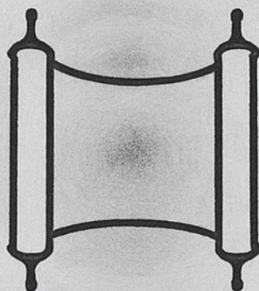


בס"ד

The Rebbe Chanukah

ליל זאת חנוכה, ה'תשמ"ו



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The Rebbe

בסייעתא דשמיא. מוצאי שבת קדוש פרישת מקץ, ליל זאת חנוכה, ה'תשמ"ו

With the help of Heaven. After the conclusion of the holy Shabbat, Parashat Miketz, the night of Zot Chanukah, 1985–1986

Introduction

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902–1994), the Lubavitcher Rebbe, served as the seventh Rebbe of Chabad Lubavitch and articulated a comprehensive vision that integrated the deepest strata of Chassidic metaphysics with concrete action in lived reality. This maamar, delivered on Motzaei Shabbat Parashat Miketz, the night of Zot Chanukah in the Hebrew year five thousand seven hundred forty six [1985–1986], addresses the inner meaning of the eighth day of Chanukah, clarifying why Zot Chanukah occupies a unique position as the culmination of Chanukah and as a paradigm for the ultimate purpose of divine service: refining and elevating the lowest level of reality through action.

(א)

“On the eighth day, the prince of the children of Manasseh” [Numbers 7:48], “this is the dedication of the altar” [Numbers 7:84]. It is known that one of the reasons for reading the offerings of the princes on Chanukah is because on Chanukah they dedicated the altar, similar to the dedication of the altar the first time, through the offerings of the princes.

ביום השמיני נשיא לבני מנשה גוי, זאת חנוכה המזבח גוי. הנה ידוע דמהטעמים על זה שבחנוכה קוראין קרבנות הנשיאים הוא לפי שבחנוכה חנכו את המזבח, דגמת חנוכה המזבח בפעם הראשונה על ידי קרבנות הנשיאים

From this it is understood that the eight days of Chanukah correspond to the eight days of the inauguration. And just as the eight days of the inauguration are divided into two, the seven days of the inauguration and the eighth day, so too it is with the eight days of Chanukah.

ומזה מוכן, דשמונת ימי חנוכה הם דגמת שמונת ימי המלוואים. וכמו ששמונת ימי המלוואים נחלקים לשנים, שבעת ימי המלוואים יום השמיני

Accordingly, the eighth day of Chanukah is also called, according to the custom of Israel, by its own distinct name, Zot Chanukah.

על דרך זה הוא בשמונת ימי חנוכה, שיום השמיני דחנוכה נקרא על פי מנהג ישראל גם בשם בפני עצמו, זאת חנוכה

And it may be said that this also explains why the Torah reading on the eighth day of Chanukah is much longer than on the seven preceding days, for on the first seven days only two princes are read each day, whereas on the eighth day of Chanukah five princes are read, as well as “this is the dedication of the altar” [Numbers 7:84], and the beginning of Parashat Beha‘alotekha, “when you kindle the lamps” [Numbers 8:2], an addition in the Torah reading that indicates the elevated stature of the day.

ויש לומר, שזהו גם מה שהקריאה בתורה ביום השמיני דחנוכה היא הרבה יותר משבעת הימים שלפניו, דבשבעת הימים הראשונים קוראין בכל יום רק שני נשיאים, וביום השמיני דחנוכה קוראין חמשה נשיאים, וגם זאת חנוכה המזבח וראש פרישת בהעלותך את הנרות, בהוספה בקריאת התורה מורה על מעלת היום

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בְּסִיעֵתָא דְשָׁמַיָא. מוֹצָאֵי שַׁבַּת קֹדֶשׁ פְּרִשְׁת מִקֶּטֶץ, לַיִל זֹאת חֲנוּכָה, ה'תשמ"ו

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It is explained in the discourse beginning “Blessed is He Who performed miracles for the Alter Rebbe,” together with the glosses and notes of the Tzemach Tzedek, that the eighth day, both of the inauguration and likewise the eighth day of Chanukah, corresponds to the attribute of kingship.

וּמְבוֹאֵר בְּדַבּוּר הַמִּתְחִיל בְּרוּךְ שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאֲדָמוֹר הַזֶּקֶן עִם הַגְּהוּת וְהַעֲרוּת וְכוֹנֵן וְכוּלֵי הָאֵי, דְהַצְמַח צֶדֶק, שְׂיֹוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי לְמַלּוּאִים וְכֵן יוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי דְחֲנוּכָה הוּא מַלְכוּת

Therefore it is called by the name Zot Chanukah, for “this” refers to kingship.

