged” can it be considered a *nefesh*. At that point, “one may not even touch it to kill it, for it is considered as birthed, and we may not sacrifice one *nefesh* for another.”⁴⁷

This means that although a fetus may possess all 248 limbs and there is fetal movement, “it is not a *nefesh*.” A (living) *nefesh* is not a composite of two distinct parts: (a) a bodily being, which contains (b) a *nefesh* that animates it, like an object placed in a container.

⁴¹ *Avos* 5:22.

⁴² To cite a phrase that **expresses this as a novelty** (*Menachos* 99b): Ben Dama asked... What about one such as I, who has studied the entire Torah. — See also Alter Rebbe’s *Hilchos Talmud Torah*, ch. 1, pars. 4-5; ch. 2, par. 2, ff.

⁴³ Note that which is cited in *Derishah*, “*Yoreh De’ah*,” end of sec. 264: We are accustomed to visit the infant on the Shabbos following its birth, for he is mourning his Torah {study} that he has forgotten... It seems that it is for this reason that circumcision was given to be done on the eighth day, once his {7-day-}period of mourning has passed.

⁴⁴ For more on the above, and for the discussion below — see at length *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 2, p. 601, ff.

⁴⁵ On *Sanhedrin* 72b, s.v., “*yatza rosho*”; similarly in *Meiri*, ad loc; *Sefer Me’iras Einayin*, “*Choshen Mishpat*,” sec. 425, sub-par. 7 (see also *Gur Aryeh* on *Shemos* 21:22); see also *Ramban* on *Niddah* 44b; et al.

⁴⁶ {*Nefesh* here is used to refer to a life or the soul that is unified with and vivifies the body.}

⁴⁷ *Mishnah Ohalos* 7:6; *Sanhedrin*, ibid; see also *Beis HaOtzar*, “*Ma’areches Alef*,” Principle 10, whether a fetus can be called a person.

Instead,⁴⁸ {a *nefesh*} consists of **one** living being. In contrast, the life of a fetus is not its own,⁴⁹ but that of its mother.⁵⁰ Consequently, it cannot be described as a *nefesh* — “it is not a *nefesh*.”

This is why we celebrate a person’s birthday every year; it marks the day he became an independent living being, “a *nefesh*.”

3.

BORN TO SERVE

On this basis, we can understand why the idea of a birthday as a special day is **emphasized** in the case of the birthdays of the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe. After all, this is the core innovation of the doctrine of Chassidus — both the general doctrine of Chassidus {promulgated} by the Baal Shem Tov, as well as that of Chassidus Chabad revealed by the Alter Rebbe:

As known,⁵¹ exile is “likened to pregnancy,” and “the redemption of the messianic era, that should be very soon in our times, is likened to birth.”⁵² Now, the doctrine of Chassidus is (a foretaste⁵³ of redemption and, thereby, acts as)⁵⁴ a prelude and precursor to redemption. By spreading the wellsprings outwards — the dissemination of Chassidus — “the master, King Mashiach, will come” (as was Mashiach’s response to the Baal Shem Tov).⁵⁵ It is, therefore, understood

⁴⁸ See *Hemshech* 5666, p. 177, et al; *Hemshech* 5672 vol. 1, ch. 210; et al.

⁴⁹ For **its** *nefesh* is not yet unified with its body (despite it already existing within it — see *Sanhedrin* 91b). See also *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 10, p. 45, regarding “the beginning of the **entry** of this **holy** soul...” (Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Orach Chaim*,” Second Edition, end of sec. 4).

⁵⁰ Note *Shabbos* 107b, *Ramban*, s.v., “*Ha DeAmrinan*”: True, a fetus does not have a soul. Nevertheless, since its growth relies on its mother’s soul, one who uproots the fetus from there has taken its soul away from it. See also *Meiri* on *Shabbos*, *ibid*: It is not inaccurate to use the term “taking a soul” about a fetus, as the verse states....

