THE SLAGER EDITION

The

PRACTICAL TANYA

PART ONE

THE BOOK FOR INBETWEENERS

R' SHNEUR ZALMAN of LIADI

ADAPTED BY

CHAIM MILLER

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בס"ד

משה וואלפסאן
משגיח רוחני, ישיבה תורה ודעת
ורב דביהמ"ד אמונת ישראל

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בס"ד
כ' כסלו תשע"ז

בא לפני הרב חיים מילר שליט"א, מחבר ספרים רבים וזשובים, ובידו ספרו החדש The Practical Tanya, ובו הפליא לעשות תרגום ופירוש לספר הקדוש ליקוטי אמרים תניא בשפת המדינה, בלשון קצרה ומתקבלת, למען יוכל כל מבקש השם להבין ולהשכיל בספר הקדוש הזה, גם אם אינו רגיל לקרוא בלשון הקודש ואינו בקי ביסודות העמוקים של התניא, עד שיוכל כל יהודי לטעום את האור כי טוב. וגם שם דגש מיוחד לבאר את דברי התניא למעשה באופן שיוכל כל אחד ואחד לעבוד את השם על דרך החסידות על פי העצות המבוארות בספר התניא, שהוא עיקר מטרת הספר.

לכן אצרף את ברכתי שיזכה הרב המחבר שיחי' לקרב את ליבות ישראל לאביהן שבשמים ויזכה לחבר עוד ספרים רבים מועילים לזכות את הרבים ולקרבם לה' ונזכה לראות בישועת ישראל.

בברכת התורה

משה וואלפסאן

ISBN-13: 978-1-934152-37-9 | ISBN-10: 1-934152-37-4

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www.kolmenachem.com | orders@kolmenachem.com

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First Edition — 2016; Second Edition — 2017.

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בס"ד

י"ט כסלו תשע"ז

בואו ונחזיק טובה לכבוד הרה"ח, המזכה את הרבים, נועם הליכות, איש חי רב פעלים, מו"ה **מאיר הכהן גוטניק** נ"ו אשר זכה לזכות את הרבים בחומש עם פירוש רש"י עם שפת המדינה שנתקבל בחיבה והערצה אצל אחב"י שאינם יודעים לשון הקודש.

וכעת הולך מחיל אל חיל לתרגם ולבאר ספר הקדוש לקוטי אמרים תניא, שמיוסד להשקות צמאי הסדיך ולטהר את הנשמה. אשר בדורות האחרונים רואין בעליל גודל תועלת וההשפעה של לימוד התניא. לכן מה טוב ומה יפה לבאר היטב את דבריו הקדושים כדי שכל אחד יוכל להגיע ולהנות מאורו הגדול והקדוש, ובודאי יתרבו לומדי הספה"ק ויתוסף דעת דקדושה, ויתגדל ויתקדש שמיה רבא.

ובזכות הפצת תניא קדישא יתקיים הבטחת משיח צדקנו שהשיב לשאלת לאור שבעת הימים מרן הבעש"ט זי"ע אימתי קאתי מר, וענהו "לכשיפיצו מעיינותיך חוצה".

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TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

THE TANYA'S AUTHOR — RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN OF LIADI

Rabbi Shneur Zalman Baruchovitch[1] was born in 1745 in the small town of Liozna (Liozno), Belarus, to Rivkah and Baruch, a descendant of Rabbi Yehudah Loew (Maharal) of Prague (d. 1609). At the age of fifteen he moved to the neighboring city of Vitebsk and married Sterna Segal, the daughter of a local businessman. He showed exceptional intellectual talents[2] and, at around the age of twenty, was attracted to Chasidism.[3] For a number of years, he attended the court of Rabbi Dov Ber Friedman ("the Maggid," 1704–1772 of Mezritch/Mezhirichi, Ukraine),[4] accepting him as spiritual men-

1. The life of Rabbi Shneur Zalman is discussed in several biographical works: Chaim Meir Heilman, *Beis Rebbi: Toldos Admor Ha-Zaken Ba'al Ha-Tanya* (Berditchev, 1802); Mordechai Teitelbaum, *Ha-Rav Mi-Liadi Umifleget Chabad,* 2 vols. (Warsaw, 1909/10–1912/13); Nissan Mindel, *Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, A Biography* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 1969, fifth printing 2002); Rabbi Avraham Chanoch Glitzenstein, *Sefer Ha-Toldos Rabbi Shneur Zalman Mi-Liadi,* 4 vols. (Kfar Chabad: Kehos, 1986); Naftali Loewenthal, *Communicating the Infinite: The Emergence of the Habad School* (Chicago University Press, 1990), chapters 2-3; Rabbi Shalom Avzton, *The Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi* (Brooklyn, 2005); Rabbi Shalom Ber Levin, *Toldos Chabad Be-Russia Ha-Tzaris* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 2010), chapters 1-34; Rabbi Avraham Vaisfiche (trans.), *Events in the Life of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi from the Diary of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 2014); *Toldos Rabenu* in Rabbi Moshe Yehudah Kroll *et. al, Sefer Likutei Amarim Tanya* (Bnei Brak: Pe'er Mikdashim, 2014), pp. 29-81. For a critical, academic biography see: Immanuel Etkes, *Ba'al Ha-Tanya: Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liady and the Origins of Habad Hasidism* (Brandeis University Press, 2015). Etkes reconstructs a historical narrative based on available documents and is dismissive of Chabad internal traditions.
2. "At the age of eighteen, he completed the study of the *Talmud* with its major commentaries" (Introduction of Rabbi Shneur Zalman's sons to *Shulchan Aruch Ha-Rav*, Shklov, 1814; Kehos 2001 edition, p. 8). Apparently, for the next fifteen years he reviewed the entire *Talmud* at least once a year since, "we heard from his holy mouth that while he was residing in the community of Mogilev on the Dnieper river [in 1777], he reviewed the *Talmud* for the sixteenth time" (*ibid.* p. 10 and note 22).
3. *Ibid*. See also written testimony of Rabbi Shneur Zalman in Rabbi Shalom Ber Levin (ed.), *Igros Kodesh Admor Ha-Zaken* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 2012), p. 221.
4. The foremost Chasidic leader after the death of the *Ba'al Shem Tov* in 1760.