וְלָכֵן נִקְרָא בְּשֵׁם זֹאת חֲנוּכָה, כִּי זֹאת הִיא מַלְכוּת

(ב)

It is known that on the eighth day there are two distinct concepts. On the one hand, the eighth is higher than the seven that precede it, analogous to the interpretation of the letters of the word “az,” where the alef rides upon the zayin, for seven correspond to the seven emotional attributes, and the eighth is binah.

וְהִנֵּה יָדוּעַ דְּבַשְׁמִינִי שְׁנֵי עֲנָנִים. שֶׁהַשְּׁמִינִי הוּא לְמַעְלָה מִהַשְּׁבַעַה שְׁלִפְנָיו [וְעַל דֶּרֶךְ הַפִּירוּשׁ בְּהֵאוֹתֵיזוֹת דְּתִיבַת אָז, אֶלֶף רֹכֵב עַל זַיִן], דְּשַׁבְּעָה הֵם שְׁבַעַת הַמַּדּוֹת וְשְׁמִינִי הוּא בִּינָה

On the other hand, the eighth is kingship, which is below the seven emotional attributes. The same applies regarding the eighth day of the inauguration, for it is stated in Likkutei Torah that there are two interpretations in this matter.

וְהַשְּׁמִינִי הוּא מַלְכוּת שְׁלִמְטָה מִשְׁבַּעַת הַמַּדּוֹת. וְכֵמוֹ כֵּן הוּא בְּנוֹגַע לַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי לְמַלּוּאִים, דְּאִיתָא בְּלִקּוּטֵי תוֹרָה שְׁנֵי פִירוּשִׁים בְּזֶה

One interpretation is that the eighth day of the inauguration is higher than the seven days of the inauguration, for the seven days are in binah and the eighth day is chochmah. The other interpretation is that the eighth day of the inauguration is kingship.

שְׂיֹוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי לְמַלּוּאִים הוּא לְמַעְלָה מִז' יָמֵי הַמַּלּוּאִים, דְּז' יָמֵי הַמַּלּוּאִים הֵם בְּבִינָה וַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי לְמַלּוּאִים הוּא חֻכְמָה. וְשְׂיֹוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי לְמַלּוּאִים הוּא מַלְכוּת

The reconciliation of these two interpretations is that in order for the flow to be drawn down into kingship, which is the eighth below the seven, it must specifically come from a higher source, one that is above the seven.

וְהַתִּיּוּד דְּשְׁנֵי הַפִּירוּשִׁים הוּא, כִּי בְּכַדֵּי שְׁתֵּהֲרִיגָה הַהִמְשָׁכָה בְּמַלְכוּת שְׁמִינִי שְׁלִמְטָה מִשְׁבַּעַה, הוּא דְּוָקָא עַל יְדֵי שְׁהִמְשָׁכָה הִיא מִמָּקוֹם נְעֻלָּה יוֹתֵר שְׁלִמְעֵלָה מִשְׁבַּעַה

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Seemingly, it must be said that the same applies regarding the eighth day of Chanukah, in which there are these two interpretations. The fact that on the eighth day the flow is in kingship, which is why it is called Zot Chanukah, the eighth below the seven, is because its root is in the eighth that is above the seven.

ולכאורה צריך לומר, שעל דרך זה הוא בנוגע ליום השמיני דחנוכה, שיש בו שני הפירושים. דזה שביום הח' ההמשכה היא במלכות שלכן נקרא זאת חנוכה, שמיני שלמטה משבועה, הוא לפי ששרשו הוא בשמיני שלמעלה משבועה.

However, from the fact that in the above-mentioned discourse, which explains the concept of the eighth day of Chanukah, there is cited at the beginning of the discussion only the interpretation that the eighth is kingship, and not as in the discourses that explain the eight days of the inauguration which cite both interpretations, it is implied that the primary concept of the eighth day of Chanukah is the drawing down below.

אבל מזה שבמאמר הנ"ל שמבאר ענין יום השמיני דחנוכה מובא בתחלת הענין רק הפירוש ששמיני הוא מלכות, ולא כבהדרושים שמבארים ענין שמונת ימי המלוואים שמובא בהם שני הפירושים דשמיני, משמע, שעיקר ענינו של יום השמיני דחנוכה הוא ההמשכה למטה.

(ג)

This may be understood according to the well known principle that in the superiority of action, which in a person is the lowest faculty and corresponds to the sefirah of kingship, there are several aspects. Through action specifically, an elevation is effected in all the faculties of the soul.