⁵¹ See discourses of *Vaeira* — *Torah Or* 55a, ff.; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5562, p. 134, ff.; *Toras Chaim*, “*Shemos*,” 96b, ff.; *Or HaTorah*, *Shemos*, vol. 1, p. 139, ff.; vol. 7 — pp. 2584-5 (from *Guide for the Perplexed*).

⁵² In the words of *Torah Or*, *ibid*.

⁵³ {The original here cites from the *mussaf amidah* of *Shabbos* the aphorism, “those who taste it, merit life,” which is commonly invoked concerning the halachah to taste of the *Shabbos* dishes already on Friday. Similarly, Chassidus, a “foretaste” of the redemption, was already revealed while still in the times of exile.}

⁵⁴ See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 20, p. 173, and citations there.

⁵⁵ As the Baal Shem Tov wrote in his well-known letter — published as the foreword to *Kesser Shem Tov*; et al.

that what the doctrine of Chassidus innovated is analogous to (the revelations in the era of redemption **birth**).

The fulfillment of Torah and mitzvos can take one of two forms:

a) The study of the Torah and the performance of mitzvos can occur so that the Jew, and the Torah and mitzvos, remain two entities. As a religious Jew, the person engrosses himself in Torah study and is punctilious in performing even a minor mitzvah as much as a major one.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, he feels that there is a “him,” an independent existence (from Torah and mitzvos), and that **he** studies Torah and fulfills mitzvos. {Likewise, his sense of selfhood} is so significant that {he feels} the Torah and mitzvos infuse life **within him** {as a discrete being}. After all, Torah and mitzvos are “our life and the length of our days”⁵⁷ — as they are Hashem's wisdom and will, the Source of all life.

This can be likened to “pregnancy,” when the child is within his mother’s womb. Although a fetus possesses all its limbs and is a living⁵⁸ being, its life is not its own. Its life is the life of its mother. **Its own** limbs “are as if they were dead.”⁵⁹

b) The Baal Shem Tov revealed and emphasized⁶⁰ the inner meaning and truth of the principle that “there is none aside from Him”⁶¹ — that outside Hashem, nothing exists. It would follow that there are not **two** entities — a being who fulfills Torah and mitzvos — for outside of Hashem, nothing exists. There is only one entity:⁶² Hashem, His Torah, and His mitzvos (for He and His will and wisdom are one).

⁵⁶ {Cf. *Avos*, ch. 2, mishnah 1.}

⁵⁷ {Liturgy of *Maariv*.}

⁵⁸ Note that “a fetus is a limb of its mother” (*Gittin* 23b; et al; see also sources cited in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 22, p. 60, fn. 41) — a living limb.

⁵⁹ See *Torah Or*, loc. cit., “unlike its head and respiratory organs which are not active at all, and are all like dead.”

⁶⁰ See Tzemach Tzedek’s *Sefer HaMitzvos* — mitzvah to unify Hashem, ch. 3: “In light of the Baal Shem Tov’s deep foundation”

⁶¹ *Devarim* 4:35.

⁶² See *Sefer HaMitzvos*, loc. cit.: This is the crux of Chassidus.

Thus {for the Jew studying Torah and performing mitzvos}, there is altogether only one entity. The Torah and mitzvos themselves comprise **his life**.

This is analogous to birth. There are not two entities that are born — (a) a body that contains (b) a soul — but one living being.⁶³

This is emphasized in the words of our Sages: “I was **not created** for any purpose other than to serve my Maker.” (The deeper meaning is that a human being was not created as a discrete existence. Hashem created a human existence that consists of serving his Maker.)