tor and master. The Maggid, at the time, was in the last few years of his life, and Rabbi Shneur Zalman was one of his youngest disciples. Nevertheless, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, "was extremely precious, to no limits, in the eyes of our master [the Maggid], who would praise him greatly, all the time."[5]

Rabbi Shneur Zalman was only twenty-six when the Maggid assigned him the mammoth task of completely re-codifying the *Shulchan Aruch* (Code of Jewish Law), incorporating all the major commentaries that had appeared since the book's publication, two centuries earlier.[6] While this would become Rabbi Shneur Zalman's life-long task, a significant portion of the work was completed already in 1772-3.[7]

The Maggid also assigned his own son, Rabbi Avraham, to be a personal tutor to Rabbi Shneur Zalman in Chasidic thought. This would prove to be a significant influence, as Rabbi Shneur Zalman later wrote that "my Chasidic teachings are sayings uttered by the holy mouth of our great Rabbi [the Maggid] o.b.m, *and his son*, *o.b.m.,* of Mezritch" (emphasis added).[8]

Rabbi Shneur Zalman's outstanding mastery of the Talmudic literature positioned him, even at an early age, in an important role of defending attacks on the Chasidic movement from Rabbinic authorities, which escalated sharply in this period and continued for the next thirty years. The Chasidism of the *Ba'al Shem Tov* and the Magid had originated in Podolia, in South-East Poland, a region which was ripe with Sabbatianism, Frankism

5. 1805 Letter of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev in Levin, *Igros Kodesh,* p. 508.

6. For a list of commentaries incorporated by Rabbi Shneur Zalman in his *Shulchan Aruch* see Kehos 2001 edition, p. 9n15.

7. Levin, *Toldos Chabad* chapters 15-19. The *Shulchan Aruch Ha-Rav,* as the work later became known, was published posthumously by Rabbi Shneur Zalman's sons in 1814-16. The work is incomplete since the author's original manuscript was destroyed in the 1810 fire in Liadi, and a complete copy had not been made. Small sections of the work were published in the author's lifetime on Torah Study (1794) and Blessings on Pleasurable Acts (1800). In one responsum, Rabbi Shneur Zalman refers directly to his consultation with the Maggid in matters of Jewish law: "This legal analysis (*pilpul*)... is from the summer of 1772 when I was in the home of our great Rabbi and master, the famous Gaon, Rabbi Dov Ber, in the Jewish community of Rovno, and he gave his sacred approval to me in this matter" (Rabbi Shalom Ber Levin (ed.) *Responsa of Rabbi Shneur Zalman* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 2007), p. 40). See also Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (Rabbi Shalom Ber Levin ed.), *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 19, p. 400.

8. See below pp. xiv, xviii. According to a tradition noted by Heilman, Rabbi Shneur Zalman once commented that all the other disciples of the Maggid had received wisdom through the "filter" of teacher-to-student. Rabbi Shneur Zalman's association with Rabbi Avraham, on the other hand, enabled him to receive "unfiltered" wisdom from the Maggid, in the fashion of father-to-son. Since Rabbi Shneur Zalman received more, he eventually disclosed more (*Beis Rebbi,* p. 22, note 1; see also ibid. p. 88, note 1).

and other heterodoxies. It is understandable, then, that when Chasidism began to spread to the established Jewish centers four hundred miles to the north, it was strongly resisted by the mainstream Rabbinic establishment.

In the spring of 1772 an outright "war" was proclaimed on Chasidim, when Rabbi Eliyahu of Vilna (1720-97, the "Vilna Gaon"), the most revered scholar in Europe at the time, proclaimed that "it was a duty to repel them and pursue them and reduce them and drive them from the land."[9] The result was, as Rabbi Shneur Zalman later recalled in a private letter, "he permitted our blood to be spilled like water in 1772."[10]

A few months earlier, an attempt had been made to avert this crisis by a senior member of the Maggid's court, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk (1730-1788), who payed a visit to the Vilna Gaon to appease him. The fact that Rabbi Shneur Zalman, at the age of twenty-seven, was chosen to accompany Rabbi Menachem Mendel for this visit, shows us what an exemplary Torah scholar he had become. The Gaon, however, had already formed his opinion and refused to greet them.[11] In the same year, Rabbi Shneur Zalman participated in a debate with the Rabbis of Shklov, one of the most important communities in Belarus, which also did not end well for the Chasidim.[12]

As Rabbi Shneur Zalman's role as a public figure grew (after his senior colleagues' emigration to the Land of Israel in 1777),[13] Rabbi Shneur Zalman stood at the front during the struggle with those who opposed Chasidism (Misnagdim). His constituency of Belarus was an area where the conflict was at its strongest, and he also had many followers in Lithuania, including Vilna. He defended the Chasidim in a renewed "war" against them in 1787, responding to the Misnagdim, while cautioning Chasidim to exercise restraint.[14] In 1797, the Gaon renewed his ban on Chasidism, and Rabbi Shneur Zalman again advised his followers how to respond.[15]