ויוכן זה על פי הידוע, דבמעלת המעשה דכח המעשה שבאדם, כח הכי תחתון, הוא דגמת ספירת המלכות, כמה ענינים. זה שעל ידי המעשה דוקא נעשית עליה בכל כחות הנפש.

As is known, the analogy for this is from a lifting tool called a lever: when it is placed beneath the entire object one wishes to raise, then the entire object is elevated.

וכידוע המשל על זה מכלי ההגבהה הנקרא ליווער, שעל ידי שמעמידים אותו תחת כל הדבר שרוצים להגביה, אז דוקא יוגבה כל הדבר.

When one lifts an object from its middle, however, the lower part remains below. This is comparable to raising a house: in order for the entire house to be lifted upward, one must lift specifically the lowest beam.

דכאשר מגביהים את הדבר מאמצעיתו, אזי החלק התחתון שבו נשאָר למטה. וכמו הגבהת בית, שבכדי שכל הבית יוגבה למעלה הוא דוקא על ידי שמגביהים הקורה התחתונה של הבית.

If one raises the walls from their middle, the lower beams remain below. Since all the beams belong to one house, when the lowest beam remains below, the elevation of the upper beams is also not complete.

וכשמגביהים את הכתלים מאמצעיתם, הקורות התחתונות נשאָרות למטה. ויש לומר, דכיון שכל הקורות הן של בית אחד, לכן כשקורה התחתונה נשאָרת למטה, גם ההגבהה והעליה של קורות העליונות אינה בשלמות.

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All the more so in the analogue of the soul's faculties, where each faculty influences the others: for the elevation of the higher faculties such as intellect to be complete, it is specifically through the elevation of the faculty of action, the lowest faculty.

ועל אחת כמה וכמה בהנמשל דכחות הנפש, שכל כח משפיע על שאר הכחות, שבכדי שהעליה דכחות הנעלים שכל וכו' היא תהיה בשלמות, הוא דוקא על ידי העליה דכח המעשה, כח הכי תחתון.

An additional aspect is that through action, the elevation of the higher faculties reaches an even higher place, like the analogy of a balance scale, where the more one pan descends, the higher the other rises.

ועוד ענין בזה, שעל ידי המעשה, העליה וההגבהה של כחות העליונים היא למקום גבוה יותר. וכמה שכל דכח מאזנים ששוקלים בכח אחת ונוהגים משא בפה השני, שכל שהכח שבה שוקלים יורדת למטה יותר, הגבהת המשא שבפה השני היא למעלה יותר.

(ד)

The reason that through action specifically the complete elevation of all the faculties is achieved is because the root of action is higher than all the faculties. Two aspects are involved in this.

והנה זה שעל ידי המעשה דוקא נעשית שלימות העליה דכל הכחות הוא לפי ששרש המעשה הוא למעלה מכל הכחות. ושני ענינים בזה.

First, the drawing down into action, meaning that intellect and emotions are drawn into action, has its root in the soul that is higher than the faculties. Intellect and emotions on their own are limited and cannot descend so low as to enclothe themselves in action.

שההמשכה במעשה זה שהשכל ומדות נמשכים במעשה, שרשה הוא בהנפש שלמעלה מהכחות. שהשכל ומדות מצד עצמם הם מגבלים ואין ביכולתם לירד למטה כל כך ולהתלבש במעשה.

Their ability to descend and be enclothed in action is through that which is drawn into them from the soul, which is present equally in all the faculties and limbs.

ונה שאפשרי להם לירד ולהתלבש במעשה הוא על ידי שנומשך בהם מהנפש, שהיא נמצאת בכל הכחות והאיברים בשנה.

Second, the root of the faculty of action itself is higher than the root of all the faculties, since the faculties relate to the revealed aspects of the soul, whereas the faculty of action is rooted in the essence of the soul.

ושהשרש דכח המעשה עצמו הוא למעלה מהשרש דכל הכחות. דזה שכל הכחות הם בבחינת קירוב להנפש וכח המעשה הוא פת נבדל, הוא לפי ששרש דכל הכחות הוא בהגלויים דהנפש, ושרש דכח המעשה הוא בעצם הנפש.

(ה)

Just as within the faculties of the soul the root of the faculty of action is higher than the root of all the faculties, so too it is in the service of the Divine Name, where the primary superiority is specifically in action.

והנה כמו שבכחות הנפש השרש דכח המעשה הוא למעלה משרש כל הכחות, על דרך זה הוא גם בעבודת הוי"א, שעיקר המעלה היא במעשה דוקא.

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The statement that study is greater applies only now, but in the future action will be greater [Kiddushin 40b]. Even now, the reason study is greater is because study leads to action [Kiddushin 40b], from which it is evident that the essential element is action.