For the will and wisdom of the Holy One — His Torah and mitzvos — to be realized, a Jew must exist and accomplish it in this physical world. Consequently, there was never a being — an existence — that was **autonomous**. Instead, all that was created was only a piece in (fulfilling) Hashem’s will, for through the person, the Divine will is fulfilled.⁶⁴

An analogy from **practical** halachah: “One who carries out foods less than the prohibited quantity in a utensil {on Shabbos} is exempt even for the utensil because the utensil is subordinated to its {contents}.”⁶⁵ In other words, the utensil itself comprises the prohibited volume, such that if one were to carry it out alone, the person would be liable for carrying it. However, since the utensil now serves as a food receptacle, the Torah does not consider it a **discrete** existence. It is only “subordinated {to its contents}.” Therefore, if the foodstuffs are **smaller than the prohibited measure**, carrying a small measure of food (along with the utensil) is not considered a prohibited act of carrying. When the utensil is carried for the sake of the food, then **this function** is considered the **true** definition of the utensil’s existence. The utensil is simply a component of the provisions.

⁶³ See also *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 19, p. 247, ff.

⁶⁴ Regarding all the above, see as well *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 10, p. 102, ff.

⁶⁵ Mishnah in *Shabbos* 93b; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Shabbos*,” ch. 18, par. 28. {On Shabbos, a person is liable for carrying something from a private domain to a public domain only if the item carried meets the minimum standard measure for that substance.}

4.

NEFESH IN THE DETAILS

In this, we can also see the connection between the birthday of the Baal Shem Tov and of the Alter Rebbe:

This insight that a newly born infant is a being that comprises a “*nefesh*” pertains not only to the infant’s general life force, but it is (primarily) associated with the individual aspects {of his life force}:⁶⁶

That a fetus is not a “*nefesh*” and is only a component and part (an appendage) of its mother can be deduced (primarily) from the dormant state of its senses and limbs. As the Gemara there⁶⁷ states: “To⁶⁸ what is a fetus comparable in its mother’s womb? To a folded notebook. Its head rests between its knees... it eats from what its mother eats....” This means that although the fetus’s limbs are fully formed — a head, eyes, and ears — they are not yet functional. The “head rests between its knees, and it does not function at all, as it does not think nor reflect.”; Also, “it has eyes, but does not see; ears, but does not hear....”⁶⁹

Herein lies the true novelty of birth. The unborn infant becomes an independent *nefesh*. This not only accounts for the general life force of the body but is also manifest in that each of its **individual** limbs and senses becomes active.

Therefore, (in its spiritual counterpart), we describe Chai Elul as the simultaneous “birthday” of the “**two great luminaries.**” For, as known,⁷⁰ “the

⁶⁶ {Chassidus explains that there are two aspects to a person’s life force, (a) a general life force that vivifies the entire body equally and enlivens the person, and (b) the individualized life force, that is en clothed in each individual part of the body and that lends each part the ability to function according to its respective qualities.}

⁶⁷ *Niddah* 30b.

⁶⁸ The wording here is cited from *Torah Or* 55a; there are some differences in wording and order in the Gemara. Further discussion is beyond the scope of this work.

⁶⁹ *Torah Or*, *ibid*; see other citations in fn. 51 above; In *Toras Chaim* 96b: Its limbs are considered inanimate, without any activity at all; and in *Torah Or*, *ibid*: They are not active at all and are like dead (as cited above).

⁷⁰ See also *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 19, p. 247, ff.; et al.

innovation” of the Alter Rebbe with his doctrine of Chassidus⁷¹ — Chassidus Chabad — over the general doctrine of Chassidus of the Baal Shem Tov is as follows: The Baal Shem Tov infused a **general** vitality into Torah and mitzvos, by revealing the *neshamah*⁷² of every Jew, which is generally expressed in the area of **belief**. True, the faculty of belief permeates all the soul’s faculties and similarly affects them since one’s **life force** permeates them, as alluded to by the verse,⁷³ “The righteous shall **live by his faith**.” Nevertheless, this does not necessitate that the life force of faith permeates every faculty in their **respective** functions. Instead, faith’s life force only permeates each faculty’s general vitality, connected with the point of faith within the soul.