9. *Zemir Aritsim Ve-Charvos Tzurim* (Aleksnitz, 1772), article six.
10. Levin, *Igros Kodesh,* p. 239.
11. *Ibid*. p. 182; *Zemir Aritsim, ibid.* See Levin, *Toldos Chabad*, pp. 17-18.
12. Levin, *Igros Kodesh* p. 345; *Toldos Chabad,* p. 18.
13. See below, p. xiv.
14. See Levin, *Igros Kodesh,* pp. 16-29; *ibid*., editor's introduction p. 50-52. This policy of restraint followed the approach the Maggid had taken in 1772.
15. *Ibid*., p. 194-7. For an extensive chronicle of the early conflict between Chasidim and their opponents see: Mordechai Wilensky, *Chasidim u-Misnagdim,* 2 vols., (Jerusalem: 2nd rev. ed. 1990).

After the Gaon's passing the same year, the conflict escalated to an unprecedented degree, with the Misnagdim seeking the help of the government authorities to have Rabbi Shneur Zalman arrested in 1798 and again, in 1801.[16] After his second release, he transferred his court from Liozna, where he had taught Chasidism from around 1783,[17] to the nearby town of Liadi.

During the Napoleonic wars, Shneur Zalman feared that if Russia were conquered by the French, and Jews would be emancipated, the integrity of the traditional Jewish community would be undermined. Therefore he supported the Russian regime, prayed for its success and even conducted espionage for the Russian army. With the invasion of the French in 1812, Rabbi Shneur Zalman and his family fled. After wandering hundreds of miles in the bitter Russian winter for four months, Rabbi Shneur Zalman fell ill and passed away, at the age of sixty-eight. He was buried in Haditz in Poltava.[18]

Rabbi Shneur Zalman and Sterna had three sons and three daughters. His oldest son Rabbi Dov Ber (1773-1827), established a Chasidic court in Lubavitch (Lyubavichy) which became the home of the Chabad-Lubavitch dynasty for the next hundred years. Rabbi Shneur Zalman's writings include the *Shulchan Aruch Ha-Rav,* a new edition of *Siddur Nusach Ha-Arizal,*[19] the *Tanya,* a commentary on the *Zohar*,[20] and Chasidic discourses he delivered from 1793-1812.[21]

16. See Levin, *Toldos Chabad,* chapter 13. The date of his first release, 19th *Kislev* (on the Lunar Calendar), is celebrated to this day as a watershed moment in the Chabad movement. The first imprisonment is documented extensively in Rabbi Yehoshua Mondshine, *Ha-Ma'asar Ha-Rishon* (Moscow: Knizhniki, 2012). See also Rabbi A. C. Glitzenstein, (Rabbi Jacob Immanuel Schochet trans.), *The Arrest And Liberation of Rabbi Shneur Zalman Of Liadi* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 1964). For the socio-polictical context of Rabbi Shneur Zalman's struggles with his opponents see David E. Fishman, *Russia's First Modern Jews: The Jews of Shklov* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1995), pp. 1-21.

17. See below p. xv.

18. These events are chronicled in detail in Rabbi Yehoshua Mondshine, *Ha-Ma'asar Ha-Acharon* (Moscow: Knizhniki, 2012).

19. Published by the author in 1803. See Rabbi Gedalia Oberlader and Nachum Greenwald (eds.), *Ha-Siddur* (Monsey: Heichal Menachem, 2003).

20. Published by Rabbi Shneur Zalman's son, Rabbi Dov Ber, in Kapust 1816. Revised edition published by Kehos (Brooklyn, 2015).

21. These discourses were delivered orally in Yiddish and were transcribed in Hebrew by students and members of his family. Selections from this material were initially published as *Torah Or* (Kapust, 1837) and *Likutei Torah* (Zhitomir, 1848). The complete set of discourses has been published as *Ma'amarei Admor Ha-Zaken* (Kehos: Brooklyn, 1958-2015), 27 volumes. See Levin, *Toldos Chabad* chapters 26-8.

THE COMPOSITION OF THE TANYA

Before the *Tanya* was sent to print in 1796, manuscripts had been circulating widely for at least three years. A number of these early editions have survived, and were published by *Kehos* in 1981 as *Likutei Amarim First Versions, Based on Earliest Manuscripts.*[22]

The earliest *Tanya* manuscript in our possession dates back to 1792/3.[23] Rabbi Shneur Zalman's discourses from the fall of 1792 onwards also make explicit reference to the *Tanya.*[24] Unfortunately, discourses prior to this date have not surfaced, and we therefore have no documentary evidence of how the *Tanya's* teachings were formulated and disseminated before this period.[25]

In the "Author's Introduction"[26] — which is, in fact, a pastoral letter written in 1795 — Rabbi Shneur Zalman indicated that the *Tanya* was a collection of the advice he had offered to his disciples in private counseling sessions.[27] According to internal Chabad tradition, these private communications took place throughout the 1780s,[28] and during 1790-94, Rabbi Shneur Zalman delivered the material publicly in his sermons.[29] Evidently, the *Tanya* was a work in progress for many years.[30]