דְּזֶה שְׁתַּלְמוּד גָּדוֹל הוּא רַק עֲכָשְׁיוֹ, אֲבָל לְעֵתִיד לְבוֹא יִהְיֶה מַעֲשֵׂה גָדוֹל. וְגַם עֲכָשְׁיוֹ שְׁתַּלְמוּד גָּדוֹל, הַטַּעַם לָזֶה הוּא לְפִי שְׁתַּלְמוּד מְבִיא לְיָדֵי מַעֲשֵׂה, דְּמִזֶּה מוֹכַח שֶׁהַעֲיָקָר הוּא הַמַּעֲשֵׂה.

The reason that in the future action will specifically be greater is that in the superiority of action over study there are two general aspects, corresponding to the two aspects explained earlier regarding the superiority of the faculty of action over the other faculties.

וְזֶה שְׁלֵעֵתִיד לְבוֹא דְּוָקָא יִהְיֶה מַעֲשֵׂה גָדוֹל הוּא כִּי בְּמַעֲלַת הַמַּעֲשֵׂה עַל תַּלְמוּד שְׁנֵי עֲנִינִים בְּכָלְלוֹת, דְּוָגַמְת שְׁנֵי הַעֲנִינִים דְּלַעֲיֵל בְּהַמַּעֲלָה דְּכַחַּ הַמַּעֲשֵׂה לְגַבֵּי שְׂאָר הַכַּחוֹת.

First, action arouses and draws down the Infinite Light that is above enclotement in wisdom, which is study, and therefore the drawing down effected through action reaches lower.

זֶה שֶׁהַמַּעֲשֵׂה מְעוֹרֵר וּמְמַשִּׁיף אֶת אוֹר הַבְּלִי גְבוּל שְׁלֵמַעֲלָה מֵהַתְּלַבְּשׁוֹת בְּחֻכְמָה תַּלְמוּד, שְׁלֵכֵן הַהִמְשָׁכָה שֶׁעַל יָדֵי הַמַּעֲשֵׂה הִיא לְמַטָּה יוֹתֵר.

Second, action reaches the essential concealment, which is higher even than the Infinite Light.

וְזֶה שֶׁהַמַּעֲשֵׂה מְגִיעַ בְּהַעֲלָם הַעֲצָמִי, שְׁלֵמַעֲלָה גַם מֵאוֹר הַבְּלִי גְבוּל.

It may be said that the present superiority of action is that through action the Infinite Light is drawn down, completing the aspect of revelations. This is the meaning of the statement that study is great because it leads to action, for this advantage of action is included within the greatness of study.

וְיֵשׁ לוֹמֵר, דְּמַעֲלַת הַמַּעֲשֵׂה עֲכָשְׁיוֹ, שְׁגַם עֲכָשְׁיוֹ הַעֲיָקָר הוּא הַמַּעֲשֵׂה וְהַגְּדֻלוֹת דְּתַלְמוּד הוּא שְׁמִבִּיא לְיָדֵי מַעֲשֵׂה, הוּא זֶה שֶׁעַל יָדֵי הַמַּעֲשֵׂה הוּא הַמְּשַׁכֵּת אוֹר הַבְּלִי גְבוּל, שְׁלֵמִיּוֹת בְּעֵנִן הַגִּילּוּיִים.

The greatness of study lies in that its drawing down comes in a manner that leads to action, bringing the flow lower, because the Infinite Light is drawn into it, which then descends and results in action.

וְזֶהוּ גָדוֹל תַּלְמוּד שְׁמִבִּיא לְיָדֵי מַעֲשֵׂה, שְׁמַעֲלָה זֶה דְּמַעֲשֵׂה נִכְלָלָת בְּהַגְּדֻלוֹת דְּתַלְמוּד, דְּזֶה שֶׁהַהִמְשָׁכָה דְּתַלְמוּד הִיא בְּאוֹפֵן שְׁמִבִּיאָה לְמַעֲשֵׂה, שֶׁהַהִמְשָׁכָה בְּאֵה לְמַטָּה, הוּא הַגְּדֻלוֹת דְּתַלְמוּד.

In the future, the superiority will be the elevation of action itself, which reaches the essential concealment that is above all revelations.

וְזֶה שְׁלֵעֵתִיד לְבוֹא יִהְיֶה מַעֲשֵׂה גָדוֹל הוּא הַעֲיָלוּי דְּהַמַּעֲשֵׂה עֲצָמוֹ, שְׁמִגִּיעַ בְּהַעֲלָם הַעֲצָמִי שְׁלֵמַעֲלָה מֵהַגִּילּוּיִים.

(1)

It is known that on Chanukah, after the strengthening of the darkness of the Greeks, there was a loftier drawing down than the one that existed in the Temple previously.