For example, when a thief calls out to Hashem at the entrance of his tunnel,⁷⁴ his faith manifests superficially. However, faith may also permeate the person and his behavior to the extent that it affects his vision. Instead of seeing the world as an independent physical existence (which is in contradiction to spiritually and all more so to G-dliness) as he would ordinarily, his faith has the effect that he will no longer see (with his figurative eye) the world as a contradiction to G-dliness. The belief, however, will still not enable him to see⁷⁵ the “power of the cause within the effect.”⁷⁶

[This can be compared to the general life force, which makes the person **alive**: This {life force} permeates all of the person’s limbs and becomes unified

⁷¹ *Sefer HaSichos* 5703, p. 142.

⁷² {The soul that is an actual part of G-d (*Tanya*, *Likkutei Amarim*, ch. 2)}.

⁷³ *Chavakuk* 2:4; See also the end of *Makkos* (24a); *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” ch. 33 (42b).

⁷⁴ *Berachos* 63a (in the version found in *Ein Yaakov*). {Although the thief believes that his livelihood only comes from Hashem, as can be seen from the fact that he prays for success in his exploits, his faith has nevertheless not been internalized such that it would affect his behavior so that he would conduct himself in a manner contrary to Hashem’s will.}

⁷⁵ Note the statement of the Tzemach Tzedek before his passing (*Sefer HaSichos* 5702, p. 103) “that he does see the body but rather the light of the soul”; note also that which the Maggid said (*Sefer HaSichos* 5703, p. 155) “In the last days before the returning of the deposit — at the time of one’s passing — one sees only the words of Hashem that are within every physical entity, for the words of Hashem is the {true} being of the physical entity.” This is similar to what is cited in *Beis Rebbe*, vol. 1, ch. 22 (46a), fn. 1, that a few days before the Alter Rebbe’s passing, the Alter Rebbe asked of the Tzemach Tzedek, “do you see the roof,” and that his grandson {the Tzemach Tzedek} was mystified by the question. The Alter Rebbe then said, “Believe me. Right now all I see is the G-dly force that is vivifying....”

⁷⁶ {The Divine energy or will that brings a thing into existence and continues to sustain and be present within it at every moment.} Akin to how the Maggid discerned the characteristics of the craftsman {from observing his work}, that he was blind in one eye (*Shaar HaEmunah*, end of ch. 27; et al.). In *Shaar HaEmunah*, *ibid.*: This is impossible except for someone who can discern all spirituality within physicality, even the general light of the G-dly spiritual life force that is the energy and source for all activity.

with them. However, it has no bearing on the **individual** qualities of each limb, but rather, with the common essence of each of the limbs (that which each limb is a part of the body).^{77]}

The Alter Rebbe, however, brought life into each faculty of the soul (and in every *avodah* in Torah and mitzvos) concerning even the individual qualities of those faculties. (This is like the individual life force, which is measured following the respective features of each limb). {In this dynamic,} the faith is brought down and permeates the person's intellect to the extent that his intellect itself comprehends G-dliness and considers G-dliness to be evident.

And in turn, every particular feature of the Jew, on account of its function, becomes *nefesh*-like: Starting from the faculties of Chabad within the soul, where G-dliness is revealed in his intellect in such a fashion that his intellect truly appreciates that the only purpose of its existence is to comprehend G-dliness. This intellect then engenders such emotions that would be aligned with it, such that it may be felt that the only reason his emotion of love exists is to love Hashem. This is similar to the emotion of fear and all other emotions. In this scenario, each of his faculties has become inherently *nefesh*-like. His very life is G-dliness

For this reason, the Rebbe Rashab simultaneously proclaimed that “today is the birthday of our two great luminaries” (and only then referred to each individually). For how this birthday openly pertains to every individual, and to such an extent that each of them can genuinely bid a “*Gut Yom Tov*” to another Jew, is when the revelation and realization of the Baal Shem Tov's general doctrine is channeled through and integrated with that of the Alter Rebbe's doctrine of Chassidus Chabad. For then, it will have the effect that Jew will become a full “*nefesh*”-existence with all its particulars.

