



The Birthday Campaign Part I: A Time for Self-Improvement

25 Adar, 5748-1988

Here is a suggestion that would be of great merit for the soul. For her soul and her ascent the following custom should be established:

Jews should begin to celebrate the occasion of their birthday.

Although in previous generations this was observed only by extraordinary individuals and in a discreet manner, as related by my father-in-law, the Rebbe

– nevertheless he revealed this custom publicly, causing it to be widely known.

The greatest evidence of this is how the custom has in fact become more widespread, gaining and increasing in its tangible spiritual effect.

As mentioned many times, and as the Rebbe said: the point of a birthday, similar to the period after a person passes on, is that “the living should take it to heart.”

One makes an accounting. Another year has passed; a new year is commencing. One takes stock of the past to make up for any shortcomings. And, if there is no shortcoming, then to increase, materially and spiritually, in quality or in quantity, in the upcoming year.

On that day particularly one receives added strength, for on a birthday “one’s ‘mazel’ (‘fortune’) prevails.”

It is referred to as “mazel,” as Torah explains, since the blessings “flow down,” as in the expression, “my utterance flowed.” They come down into the person and express themselves in concrete action.

This, then, is the above-mentioned suggestion; from now on it is most appropriate. And those who already do so, should broaden it:

On an adult’s birthday and, more so, on children’s and even infants’ birthdays, it should be explained – among the parents themselves and their circle, and to the children in words they can comprehend,



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that since they have become a year older, it is understood that they must mature in the spiritual matters which, automatically, affect their physical growth.

For every Jew's material existence derives from his spiritual life: "They make their souls primary and their bodies secondary." This applies to all Jews, "Your people, who are all righteous."

And one should reflect on the year that passed, and this should become the basis, the foundation, for new growth — ascending from one level to the next, beyond boundaries, in all matters of good and holiness.

And as mentioned, since "one's fortune prevails" on a birthday, this relates to every person born, even to infants. When they reach the age of understanding, these concepts can certainly be explained in words they comprehend.

The main point: this should also result in concrete action, increasing their good deeds, their good conduct — bringing true nachas to their parents, to the entire Jewish nation and, so to speak, to God Himself.

And to "explain" to oneself in private contemplation that he has become one year older, so he must certainly become a year wiser, and certainly a year more observant, more connected to the Almighty.

This is the point of the proposal —

although there are those who will object that they didn't do so until now. But we see that when there is an increase in negative matters, certainly there must be an increase in positive matters.

For the whole reason behind a negative occurrence is to inspire us to increase desirous matters, and as mentioned, in a manner beyond comparison.

And as said: to contemplate oneself on his birthday.