וְהַנֵּה יְדוּעַ שְׁבַח־חֲנוּכָה, לְאַחֲרֵי הַתְּגַבְּרוֹת הַחוּשָׁף דְּהַיְיֻנִים, הִיָּתָה הַמְּשַׁכָּה נְעֻלִית יוֹתֵר מִהַהִמְשָׁכָה שֶׁהָיָה בְּבֵית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ לְפָנָי זֶה.

The Rebbe

בסייעתא דשמיא. מוצאי שבת קדש פְּרַשַׁת מִקֵּץ, ליל זאת חנוכה, ה'תשמ"ו

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With regard to the earlier drawing down, it was possible for the darkness of the Greeks to overpower. The drawing down of Chanukah, however, is from the Divine Name above, beyond the chain of descent.

דלגבי ההמשכה שהיתה לפני זה היה אפשר להיות התגברות החושף דהינונים, וההמשכה דחנוכה היא מהנויא דלעילא שלמעלה מהשפלתלות.

This light illuminates even the darkness, as it is written, “and the Divine Name will illuminate my darkness” (Psalms 18:29), such that the darkness itself shines, similar to the revelation of the future.

ואור זה מאיר גם את החושף, והנויא יגיה חשכי שהחושף עצמו מאיר, בְּדוּגְמַת, (Tehillim 18:29), הגילוי דלעתיד לבוא.

On this basis, the difference between the eighth day of Chanukah and the eighth day of the inauguration can be explained.

ועל פי זה יש לבאר החלוק בין יום השמיני דחנוכה ליום השמיני למלואים.

The eighth of the inauguration being in kingship, the eighth below the seven, means that the drawing down from above extends until kingship.

דזה ששמיני למלואים הוא במלכות שמיני שלמטה משבעה, הוא שההמשכה מלמעלה נמשכת עד המלכות.

The eighth of Chanukah being in kingship means that through the Chanukah drawing down, an elevation occurs in kingship itself.

ונהי ששמיני דחנוכה הוא במלכות הוא שעל ידי ההמשכה דחנוכה נעשית עליה במלכות עצמה.

Therefore, in discourses explaining the eight days of the inauguration, both interpretations of the eighth are cited, above the seven and below the seven.

ונהי שבהדרושים שמבארים ענין שמונת ימי המלואים מובאים שני הפירושים דשמיני, שהוא למעלה משבעה ושהוא למטה משבעה.

In the discourse explaining the eighth of Chanukah, however, only the interpretation of the eighth being below the seven is cited.

ובדרוש הנ"ל שמבאר ענין שמיני דחנוכה מובא רק הפירוש ששמיני הוא למטה משבעה.

The reason is that drawing down from above to below is due to the superiority of the root of the drawing down, the eighth above the seven, similar to the present advantage of action.

כי זה שההמשכה שלמעלה נמשכת גם למטה, שמיני למלואים, הוא מצד המעלה דשרש ההמשכה, שמיני שלמעלה משבעה.

The power for refinement and elevation of the below itself, the eighth of Chanukah, comes from the essential concealment above the root of revelation, similar to the future greatness of action.

והכח שיהיה זכוף ועליה במטה עצמו, שמיני דחנוכה, הוא מהעלם העצמי שלמעלה משרש הגילוי.

Therefore, the emphasis of the eighth day of Chanukah is that it is in kingship, which is why it is called Zot Chanukah, the concept of refining the below.

ולכן ההדגשה של יום השמיני דחנוכה היא שהוא במלכות, שלכן נקרא בשם זאת חנוכה, הענין דזכוף המטה.

(ז)

This matter, that in the future action will be great, was revealed specifically in the later generations, as with all matters of the teaching of Chassidut.

והנה ענין זה שלעתיד לבוא יהיה מעשה גדול נתגלה, ככל הענינים דתורת התסידות, בדורות האחרונים דוקא.

The Rebbe

בסייעתא דשמיא. מוצאי שבת קדש פרישת מקץ, ליל זאת חנוכה, ה'תשמ"ו

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The reason this was revealed to us, even though the present halachah is that study is greater, is because all the future revelations depend on our deeds and service now.

והטעם שגלו לנו זה, אף שעכשיו ההלכה היא שתלמוד גדול, הוא, כי כל הגילויים דלעתיד תלויים במעשינו ועבודתינו עכשיו.

That in the future action will be great comes through effort and alacrity in action now, and therefore in the era of the footsteps of Mashiach this was revealed to arouse greater diligence in action.

ונה שלעתיד לבוא יהיה מעשה גדול הוא על ידי ההשתדלות והזירוז בענין המעשה עכשיו. ולכן בדרך דעקבתא דמשיחא גלו שלעתיד לבוא יהיה מעשה גדול.