⁷⁷ See *Sefer HaArachim Chabad*, vol. 1, “*Eivanim*,” sec. 1, and citations there.

Everything that a tzaddik reveals is first and foremost expressed in his teachings. The above concept — the connection between the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe — is overtly seen and emphasized in the Torah that was shared by the Baal Shem Tov on the Shabbos of *parshas Ki Savo, Chai Elul*,⁷⁸ in the year 5552. [My father-in-law recounted⁷⁹ that his father, the Rebbe Rashab, over the course of that Chai Elul, heard the seven teachings that the Baal Shem Tov had then shared in Gan Eden].⁸⁰

The first teaching shared by the Baal Shem Tov, following *Kabbalas Shabbos*, was based on the verse,⁸¹ “It will be when you will enter the *eretz*, the land...” He interpreted the word “*eretz*” as a cognate of “*merutzah*, contentment.” There are the two {homiletical} meanings given for the word “*eretz*” — one of which is offered by the Midrash:⁸² “Why was it called *eretz*? Because it hastened to perform the ‘*ratzon*, will’ of its Maker” — and *eretz* as a cognate of *merutzah*.⁸³

“It will be when you will enter the land” — when you reach the level of *ratzon* and *merutzah*⁸⁴ — *“that Hashem, your L-rd, gives to you as an inheritance, you shall take possession of it”* — a {level} that is gifted from Above and is an inheritance⁸⁵ for every Jew. At that point, your *avodah* is: *“You shall dwell in it”* — to internalize it in a settled manner — *“you shall take...”*⁸⁶ *and place it in a*

⁷⁸ Chai Elul in the year 5552 fell on the same day of the week as this year (5743, {the year of this Sichah’s original publication}).

⁷⁹ *Shemini Atzeres*, 5697, in Otwock, Poland. From the notes of one of the attendees (cited in the following footnote).

⁸⁰ *Hayom Yom — Chai Elul* (in brief); *Kesser Shem Tov*, additions, sec. 3, and citations there; see also *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 9, p. 338, ff.

⁸¹ Beginning of *Ki Savo* (*Devarim* 26:1).

⁸² *Bereshis Rabbah* sec. 5, par. 8.

⁸³ *Torah Or*, *maamar* “*Ki Ka’asher*” (1c, ff.); *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5565 vol. 2 p. 712; *Or HaTorah*, “*Bereishis*,” vol. 3, 481b, ff.; vol. 6, 1043a, ff.; See also *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5679, p. 523; et al.

⁸⁴ {The “will” and “contentment” of the soul are two levels that are primarily associated with the soul’s essence that transcends the soul as it is en clothed in the body. *Ratzon* is the soul’s inherent leanings towards anything (see below fn. 94), and *merutzah* is the soul’s inherent pleasure.}

⁸⁵ See *Bava Basra* (129b; 133a) on the subject of a gift given to someone who could have inherited it. This is explained in *Or HaTorah*, “*Bereishis*,” vol. 1, 16b, ff.

⁸⁶ *Devarim* 26:2: “you shall take... to make His Name rest there.”

basket” — {you shall} draw down the {spiritual} lights into {appropriate} vessels — “*and go to the place*” — led by individual Divine Providence — “*that Hashem, your L-rd, will choose*” — for when a Jew goes to a place, he is directed there by Divine Providence. Wherever he arrives, it is to “*make His Name rest there*” — to {further} publicize G-dliness in the world.

Since the Baal Shem Tov shared this exposition on the occasion of Chai Elul, which was, in turn, heard by the Rebbes of Chabad,⁸⁷ it follows that this teaching emphasizes the essence and innovation of the day of Chai Elul—introduced by the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe.