22. The nine manuscripts in the Chabad-Lubavitch library are described on pp. 583-5 of the work. A further manuscript is found in Leningrad, MS 177a. For an overview of the "First Versions" see discussion of Rabbi David Olidort in *Be-Ohr Ha-Chasidus* (Brooklyn: Heichal Menachem, 1997), issue 35, pp. 11-13.
23. MS 750, Chabad-Lubavitch Library, New York.
24. See *Ma'amarei Admor Ha-Zaken,* Short Discourses (Brooklyn: Kehos, 1981), p. 190.
25. Levin, *Toldos Chabad,* p. 69. Rabbi Levin has conjectured that *Tanya* manuscripts first started to circulate in the summer of 1792.
26. Below, pp. 12-26.
27. See below, p. 23. This is indicated by the name of the book *Likutei Amarim* ("An anthology of teachings"). The term *amarim* suggests orally delivered teachings which the author had collected into book form. See Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, *Likutei Diburim* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 1957), p. 70b.
28. Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, (Rabbi Shalom Ber Levin ed.), *Igros Kodesh,* volume 4, (Brooklyn, Kehos, 1983), p. 274. An earlier letter (*ibid*. p. 28), dates the counseling sessions to 1779-81.
29. *Idem*., *Sefer Ha-Sichos* 5703*,* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 1965), p. 23. See p. 59 *ibid*., that an earlier version of the *Tanya* was included by Rabbi Shneur Zalman in his discourses as early as 1782. This coincides with Rabbi Shneur Zalman's first public appointment to a formal leadership role in the same year (see p. xiv).
30. One internal tradition indicates that Rabbi Shneur Zalman first began to formulate the book's contents just a few years after the Maggid's passing in 1772: "Our Rebbe spent twenty years composing the *Tanya*... until 1795" (*Igros Kodesh, ibid.,* p. 264). Another

To help contextualize this tradition concerning the *Tanya's* early development, let us briefly review what we know about Rabbi Shneur Zalman's gradual ascent to communal leadership during this period.

After being present at the Maggid's passing in Annapoli at the end of 1772, Rabbi Shneur Zalman stayed on for a few months to continue studying with the Maggid's son, Rabbi Avraham.[31] Rabbi Shneur Zalman then returned home to Vitebsk, where he had been living since his marriage in 1760. During this period Rabbi Shneur Zalman was a disciple/colleague of Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk (now in Horodok/Gorodok), one of the older students of the Maggid who had become the leading Chasidic Rabbi in Belarus. Since Vitebsk and Horodok were only twenty miles apart, Rabbi Shneur Zalman was able to make several visits to Rabbi Menachem Mendel until he emigrated to the Land of Israel in the summer of 1777.[32]

Rabbi Menachem Mendel's plan was to continue leading the Chasidim in Belarus from a distance via correspondence, along with his junior colleague, Rabbi Avraham of Kalisk, who had joined the large group that emigrated to the Land of Israel. After a while, however, many Chasidim grew dissatisfied with this arrangement, and began to seek alternative leadership from other Chasidic Rebbes in neighboring regions. As a result, in 1782, Rabbis Menachem Mendel and Avraham deemed it necessary to appoint three local mentors in White Russia, not as a substitute for their own authority, but as a "second tier" of leadership. These mentors were: Rabbi Yisrael of Polotsk, Rabbi Yissachar Ber of Lubavitch,[33] and Rabbi Shneur Zalman.[34] This is the first documented indication we have of any formal leadership position by Rabbi Shneur Zalman after the passing of the Maggid, a decade earlier. It was also around this time, in 1783, that Rabbi Shneur Zalman resettled in

tradition describes the *Tanya* as the culmination of forty years of study and inner work on the part of the author (Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, *Sefer Ha-Ma'amarim* 5708, p. 177).

31. Heilman, *Beis Rebbi,* chapter 4. Rabbi Avraham passed away shortly afterwards in 1776.

32 According to Michael Radkinson (*Toldos Amudei Chabad* (Koenigsberg, 1876), p. 34), Rabbi Shneur Zalman made four visits to Rabbi Menachem Mendel before he emigrated. See also Levin, *Toldos Chabad,* chapter 8. The reasons for the emigration remain unclear.

33. Rabbis Yisrael of Polotsk and Yissachar Ber of Lubavitch were both disciples of the Maggid who had attached themselves to Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk after the Maggid's passing. They were considerably older than Rabbi Shneur Zalman; Rabbi Yissachar Ber had, in fact, been Rabbi Shneur Zalman's childhood teacher. Rabbi Yisrael of Polotsk joined the emigration to Israel in 1777, but subsequently returned to White Russia.

34. For the above see Levin, *Igros Kodesh,* p. 485; Ya'akov Barnai, *Igros Chasidim Me-Eretz Yisrael* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzchak Ben Zvi, 1980), pp. 86, 92-93, 96.

his childhood home of Liozna, where he would remain and gradually build his Chasidic following for the next two decades.[35] (For two years prior to that, he lived in Horodok, presumably offering some informal leadership to the Chasidic community established there by Rabbi Menachem Mendel in 1773-7).[36]

The tripartate leadership established in 1782 did not continue for too long, as in 1785-6 Rabbis Menachem Mendel and Avraham of Kalisk impressed upon Rabbi Shneur Zalman to accept the spiritual leadership of the Chasidim of Belarus solely upon himself, (still as a "second tier" but with much greater authority).[37] Rabbi Shneur Zalman's leadership appears to have been fully consolidated around 1789, at which point we find no further documents suggestive of local opposition to his leadership.[38]

Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk passed away in 1788, and the Chasidic community in Israel continued to be led by Rabbi Avraham of Kalisk. However, while Rabbi Shneur Zalman had accepted Rabbi Menachem Mendel as his senior authority, he did not show the same deference towards Rabbi Avraham of Kalisk. This became very clear later when Rabbi Avraham publicly criticized the *Tanya,* eventually maneuvering a complete organizational split with Rabbi Shneur Zalman.