Since in the future action will be great, it is understood that all matters of the future redemption, and certainly the redemption itself, must be in actual deed.

וכיון שלעתיד לבוא יהיה מעשה גדול, הרי מובן, שכל הענינים דגאולה העתידה, ומכל שכן הגאולה עצמה, צריכים להיות במעשה בפועל.

As long as the redemption has not yet occurred in actuality, the essential element is lacking. This is illustrated by the well known account of the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash.

וכל זמן שהגאולה לא ישנה עדיין בפועל, קסר העיקר. וכספיר הידוע דהצמח צדק ואדמו"ר מהר"ש.

When the Tzemach Tzedek spoke of the end that was to be in the year five thousand six hundred eight [1847–1848], fulfilled through the publication of Likkutei Torah, the Rebbe Maharash responded that Mashiach must be brought below ten handbreadths.

שכשאמר הצמח צדק בנוגע להקץ שהיה על שנת תרמ"ק שנה נתקיים על ידי הלקוטי תורה, ענה אדמו"ר מהר"ש מען דארף האבן משיחן למטה מעשרה טפחים.

It may be said that the Tzemach Tzedek emphasized the printing of Likkutei Torah because “your wellsprings shall spread outward” (Proverbs 5:16), through which “then the Master, the King Mashiach, will come” (Zohar).

ויש לומר, דזה שאמר הצמח צדק שנדפס הלקוטי תורה הוא, כי על ידי יפוצו מעינותיה חוצה נעשה אתי מר דא מלפא משיחא (Proverbs 5:16) (Zohar).

Since the inner dimension of Torah is above the limitation of time, when the wellsprings are spread, the cause and the effect occur immediately.

וכיון שפנימיות התורה מעינותיה היא למעלה מהגבלת הזמן, הרי מובן, דכשישנה הפצת המעניות, ישנו מייד גם המסובב.

In matters bounded by time, cause and effect follow sequentially, whether swiftly, “He sends forth His word, it runs very quickly” (Psalms 147:15), through “I will hasten it” or “in its time” (Isaiah 60:22).

דבענינים שהם בגדר זמן, הסיבה והמסובב הם באופן דקדימה ואחור, עד מהרה ירוץ דברו באופן דאחישנה ובאופן (Psalms 147:15) (Isaiah 60:22).

In matters above time there is no interval; when the cause exists, the effect exists immediately.

אבל בענינים שלמעלה מגדר זמן, אין שיעור שיהיה הפסק בין הסיבה והמסובב, וכשישנה הסיבה ישנו תיכף ומיד גם המסובב.

The completeness is that the spreading of the wellsprings and the coming of Mashiach extend into time and place, in actual deed below ten handbreadths.

אלא שהשלימות דהפצת המעניות וביאת המשיח הוא שיומשכו בזמן ומקום, ובמעשה בפועל למטה מעשרה טפחים.

The Rebbe

בְּסִיעָתָא דְשָׁמַיָא. מוֹצָאֵי שַׁבַּת קֹדֶשׁ פְּרִשְׁת מִקֶּזֶן, לַיְל זֹאת חֲנוּכָה, ה'תשמ"ו

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Simply put, through our deeds and service in spreading the wellsprings outward in actual action, the King Mashiach will come in actual deed.

וּבְפִשְׁטוּת, שְׁעַל יְדֵי מַעֲשֵׂינוּ וְעִבּוּדֵינוּ בְּהַפְצַת הַמַּעֲיָנוֹת חוֹצָה בְּמַעֲשֵׂה בְּפוּעַל, עַל יְדֵי זֶה אֵתִי מֵרָדָא מִלְכָּא מְשִׁיחָא בְּמַעֲשֵׂה בְּפוּעַל.

Since waiting for Mashiach is a halachic requirement, meaning actual fulfillment in deed, therefore with the agreement of the entire community, we want Mashiach now, speedily in our days.

וְכִיּוֹן דְּזֵה שְׁצָרִיךְ לְחַפּוֹת לְבִיאַת הַמְּשִׁיחַ הוּא הַלְכָה, לְכֹן בְּהַסְכֵּם כָּל הַקְּהָל וּוִי וְוֹאנָט מְשִׁיחַ נָאוּ, בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ מִמֶּשׁ.

[NOTE Summary:

The maamar opens by establishing that the eight days of Chanukah parallel the eight days of the milu'im, the inaugural days of the Mishkan. Just as the eighth day of the milu'im stands apart from the preceding seven, so too the eighth day of Chanukah possesses a distinct identity, known as Zot Chanukah. This distinction is reflected in the Torah reading, which is significantly expanded on the eighth day, indicating its superior spiritual quality.