We may (possibly) suggest that this teaching of the Baal Shem Tov consists of two parts:

a) “*It will be when you will enter the land* — when you will arrive at the level of *ratzon* and *merutzah* — *that Hashem, your L-rd, gives to you as an inheritance, you shall take possession of it* — a {level} that is gifted from Above and is an inheritance for every Jew.” — This generally relates to the revelation of the general doctrine of Chassidus brought forth by the Baal Shem Tov. That is, a revelation of the inherent *ratzon* contained within the soul of every Jew.

b) The *avodah* which must then be conducted — “*you shall dwell in it* — to internalize it in a settled manner — *you shall take... and place it in a basket* — draw down the {spiritual} lights into {appropriate} vessels.” — These are the ideals of the doctrine of Chassidus Chabad. The soul’s *ratzon* and *merutzah* are to be brought down into the particulars, “the {spiritual} lights into {appropriate} vessels.” As mentioned above, these ideals are to be perceived and affect each person’s faculty.

And through this teaching, the Baal Shem Tov emphasized that they are not considered two distinct *avodos* and ideals — “you **should** arrive at the level of *ratzon* and *merutzah*, etc., and there (additionally) is required the *avodah* of internalizing it in a settled manner.”

⁸⁷ That is — even those **in this world**, for in Gan Eden there were chassidim present as well (see following footnote).

Instead, he expressed it all as one idea: “**when** you **will** arrive,” namely, when you have been born. When the “{level} that is gifted from Above and is an inheritance for every Jew,” the “*ratzon* and *merutzah*” of the soul, has been revealed to and assimilated by your very existence, your *avodah*, *in turn*, must be to “draw own the {spiritual} lights into {appropriate} vessels.” They {the *ratzon* and *merutzah*} should be drawn into the intellectual faculties of Chabad and, thereby, into all of the soul’s faculties, as explained above. Then, this is the perfect birth.⁸⁸

6.

LIVING ON THE OUTSIDE

In light of this, we can explain the subsequent words in the Baal Shem’s teaching, “*and go to the place* — led by individual Divine Providence ... Wherever he arrives, it is *to make His Name rest there* — to publicize G-dliness in the world.”

For seemingly: It is indeed true that this idea also relates to the foundations of the Baal Shem Tov’s ideology, that is, the concept of individual Divine Providence and the dissemination of G-dliness wherever a Jew goes.⁸⁹ —

However, what is the connection to the beginning of the Torah, “*It will be when you will enter the land... you shall take... and place it in a basket* — drawing down the lights into {appropriate} vessels”?

The account⁹⁰ continues to discuss the second exposition that the Baal Shem Tov shared after the evening prayer:

⁸⁸ On this basis, we can better understand the preface in *Likkutei Dibburim* vol. 2 (341a, ff.) by my father-in-law, the {Previous} Rebbe to these Torah expositions, that belief in Hashem is insufficient. A person needs to extend effort so that G-dliness should also be grasped by the mind. By comprehending G-dliness, one’s belief becomes pure, etc.; see there.

⁸⁹ See *Kesser Shem Tov*, addenda, sec. 123, ff.

⁹⁰ See above fn. 79 and 80 {fn. 48 and 49 in the original}.

He repeated once again the above exposition and then added: *It will be when you will enter the land* — to receive the *ratzon* which is given as a gift to everyone, what is expected of him is — *to make his name rest there* — self-sacrifice to publicize G-dliness in the world. In what is his self-sacrifice manifest? In reciting a blessing or a verse from Tehillim.

However, this is insufficient to explain the correlation between the two ideas brought up in the first exposition. The wording “he repeated once again the above exposition and then added” implies that the addition in the second exposition is an independent idea and teaching, an addition, and not (only) clarification of the first exposition.