If we place all these details alongside the oral traditions we have regarding the early formulation of the *Tanya,* the following picture emerges. Immediately after the passing of the Maggid, Rabbi Shneur Zalman continued to incubate his master's teachings through close consultation with the Maggid's son and with Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk. Rabbi Shneur Zalman's public role emerged gradually, from informal leadership in 1781 (in Horodok), formal/joint leadership in 1782, and sole leadership which was consolidated between 1786-8. It was throughout this period in the 1780s that Rabbi Shneur Zalman delivered the *Tanya's* teachings to his disciples, honing them during private counseling sessions. After the passing of Rabbi Menachem Mendel in 1788 and the neutralization of all internal opposition to his appointment (by 1789), Rabbi Shneur Zalman's leadership was fully autonomous. It was *at this point* that he started to deliver the *Tanya* public-

35. See Levin, *Igros Kodesh Admor Ha-Zaken* p. 219; *idem*., *Toldos Chabad,* p. 32. After his second arrest in 1802, he relocated to Liadi.

36. *Ibid.,* p. 29.

37. Barnai, *Igros,* pp. 132, 146-9. Rabbi Yisrael of Polotsk had passed away in 1782 (or 1784). Rabbi Yissachar Ber of Lubavitch accepted the leadership of Rabbi Shneur Zalman (*Beis Rebbe,* p. 15b), and passed away in 1794.

38. For controversy in 1788 surrounding Rabbi Shneur Zalman's appointment, see Barnai, *Igros,* pp. 174-5, 181-3 and Levin, *Igros,* pp. 39-43.

ly, in his discourses. Soon afterwards, the distribution of *Tanya* manuscripts began, no later than the summer of 1792.[39]

The distribution of the manuscripts was prompted, at least in part, by the success of Rabbi Shneur Zalman's leadership—he could no longer handle the flow of visitors flocking to see him. Some time before 1793 he issued the "Liozna Regulations," severely curtailing the extent to which his disciples could visit him for a private meeting.[40] This, together, with the dissemination of the *Tanya* manuscripts, represented an attempt to broaden the influence of his leadership while reducing the demands on him personally. After an initial meeting with Rabbi Shneur Zalman, a disciple could be guided in worship through the assistance of the *Tanya,* as taught by a large number of local mentors in each community.[41] The approach proved wildly successful, and Rabbi Shneur Zalman's following grew in large numbers to eventually become the largest Chasidic group in Eastern Europe at the time.[42] After the split with Rabbi Avraham of Kalsik, in 1805/6, Rabbi Shneur Zalman's movement came to be known as Chabad Chasidism, due to its emphasis on the mind in worship.[43] The *Tanya*, however, transcended many of the organizational and geographic boundaries of the Chasidic movement, and its study became widespread in circles well beyond Chabad.[44] As the most thorough and accessible practical guide to emanate from the Maggid's school, the *Tanya* eventually came to be known as the "Bible" (*Torah Shebiksav*) of Chasidic thought.[45]

39. For a review of other Chasidic books that were printed in a similar period to the *Tanya,* see Loewenthal, pp. 45*ff.*

40. See Levin, *Toldos Chabad,* chapter 12.

41. See below, p. 24.

42. See Rabbi Yehoshua Mondshine, *Meeting of the Alter Rebbe with Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav* [Hebrew], in *Mayanosecha* (Jerusalem, 2014), issue 39, p. 11.

43. See p. xxi. CHaBaD being an acronym for *chochmah, binah* and *da'as,* the intellectual powers of the soul, see below pp. 55*ff.*

44. For comments by a vast range of Jewish thinkers about the *Tanya,* see Rabbi Avraham Shmuel Bukiet, *Nezer Ha-Tanya,* volume 2 (Kfar Chabad, 2007), pp. 357-433. For the spiritual benefits of *Tanya* study see Rabbi Moshe Nisilevitch, *Tanya Kadisha Ve-Kocho Ha-Eloki* (Kiryat Malachi 2004).

45. Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, *Igros Kodesh,* volume 4, p. 264. The term *Torah Shebiksav* (Written Torah) here has a number of implications: 1) The *universal appeal* and accessibility of the *Tanya*; 2) that it is a *primary source* for the Chasidus of the Besht and Maggid; 3) its *authoritativeness,* as a work penned by a Chasidic Rebbe, in contrast to most Chasidic works which were noted down by students; 4) that it was written with *extreme precision* and attentiveness to small textual nuances. See Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Likutei Sichos,* volume 20 (Brooklyn: Kehos, 1982), pp. 183-4; *idem., Toras Menachem, Hisva'aduyos* 5721, vol. 1, (Brooklyn: Lahak, 2005), pp. 149-150; idem., *Sichos Kodesh* 5741, volume 2 (Brooklyn, 1986), p. 30. On the precision

ORIGINS OF THE TANYA'S TEACHINGS

It is not an easy task to trace the system of thought on which the *Tanya* was based, since Chasidic wisdom was transmitted only orally from the movement's inception until 1780.[46] Some important preliminary work has been done in this field by Rabbi Nachum Greenwald, who has traced close parallels to ideas in the *Tanya* in other recorded teachings of the Maggid of Mezritch and *Ba'al Shem Tov*[47]; but we still lack a clear picture of how the *Tanya* was assembled from the sources available to Rabbi Shneur Zalman, and to what extent the author added his own enhancements and elaborations.[48]

An important, first hand account by Rabbi Shneur Zalman of the Kabbalistic works that informed him is found in the testimony he provided to the Russian authorities during his 1798 arrest and imprisonment. He states that while Kabbalistic wisdom "is written in books, nevertheless, a person must begin his study by one Rav, and he can then subsequently study from the books. That is what happened with me: When I was approximately twenty years old... I traveled to Mezritch and I began to study Kabbalah there with Rabbi Ber o.b.m., and since then I study by myself from many respectable

of the text, see sources compiled in: Rabbi Michael Golomb (ed.), *Sha'arei Limud Ha-Chasidus* (Brooklyn: Va'ad Le-Hafatzas Sichos, 1998), pp. 86-92.