The Rebbe explains that the concept of “eighth” contains two dimensions. On one level, eight signifies what is above seven. Seven corresponds to the seven emotional attributes, while eight represents a higher plane, identified with binah or even chochmah. On another level, eight signifies malchut, the lowest sefirah, which receives and actualizes the flow of the higher attributes. These two interpretations also appear with regard to the eighth day of the milu'im.

The resolution is that in order for divine flow to reach malchut, which is below the seven attributes, it must originate from a source that is above the seven. Thus, the higher eighth enables the lower eighth. Applied to Chanukah, although the eighth day is identified with malchut, its capacity to elevate malchut derives from a source that transcends the entire chain of spiritual worlds.

The maamar then develops the central theme of ma'aseh, action. Action is the lowest faculty of the soul, paralleling malchut, yet it possesses a root higher than all other faculties. Through action, all other faculties are elevated, just as lifting an object from its base raises the entire structure. Elevation that bypasses the lowest level remains incomplete. Moreover, action enables a greater elevation of the higher faculties, similar to a scale in which lowering one side causes the other to rise higher.

Two fundamental reasons explain the superiority of action. First, intellect and emotion can only be drawn into action because they are animated by the essence of the soul, which transcends all faculties. Second, the faculty of action itself is rooted in the essence of the soul, whereas intellect and emotion emerge from its revealed dimensions.

This principle applies directly to Torah and mitzvot. Although study is presently considered greater, this is only because it leads to action. In essence, action is primary. In the future, action itself will be openly revealed as

The Rebbe

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greater, because action draws down the Infinite Light beyond intellectual comprehension and even reaches the essential concealment that transcends revelation altogether.

Chanukah exemplifies this dynamic. After the intensification of spiritual darkness under Greek oppression, the divine flow revealed on Chanukah was higher than what existed previously in the Temple. This light originates beyond the chain of worlds and has the power not merely to dispel darkness but to transform it so that the darkness itself shines. This anticipates the revelation of the future redemption.

Accordingly, the difference between the eighth day of the milu'im and the eighth day of Chanukah is clarified. In the milu'im, the eighth signifies that divine flow reaches malchut. In Chanukah, the eighth signifies that malchut itself is elevated and refined. For this reason, discourses on the milu'im emphasize both meanings of eight, while the eighth of Chanukah is defined primarily as the eighth below seven, focusing on the refinement of the lowest realm.

Finally, the Rebbe explains that the future state in which action is revealed as supreme has already been disclosed in the later generations, particularly in the era preceding Mashiach. All future revelations depend on our actions now. Therefore, the emphasis on action is meant to arouse greater diligence and urgency in practical deeds.

The well-known exchange between the Tzemach Tzedek and Rabbi Shmuel of Lubavitch illustrates this point. Although the spreading of Chassidic teachings fulfills a crucial condition for redemption, Mashiach must be brought into concrete reality, below ten handbreadths, through actual action. Even matters that transcend time must ultimately be drawn into time, space, and tangible reality.

Thus, waiting for Mashiach is not merely belief but a halachic obligation expressed through concrete action. The ultimate fulfillment of the spreading of the wellsprings and the coming of Mashiach occurs only when they are realized in actual deeds in this physical world.

Practical Takeaway:

The core teaching of the maamar is that the ultimate purpose of divine service is not spiritual experience alone but concrete action that refines and elevates the lowest levels of reality. Every mitzvah performed in action has the power to draw down transcendent divine light and to transform darkness itself into light. Especially in the final generation before redemption, the emphasis must be on urgency, diligence, and practical implementation. Through tangible deeds, the inner teachings of Torah are brought into the world in a way that prepares and actualizes the coming of Mashiach.

Chassidic Story:

Rabbi Shmuel of Lubavitch once responded to his father, the Tzemach Tzedek, who pointed to the printing of Likkutei Torah as a sign of the approaching redemption. Rabbi Shmuel replied that it is not enough for

The Rebbe

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Mashiach to exist in lofty realms; Mashiach must be brought below ten handbreadths, into concrete reality. This exchange encapsulates the message of Zot Chanukah. Spiritual illumination alone is insufficient. The goal is that divine truth be realized in the physical world itself, through action that transforms reality and hastens the redemption.

TPX: Zot Chanukah and the Psychology of Action

Reframing the Core Theme

At the heart of this maamar, the Rebbe is not making a technical statement about mitzvot versus learning. He is describing a deep psychological and spiritual truth about how human beings actually change. Insight alone does not transform a person. Emotion alone does not transform a person. Real change happens only when something moves into action.