Furthermore, this would only allow us to understand the correlation of “to make His name rest there” — the self-sacrifice to publicize G-dliness in the world — with “It shall be when you will enter” — the *ratzon* which is given as a gift to everyone, which is the general innovation of the doctrine of the Baal Shem Tov. {However,} this doesn’t explain its connection to the main point of the first exposition, the idea of everything being done in a settled manner, “*you shall take... and place it in a basket* — drawing down the lights into {appropriate} vessels,” that is, the concept of bringing things down to their details — “Chabad.”

We may posit the following explanation for the above:

The difference between a fetus and a newborn is (not only in relation to their sense of existence, but it also, and primarily, relates to their interaction with others —) that all of a fetus’ aspects and activity are for the fetus itself, without any relationship and effect on the outside world. However, once the child is born, every action exists externally. This begins from birth when others hear the newborn’s cries,⁹¹ and the activity of its hands and feet can be seen and felt by others.

Therefore, after the “birth” of a Jew, by which his Torah and mitzvos and his life force and *nefesh* — the *ratzon* and *merutzah* of the soul come down so

⁹¹ See *Torah Or* (and similarly in the other sources cited in fn. 51), “for then it emits sounds, as our Sages taught (*Niddah* 42b; *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Yoreh Deah*,” sec. 194, par. 12) that a signal of birth is when they hear the infant’s cries.”

that the lights within be in vessels — there is also brought about automatically the dissemination of G-dliness, that wherever a Jew goes, he perceives that the intention is for him to publicize G-dliness in the world.

The spiritual reason for this: The difference between something that receives life from elsewhere and something inherently alive is as follows:⁹² An entity that receives life from another cannot, in turn, give life to something else. It is precisely one that is inherently alive and can enliven another. When it encounters another entity, it permeates it and makes it alive. Therefore, since G-dliness, Torah, and mitzvos are inherently alive when **this** becomes the Jew's identity, it becomes his *nefesh*. Then, automatically,⁹³ wherever a Jew goes, he makes an imprint on the place and publicizes G-dliness in the world.

7.

PUBLICIZING G-DLINESS

Indeed, the Baal Shem Tov promoted G-dliness worldwide before the Alter Rebbe introduced the philosophy of Chabad Chassidus. Nevertheless, with the emergence of Chabad Chassidus, there was a further enhancement in the diffusion of divine awareness, namely the process of bringing "the lights" into "practical vessels."

The explanation:

The Alter Rebbe's innovation with the doctrine of Chassidus Chabad was not only predicated upon the distinction of the intellectual faculties over the other soul's faculties [for which reason it is vital that the doctrine of Chassidus — G-dliness — be also perceived by a person's intellect].

⁹² *Hemshech* 5666 p. 177; et al.

⁹³ See *ibid.*, p. 177-178 (et al) that the body receives life from the *nefesh*, not through any active efforts on the *nefesh's* part, but rather that when the *nefesh* relates to the body then the body automatically receives life from it.

Instead, {engaging the intellectual faculties is essential because of their crucial role in achieving} the goal of making a dwelling place for Hashem in the lower realms. This requires the ability to perceive **within** the world's reality, and **on account** of the world, that there is none aside from Him. Now, the first stage of reality, which is separate from G-dliness, so to speak, is **intellect**.⁹⁴ It is, therefore, essential to explain the above idea, first and foremost, in abstract terms to the extent that it reaches the purview of human intellect. Then, once even human intellect perceives and recognizes Hashem's Oneness as **explained above**, to the extent that the intellect's *raison d'être* is to understand G-dliness, this clarity will then extend further so that "you take unto to your heart,"⁹⁵ in the emotive faculties of the heart. The ideal influence on the heart's emotions is achieved precisely when the person's intellect generates the emotions. [As the Rambam rules,⁹⁶ "What is the path (to attain) love and fear of Him? When a person **contemplates...**"] Through this dynamic, the emotions generated should be drawn further into the lower faculties until Hashem's Unity is felt worldwide and in all worldly matters.