46. The first Chasidic book, *Toldos Ya'akov Yosef,* was printed in 1780, probably forty years or more after the *Ba'al Shem Tov* began teaching Chasidism. The following decades, however, witnessed a revolution in Chasidic publishing and by 1815, sixty-eight Chasidic books had been printed. According to one account, the *Ba'al Shem Tov* sharply opposed the recording of his teachings on paper (Ben Amos and Mintz (trans.), *In Praise of the Ba'al Shem Tov,* (Bloomington, 1970), p. 179). The Maggid, on the other hand, is said to have encouraged the publication of his own teachings (see introduction of Rabbi Shlomo of Łuck to *Maggid Devarav Le-Ya'akov* (revised edition, Brooklyn: Kehos, 1972), p. 3a).

47. See Greenwald, *Transformation,* in note 74. For selections from the thought of early Chasidism in English see Rabbi Norman Lamm, *The Religious Thought of Hasidism: Text and Commentary* (New Jersey: Ktav, 1999).

48. According to one account that has reached us: "Once a Chasid found Rabbi Shneur Zalman studying the *Tanya*. He asked him, 'Do you really study the *Tanya* [which you, yourself wrote]?' Rabbi Shneur Zalman replied, 'I find (perceive?) more original ideas here than in Mezritch' (Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Igros Kodesh* vol. 3, p. 19). While this anecdote clearly points to the presence of some original content in the *Tanya*, nevertheless, from Rabbi Shneur Zalman's stated response, it seems that this fact came as a surprise to his disciple. Apparently, the perception of *Tanya* as containing "more original ideas than in Mezritch" was *not* the common perception. In fact, the tone of Rabbi Shneur Zalman's response suggests, perhaps, that *even he* was surprised at the "original ideas" in the text, and that these were insights he only "found" or "perceived" at a later date "between the lines," after writing the book.

books of the Kabbalah, both earlier and later works, according to my own understanding."[49]

Rabbi Shneur Zalman then mentions a number of works by name from which he had drawn, after being initiated in Kabbalistic study by the Maggid: *Sha'arei Orah* by Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla (1248-1305), *Pardes Rimonim* by Rabbi Moshe Cordovero (1522–1570), *Shefa Tal* by Rabbi Shabbetai Sheftel Horowitz (c. 1561-1619), *Etz Chaim* by Rabbi Chaim Vital (1542-1620), as well as the *Zohar*.[50]

After the passing of the Maggid in 1772, we know that Rabbi Shneur Zalman continued as a student of the Maggid's son, Rabbi Avraham until 1776, when he died at the young age of 36. Rabbi Shneur Zalman was also extremely close with his senior colleague at the Maggid's court, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk/Horodok.[51] Even after Rabbi Menachem Mendel emigrated to the Land of Israel in 1777, he sustained an extensive scholarly correspondence with Rabbi Shneur Zalman and the Chasidic community in Belarus,[52] which is mentioned explicitly in the "Author's Introduction" as a source which informed the *Tanya*.

The vast majority of the *Tanya*, however, is undoubtedly based on oral teaching which the author heard in Mezritch. As Rabbi Shneur Zalman wrote in a letter to his colleague, Rabbi Avraham of Kalisk, "I did not ask for your approval for my Chasidic teachings, since they are sayings uttered by the holy mouth of our great Rabbi [the Maggid] o.b.m, and his son, o.b.m., of Mezritch."[53]

49. Levin, *Igros Kodesh Admor Ha-Zaken*, p. 221.

50. *Ibid.* Interestingly, there is no mention of Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz's *Shnei Luchos Ha-Bris* (17th Century) or the writings of Rabbi Yehudah Loew (Maharal) of Prague (d. 1609), which, according to an internal tradition of Chabad Chasidim, served as sources for the *Tanya* (see Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Igros Kodesh* vol. 17, p. 92; idem., *Sichos Kodesh* 5730, vol. 2, pp. 495-6; ibid. 5741, p. 830). Presumably these two works, which are of a more ethical nature, were familiar to Rabbi Shneur Zalman before his formal Kabbalistic study with the Maggid.

    Nissan Mindel observes in his introduction to the *Tanya*: "The *Zohar* is mentioned in the *Tanya* (part I) forty-nine times; Luria, ten times; Vital and his works, twenty-nine times; Maimonides (Code) five times; Nachmanides, once." Mindel also suggests Bachya ben Asher's Commentary on the Bible as a source for the *Tanya*.

51. Rabbi Menachem Mendel's teachings are collected in *Pri Ha'aretz* (Kapust, 1814), *Pri Etz* (Zhitomir, 1874), and *Likutei Amarim* (Lvov, 1911). See also below pp. 72, 232. See also Loewenthal, p. 4, that Rabbi Menachem Mendel encouraged scholastic, Kabbalistic study.

52. Below, p. 22. The correspondence appears in Barnai, *Igros Chasidim*; Rabbi Avraham Surasky, *Yesod Ha-Ma'alah* (Bnei Brak, 2000), volume 2.