In therapeutic language, we might say: awareness is necessary but not sufficient. Understanding patterns, naming emotions, and gaining insight are crucial stages, but healing stabilizes only when insight is translated into behavior. Without that step, growth remains abstract and fragile.

Zot Chanukah, the eighth day, represents that moment where everything finally lands in lived reality.

The Eighth Day as Psychological Grounding

The Rebbe explains that “eight” has two meanings. One meaning is transcendence, going beyond the system. The other meaning is malchut, the lowest level, where things actually happen.

Psychologically, this maps onto a familiar experience. Breakthroughs often feel transcendent. A person may suddenly see their life clearly, understand a long-standing pattern, or feel a powerful emotional release. But the real test comes afterward: does this insight change how they speak, decide, show up, and act?

Chanukah’s eighth day emphasizes the second meaning. The breakthrough must enter the most concrete layer of life. If it does not, it fades. Zot Chanukah is the day that asks: what does this illumination change in practice?

Why Action Heals What Insight Cannot

The Rebbe’s teaching that action has a higher root than intellect sounds paradoxical, but it aligns closely with modern therapeutic understanding.

Thoughts and emotions are limited systems. They loop. They rationalize. They get stuck. Action, however, engages the whole self. When a person acts differently, even before they fully feel ready, the nervous system reorganizes around that behavior.

The Rebbe

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This is why behavioral shifts often precede emotional healing rather than follow it. A person who begins setting boundaries may still feel anxious or guilty, but the action itself creates a new internal reality. Over time, emotions catch up.

The Rebbe's metaphor of lifting from the bottom is precise. If you try to lift a structure from the middle, the lower parts stay stuck. When you lift from the base, everything rises. Action is that base.

Darkness That Can Be Transformed

Chanukah occurs after darkness intensifies. The Rebbe emphasizes that the light revealed then does not merely overpower darkness but transforms it so that the darkness itself begins to shine.

Psychologically, this speaks to parts of the self we often label as problems: resistance, fear, avoidance, even destructive habits. Many therapeutic approaches aim to suppress or eliminate these parts. The Rebbe is suggesting something more radical.

When action is rooted in something deeper than fear or self-judgment, even the darkest parts can be repurposed. Fear becomes caution. Resistance becomes discernment. Pain becomes sensitivity. The darkness does not disappear. It becomes integrated.

This mirrors contemporary parts-based therapy models, which see symptoms not as enemies but as protectors carrying distorted forms of strength.

Why This Teaching Emerges Near the End

The Rebbe notes that the teaching that action will ultimately be revealed as supreme emerges specifically in the later generations. This is psychologically intuitive.

Earlier stages of development focus on structure, learning, and internalization. Later stages focus on embodiment. A person who has spent years learning, reflecting, and growing eventually faces a simpler but harder question: what are you doing with all of this?

In the language of therapy, this is the shift from insight-oriented work to integration. The Rebbe is telling us that we are living in a time when integration is the primary task.

Mashiach as Lived Reality

The Rebbe's insistence that Mashiach must come "below ten handbreadths" is not only a theological claim. It is a statement about mental health and wholeness.

The Rebbe

בְּסִיעֵתָא דְשָׁמַיָא. מוֹצָאֵי שַׁבַּת קֹדֶשׁ פְּרִשְׁת מִקֶּזֶן, לַיִל זֹאת חֲנוּכָה, ה'תשמ"ו

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Redemption that exists only as belief, hope, or inspiration is incomplete. Healing that exists only as understanding is incomplete. Completion happens when ideals become behaviors, values become habits, and insight becomes embodiment.

Waiting itself becomes an action. Expectation becomes a lived stance. Hope becomes practice.

Modern Story

A therapist once worked with a man who deeply understood his childhood trauma. He could articulate his patterns with precision. He knew why he avoided intimacy and why he overworked. But nothing changed.

At one session, the therapist asked him to choose one small action: sending a single honest message to someone he trusted. He resisted. It felt insignificant. It felt terrifying.

He did it anyway.

That message did not fix his life. But it reorganized it. Something shifted internally. The fear did not vanish, but it loosened. Over time, other actions followed. Healing began not when he understood more, but when he acted differently.

That is Zot Chanukah.

Integrated Takeaway

Zot Chanukah teaches that the deepest light is not found in insight, emotion, or transcendence alone. It is found where those elements are translated into concrete action.

In therapeutic terms, healing is not complete until it is embodied. In spiritual terms, redemption is not complete until it enters physical reality.

The question Zot Chanukah asks is simple and demanding: given everything you understand and feel, what are you doing differently?

That is where the light finally arrives.

END NOTE]