Accordingly, we can see how the goal "to publicize G-dliness in the world" is a continuation and a part of the value added by Chabad to the general doctrine of Chassidus. "*You shall take... and place in a basket*, drawing lights into vessels" — introducing a novelty in this doctrine.

Because — in addition to the fact that we recognize that it is the *ratzon* and *merutzah* of the **soul's essence** drawn into Chabad (not something associated with his personhood and pleasure) precisely when we see that the person is ready to curtail his *avodah* with himself (concerning his comprehension of G-dliness, his *avodah* of love and fear) and goes and publicizes G-dliness in the world beyond him⁹⁷ — there is also an innovation in this *avodah* itself:

⁹⁴ For will is an inclination of the soul and (the revelation of) one's existence is in intellect, emotions, thought, speech, and action.

⁹⁵ *Devarim* 4:39.

⁹⁶ *Mishneh Torah*, "*Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah*," ch. 2, par. 2.

⁹⁷ Note the Previous Rebbe's letter, printed at the end of *Sefer HaSichos* 5705; the Previous Rebbe's *Igros Kodesh* vol. 8, p. 497, ff.

Just as the dissemination of G-liness must be done with all the faculties of the soul in that, a person should publicize G-dliness through understanding and comprehension, and through his emotions and the rest of his soul's faculties, and even his faculty of action — laying tefillin with other Jews, fixing a mezuzah to the door of his home, and similarly with other mitzvos —

Likewise, he must use every avenue to publicize G-dliness in a way appropriate to the unique prevailing conditions of each time and place. In this way, he will even refine and elevate the medium and specific item⁹⁸ in the world for the service of Hashem.⁹⁹ For every medium and thing in the world “was only created for His glory.”¹⁰⁰

8.

DISSEMINATING TORAH

On this basis, we can also understand why this exposition taught by the Baal Shem Tov was revealed by my father-in-law, the {Previous} Rebbe, for we observed in practice that the Divine providence led my father-in-law, the {Previous} Rebbe, in every place “*to make His Name rest there* — to publicize G-dliness in the world,” in the literal sense, in the entire world — and primarily through his emissaries, etc., across the globe.

This publicity also took advantage of all available avenues. He revealed the most profound concepts of Chassidus and publicized Torah thoughts within the revealed dimension of Torah as well as Chassidus in different languages,

⁹⁸ See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 15, p. 43, ff.

⁹⁹ Through the realization of this — both on the part of the person (the pervasion of G-dliness through all the faculties of the soul) and also in the features of the world (in accordance with the time and place etc., through which all aspects of the world are refined and elevated) thus making of a dwelling place for Hashem in the lower realms, in practise, it brings about an addition in the revelation of Hashem's Essence, as well as an addition in the revelation of the *ratzon* of the soul, and automatically thereby in permeating the chabad of the soul.

¹⁰⁰ *Avos* ch.6, mishnah 11.

reaching even those categorized as *tinokos shenishbe'u*,¹⁰¹ so that it inspires a Jew to keep Shabbos, maintain family purity, lay tefillin, and so forth.

And through this, we affect Jews so that they will genuinely comprehend that “I have this day birthed you.”¹⁰² He was born as a Jew, a living “*nefesh*,” and his whole existence consists of Torah and Judaism.

This will, all the more so, hasten redemption swiftly in our time through our righteous Mashiach. Then, the birth of the Jewish nation will be revealed—“Zion both experienced birth pangs and bore her children,”¹⁰³ speedily in our days.

— From the talks delivered on Chai Elul, 5741 (1981) and 5742 (1982)

¹⁰¹ {The term *tinok shenishba* (pl. *tinokos shenishbe'u*), lit., “a captured infant” originates from the Talmud, where it describes a Jewish infant taken hostage and raised by non-Jews. In present day usage, the term refers to someone raised without a kosher Jewish upbringing.}

¹⁰² *Tehillim* 2:7; see also *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 2, p. 605, ff.

¹⁰³ *Yeshayah* 66:8.