53. 1805 letter to Rabbi Avraham of Kalisk in *Igros Admor Ha-Zaken*, p. 340. See also

From the conflict which erupted between Rabbi Avraham of Kalisk and Rabbi Shneur Zalman after the publication of the *Tanya*, we can glean some insight into how Rabbi Shneur Zalman might have received his teaching from the Maggid. One of Rabbi Avraham's key criticisms was, "I do not approve… that you have taken the words of our holy Rabbi of Mezritch, which are the words of our holy Rabbi the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, and mixed them together with the holy words of Rabbi Yitzchak Luria."[54]

Rabbi Avraham perceived the "mixing" of Chasidic wisdom and Kabbalah in the *Tanya* as Rabbi Shneur Zalman's own innovation. Rabbi Shneur Zalman, however, insisted that this synthesis originated from the Maggid, "they are teachings uttered by the holy mouth of our great Rabbi." In another letter, Rabbi Shneur Zalman makes the point more emphatically "I came but to explain the words of the Ba'al Shem Tov, of blessed memory, and of his disciples, according to the Kabbalah of Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, of blessed memory… as I heard from my masters."[55]

Could Rabbi Avraham and Rabbi Shneur Zalman have argued over a simple fact, whether or not the Maggid had taught the Lurianic underpinnings of the *Ba'al Shem Tov's* thought?

One possibility is that the Maggid taught his various disciples according to their abilities and interests. Sensing that certain students were more interested in the integration of Chasidus with Lurianic Kabbalah, the Maggid developed this theme to a greater extent with them.[56] If this is the case, the emphasis on Kabbalah in Rabbi Shneur Zalman's writings may simply represent a more advanced type of teaching he had received from the Maggid (and his son).[57]

However, what seems more likely is that Rabbi Avraham *was* aware of (at least some of) the Kabbalistic content in the Maggid's teaching, but he viewed it as a communication aimed exclusively at the elite group who were

below pp. 57-8 for a further citation from this letter. It is important to note that Rabbi Avraham's polemic with Rabbi Shneur Zalman was complicated by other organizational and financial matters. See Loewenthal, *Communicating,* pp. 77-85.

54. Barnai, *Igros* p. 239.

55. *Tanya, Igeres Ha-Kodesh*, section 25; Levin, *Igros Kodesh,* p. 156. Rabbi Levin dates the letter to around 1795.

56. See, for example, the questions in Kabbalah posed to the Maggid by Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, and the answers he received. *Kedushas Levi* (Jersualem 1978), addendum.

57. See above note 8. See also Rabbi Nachum Greenwald, *The Development of Chabad Chasidus from the Torah of the Maggid of Mezritch* [Hebrew], in *Heichal Ha-Besht,* issue 7, (Rabbi Ya'akov Leib Altein *et. al.,* eds., Brooklyn 2004), pp. 45*ff.* For the development of the Maggid's teachings through his son, see also Loewenthal, p. 248n73.

privy to hear it at the Maggid's table; it was not something to be shared with the masses. This seems to be the thrust of Rabbi Avraham's stated objection to Rabbi Shneur Zalman over the *Tanya's* contents, "Too much oil may, G-d forbid, cause the light to be extinguished.... In their approach to almost all their Chasidim, our teachers took great care with their words, speaking only ethical teachings (*musar*), striving to bring them faith in the Sages."[58]

Rabbi Avraham's argument was: If Rabbi Shneur Zalman had heard Kabbalistic teaching from the Maggid, he should have realized that it was not something to be publicized, just as the Maggid himself had been highly selective with whom he shared this wisdom. Instead of muting this element of the Maggid's teachings, Rabbi Shneur Zalman had amplified it in the *Tanya*, citing ideas from Lurianic Kabbalah extensively.

At the core of the dispute was the question: How is Chasidus to be adapted for mass consumption? Rabbi Shneur Zalman was of the opinion that at least a modified version of the advanced concepts and techniques he had learned in Mezritch could be made available for the public.[59] This was not mere conjecture, as the *Tanya* represented practical wisdom which Rabbi Shneur Zalman had shared with his disciples personally (see below, p. 21). He was not concerned that "too much oil may cause the light to be extinguished," because he had tested, with a wide range of students, exactly how much "oil" was a suitable amount. The "Book of the Inbetweeners" represented as much of the Maggid's wisdom that ordinary people could reasonably implement in their worship, if they would try hard and seek clarification from their mentors, where necessary.

The ideological tension between Rabbis Avraham of Kalisk and Shneur Zalman appears to have echoed a similar difference of emphasis in the prior generation of Chasidic masters, between the Maggid of Mezritch and Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz (1728-1790). Rabbi Pinchas was a close colleague/disciple of the *Ba'al Shem Tov,* but he did not embrace the subsequent leadership of the Maggid. A notable issue dividing them was the question whether the teachings of the *Ba'al Shem Tov* should be taught within the framework of Lurianic Kabbalah. The Maggid is said to have expounded on Kabbalah even in public and he emphasized the knowledge necessary to achieve higher states of mind, whereas Rabbi Pinchas advised not to seek

58. Barnai, *Igros,* p. 240. For more on the disagreement see Loewenthal, pp. 51-54, 77-90; Etkes, pp. 209-258; Nehemia Polen, *Charismatic Leader, Charismatic Book: Rabbi Schneur Zalman's Tanya and His Leadership,* in Suzanne Last Stone, (ed.), *Rabbinic and Lay Communal Authority* (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 2006), pp. 60-61; Rabbi Nachum Greenwald (ed.) *Harav* (2015), p. 430n129.

