Many of the teachings of the Ba’al Shem Tov come to us through the following paths:

- **R. Ya’akov Yosef of Polnoye** (Ukraine, 1710-1784):
  - *Toledot Ya’akov Yosef* (Korets, 1760)
  - *Ben Porat Yosef* (Korets, 1781)
  - *Tzafnat Pa’aneach* (Korets, 1782)
  - *Ketonet Pasim* (Lvov, 1861)

- **R. Moshe Efraim of Sudilkov** (Medzhibozh, 1748-1800):
  - *Degel Machane Efraim* (Korets, 1809)

- **R. Aryeh b. Tzvi Hirsch of Apt** (compiler)
  - *Keter Shem Tov* (Zalkevo, 1794?)

- **R. Yeshava of Yanov** (compiler)
  - *Tzava’at ha-Rivash* (1793)

- **R. Dov Ber, Maggid of Mezeritch** (Poland, 1704-1772)
  - *Maggid Devarav le-Ya’akov* (Korets, 1781)

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10 The famous Korets *beit defus*, or press was established in 1776 by R. Tzvi Hirsch and his son in law R. Shmuel Segal. It was active until 1781, having printed roughly 20 books in total. The scholar of Hasidism, Glenn Dynner, writes in his *Men of Silk* (Oxford, 2006), p. 331 fn. 35:

> "...no truly Hasidic printing presses existed in the Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania during the period up to 1837, with the exception of the Bratslav press... In Korzec, the source of so many Hasidic books, he finds that printers were usually Mitnaggedim, Maskilim, or Christian."

11 עליית הנשמה של תלת אבות עמנו 2499 שנה. דודה לאינו של כלם. ובראשנו של כלם, כך כותב הרב פורת. ובראשנו של כלם.

12 נזכרת ומעשית авиים של תלמידי הבעש״ט ושומעי לקחו. בספר בן פורת יוסף נדפס אגרת בו מוזכר "שמעתי ממורי" כעליית הנשמה של הבעש״ט הראשונה. קיימת עדות שנשרף ס׳ התולדות יחד עם צוואת הריב״ש בעיצומיו של התנגדות.
A brief word of introduction from R. Schnuer Zalman of Liadi, Admor ha-Zaken of Chabad (1745-1812) in his Likkutei Amarim: Tanya (Iggeret ha-Kodesh sec. 25):  

❖ An Overview ❖

1. **Deveikut**: The central theme of Tzava‘at ha-Rivash, and ultimate of Chassidism’s religious values.

2. **Prayer**: The most frequently mentioned concept in Tzava‘at ha-Rivash, for prayer is the most direct and common occasion for Deveikut. In our times, the primary service of God is through prayer, though Torah study is in principle superior to worship. (Peri Etz Chayyim, Sha’ar ha-Tefillah)

3. **Torah Study**: The emphasis on Deveikut and prayer is not to belittle the significance and central role of Torah study. Failure to study Torah is a principal cause of all spiritual defects. Even so, one must be aware that this is God’s Torah, and ‘before whom you are learning.’ (no. 54)

4. **Mitzvot**: Emphasis on “Lishma”, eliminating all ulterior motives in Mitzvah performance - material or spiritual. At the very least can be realized in part through the “via negativa”.

5. **Joy**: In short, He “wants you to be happy, don’t live inside the gloom.” Categorical rejection of sadness and melancholy, for these are barriers to the service of God.

6. **Religious Ethics in Daily Life**: Service of God is not limited to rituals like Torah, Mitzvot, Prayer.

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13 The Mitnagged Avigdor of Pinsk cited Tzava‘at ha-Rivash multiple times in his attack on Chassidut, and specifically the Admor ha-Zaken. Two depositions were given, one to the Tsarist authorities, and one directly to the Admor ha-Zaken. To say there were distortions is beyond mentioning. The Admor ha-Zaken’s response eventually vindicated Chassidut and himself in the eyes of the authorities and he was subsequently released from prison. After discovery, Chabad has reprinted and published them.

14 ראו ספרות רח”ר (וקמן): "אמר: אנא מפרש鼬יך שישווע מהתורות המפליות...אך אני יודעplementation אותר...ותרדייל לאכול...שנה הולך וולך. שיעום ובליון ילקט(אלא)."تسجيلו של מחמודי בודא לתשלית שלוש על הפרות זכויות של ההרしまי הלכות וההלכות של כל התורה..."אמר: אנא מפרש鼬יך שישווע מהתורות המפליות...אך אני יודעplementation אותר...ותרדייל לאכול...שנה הולך וולך. שיעום ובליון ילקט(אלא)."

15 על פי שבתיה הרח”ר (ב): "אמר: אני מפרש鼬יך שישווע מהתורות המפליות...אך אני יודעplementation אותר...ותרדייל לאכול...שנה הולך וולך. שיעום ובליון ילקט(אלא)."

16 Besht: The Light from the Forest
Serve God simply, and simply serve God. Treat every Mitzvah as a sacred opportunity to draw light into this world.

With our minds focused on God at all times, all times - good or bad - shall not shift our focus on God. The secret of equanimity and inner peace. Recognize all is from God.

...
Despite our natural inclination, we do not serve God on our terms. Often, Hakadosh Baruch Hu is זֶרֶךְ עַבְרֵי נַפְשֵׁנוֹ. This is an invitation to “know God in all our ways” and eventually we shall merit to “know God in all His ways” too.

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19 “In the books of R. Israel Baal Shem is written that it is forbidden to bring depression upon oneself. In truth, if that had been the sole content of his books, [they] would already deserve to be cast unto fire to be condemned to burning.” from Zemir Aritzim (Olexiniec, 1772), cited in R. Schochet’s introduction.
Sometimes, the Yetzer Hara tricks a person by telling them they’ve committed a great sin, even though it was only a mere stringency, or not even a sin at all. The intent of the Yetzer Hara is to make a person sad because of this, and therefore they’ll eventually neglect serving Hashem because of their sadness.

A person must be wise to this trickery, and should tell the Yetzer Hara -

“I am not going to pay attention to that stringency you’re pointing out to me, because your intentions are to get me to stop serving my creator, you speak lies! And even if it was actually a bit of a sin, it is still more pleasing to my creator that I pay no attention now to your distractions, for you are only trying to make me depressed in my service of Hashem. On the contrary - I shall serve Hashem with joy, for this is the general rule: my intention is not to serve Hashem for my own purposes, but rather only to please Hashem. If so, even if I disregard this stringency, I know my creator will not take issue with me, because the whole reason I am disregarding it is because I do not want to stop serving Hashem, how could I, even for a moment.”

And this is a great rule in serving Hashem – to guard yourself as much as possible from any sadness and depression.