

Chasidus

קונטרס ענינה של תורת החסידות מכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורינו

On the Essence of Chasidus,

Delivered by The Lubavitcher Rebbe, on the Chasidic holiday of Yud-Tes Kislev 5726 (1965).

-CHAPTER 1-

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THE CREATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CHASIDUS

בַּנּוֹנֵעַ לְעַנְיְנָה שֶׁל תּוֹרַת הַחֲסִידוּת – וְהַחִידוּשׁ שֶׁבָּה עַל חֶלְקֵי הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁנְּחָנֵלוּ לְפָנֶיהָ – נֶאֶמְרוּ בֵּיאוּרִים רַבִּים. ומֵהֶם: Many explanations have heretofore been given concerning the nature of Chasidus, and the creative contribution which distinguishes it from those parts of the Torah which had been previously revealed. And among them one finds the following:

 א) בּוְמַנּוֹ שֶׁל הַבַּעַל שֵׁם מוֹב הָיָה הָעוֹלְם בְּמַצְב שֶׁל הִתְעַלְפוֹת, וְעַל יְדֵי גִילוּי הַבַּעַל שֵׁם מוֹב וְתוֹרַת הַחְסִידוּת, נַתְעוֹרַר הַעוֹלִם מהתעלפוּתוֹ.

1) In the times of the Baal Shem Tov the world was in a state of spiritual "unconsciousness," and through the revelations of the Baal Shem Tov and the teachings of Chasidus the world was aroused from this condition.

ב) ״חָסִיד הוּא שֶׁעוֹשֶׂה ״לְפְנִים מִשׁוּרַת הַדִּין״ (וּכְמַאֲמַר רַבּוֹתֵינוּ זִכְרוֹנָם לִבְרָכָהד. ״שׁוֹרְפָּן חָסִיד - אַף עַל גַב שֵׁמַזִּיק לוֹ״). 2) "A Chasid is one who does more than what is required by the letter of the law." (As our Sages of blessed memory have said: "The one who burns them [nail parings] is a Chasid, even though he might be harmed thereby.")

ג) ״מַעֲלַת הַחֲסִידוּת הוּא שֶׁהַכּּחוֹת הַמִּבְעִים נַעֲשִׁים כּחוֹת אֱלֹקִים״. וּכְמַאֲמֵר רַבִּינוּ הַוָּקֵן בַּעַל הַתַּנְיָא וְהַשְּׁלְחָן-עָרוּף ״כָּל עִנְין הַחֲסִידוּת הוּא לְשַׁנּוֹת טֶבַע מִדּוֹתִיו״: לֹא רַק לְשַׁנּוֹת מִדּוֹתִיו הַמִּבְעִים אֶלָּא נַּם – ״מֶבַע מִדּוֹתִיו״. 3) "The distinctive quality of Chasidus is that one's natural faculties are transformed into G-dly faculties." As the Alter Rebbe [R. Schneur Zalman of Liadi], author of the *Tanya* and *Shulchan Aruch* said, "The entire idea of Chasidus is to change the nature of one's attributes." This means to change not only one's natural characteristics themselves, but also the very "*nature* of one's character."

הוֹרַת הַחֲסִידוּת חִידְשָׁה אֲשֶׁר כָּל
 אֶחָד וְאָחָד, גַּם מִי שֶׁאֵין לוֹ נְשָׁמָה
 גְבוֹתָה וְגַם לֹא זִיבֵּךְ אֶת עַצְמוֹ, יוּכַל
 לְהַשִּׁיג אֱלֹקוּת. כִּי עַל יְדֵי זֶה שֶׁתוֹרַת הַחֲסִידוּת בַּיְאֲרָה אֶת הָענְיָנִים שֶׁל חֵלֶּל הַ הַשְּׁלָים מִכּחוֹת וּתְכוּנוֹת הַנְּבְּשִׁיר שְׁבָיִר אֶחֶזֶה אֱלוֹקה" –
 בְּהַשְּׁכָל שֻׁבְּשִׁל הָשֶׁל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד הַבְּלְמִית גַב בְּהַשֵּׁכֶל שֶׁבְנַפְשׁוֹ הַשֶּׁלְקִית, אֶלְא
 בְּהַשֵּׁכֶל שֶׁבְנַפְשׁוֹ הַשֶּׁלְיִת, אֶלְא
 בְּהַשֵּׁכֶל שֶּבְנַפְשׁוֹ הַשְּׁכְלִית עַד –
 בְּהַשֵּׁכֶל שֶׁבְנַפְשׁוֹ הַבְּבְמִית.

4) The teachings of Chasidus created the possibility for every person, including even one who does not possess a lofty soul and who has not purified himself, to be able to grasp and comprehend G-dliness. By explaining the ideas of the "esoteric" part of Torah, and making them accessible to the intellect through examples and analogies corresponding to the faculties and characteristics of the soul—as it is written, "From my flesh I perceive G-d"—Chasidus enabled every one to comprehend even this part of Torah. Not only can one grasp it with the intelligence found in his G-dly soul, but also with the intelligence of his intellectual soul—and further, he can even comprehend it with the intelligence possessed by his animal soul.