59. As we will see in the "Author's Introduction" (p. 24), Rabbi Shneur Zalman advised that a mentorship program be established alongside the dissemination of the book.

lofty rungs of insight, but to worship G-d with simple faith.[60] If this description is accurate, Rabbi Shneur Zalman's propensity to integrate Chasidic teachings with Lurianic Kabbalah is in direct continuum with his master, and is more the Maggid's innovation than Rabbi Shneur Zalman's.[61]

In any case, subsequent to the publication of the *Tanya*, and Rabbi Avraham's criticism of it, the more scholarly, speculative approach to Chasidism taught by Rabbi Shneur Zalman came to be known as the "Chabad school."[62] We find the term first used by Rabbi Shneur Zalman in an 1805 letter, over a decade after the *Tanya's* initial circulation, though, apparently, it was not a term coined by the author of *Tanya* himself.[63]

PRINTINGS OF THE TANYA

Details of the early printings of the *Tanya* from 1796-1814 will be discussed below (p. 1-11). According to Chabad sources, the *Tanya* was an immediate success, and forty-thousand copies were printed in the first three years.[64] By 1815 it had been reprinted eleven times, making it the most frequently printed Chasidic book of the period. The *Tanya* continued to enjoy regular reprinting over the next century, and prior to the authoritative Vilna edition of *Tanya* in 1900, there were twenty-nine separate printings of the work, all of which have been carefully documented by Rabbi Yehoshua Mondshine.[65]

The Vilna printing has become a "standard edition" of the *Tanya*, since its text was carefully corrected against earlier editions and manuscripts by

60. See sources cited in Rabbi Abraham J. Heschel, *The Circle of The Ba'al Shem Tov: Studies in Hasidism* (Chicago University Press, 1985), pp. 19-22; Israel Zinberg (Bernard Martin trans.), *A History of Jewish Literature,* vol. 9, (New York: Ktav, 1976), p. 100.

61. Rabbi Shneur Zalman emphasized his direct continuity with the Maggid's thought by stressing, on the title page (below pp. 1-2), that the *Tanya* was merely wisdom "anthologized" from his teacher. An internal Chabad tradition describes how Rabbi Shneur Zalman naturally shied away from leadership, and was only convinced to speak in public when his wife assured him, "They are only coming here to hear what you merited to learn from your teacher" (see *Toras Menachem* 5743, vol. 2, p. 1072).

62. The Kabbalistic/scholastic content of Rabbi Shneur Zalman's public discourses was considerably enriched after his release from imprisonment by the Russian authorities in 1798. According to Chasidic tradition, Rabbi Shneur Zalman saw his release as a sign that his approach to teaching Chasidus had been ratified in heaven, and he subsequently pursued the path more vigorously. See Greenwald, *Harav*, pp. 387-431.

63. See Levin, *Toldos Chabad*, chapters 9, 14.

64. Mindel, *Rabbi Schneur Zalman,* p. 122.

65. Rabbi Yehoshua Mondshine, *Torath Habad: Bibliographies of Habad Hasiduth Books,* volume 1 (Brooklyn: Kehos, 1981). Rabbi Mondshine provides details of the Tanya's censorship.

Rabbi Asher Grossman of Nikolayev (d. 1920), under the supervision of the Fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Shalom Dov Ber Schneersohn. The initial printing was only four or five thousand copies, but the text has served as the source for all subsequent printings of the *Tanya*.[66]

After Rabbi Grossman's passing, many further corrections that he had made were discovered in his notes, which formed the basis for the extensive erratum published by the Seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe in 1953.[67] Initially the Rebbe was reluctant to make any changes to the text itself, which was photo-reproduced from the earlier edition, but in subsequent years changes to the text were gradually introduced.[68]

In 1978 the Rebbe initiated a campaign to print the *Tanya* in every country that had a Jewish presence.[69] Later, during Chanukah of 1983 he made a "personal plea" to print the *Tanya* in every city that had even a minimal Jewish presence.[70] Within three weeks, over eighty editions had been printed. The campaign prompted a large, ongoing response from his followers and by 2008 a remarkable 5300 editions of the *Tanya* had been printed in different locations![71] The Rebbe also encouraged the translation

66. The *Practical Tanya* is not intended to replace the classic Vilna edition (which since 1953, has been published by Kehos), but is offered as a study-guide to complement the classic edition, similar to the works of Rabbis Steinsalz, Altein, Green and Ginsberg.

67. The erratum (*luach ha-tikun*) was appended to the 1953 reprint of the Vilna edition. The Rebbe added an extensive index to the *Tanya* which he had prepared. The 1953 edition also included as an appendix for the first time a list of the *Tanya* readings (*moreh shiur*) for the daily study of *Chitas* (*Chumash, Tehillim* and *Tanya*), which had been instituted by the Sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe in 1942 (see Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, *Igros Kodesh,* vol. 7, p. 30). The readings were divided by the Sixth Rebbe himself. For other guidance from the Chabad Rebbes on the study of *Tanya* see: Bukiet, *Nezer Ha-Tanya,* pp. 179-226; Golomb, *Sha'arei Limud,* pp. 27-8.

68. For the above see: Rabbi Yehoshua Mondshine, *One Hundred Years Since the Printing of Tanya, Tomchei Temimim, 1900-2000* [Hebrew], in *Kfar Chabad*, issue 880 (2000); Levin, *Toldos Chabad,* chapter 25. The Rebbe was initially very concerned that the 1943 Tel Aviv edition of the *Tanya* had been re-typset and not photo-reproduced from the Vilna edition, but when he checked the text and saw that it was accurate, he gave the project his blessing (Mondshine ibid.).

69. *Sichos Kodesh* 5738, volume 3, pp. 302-5; 316-7. All *Tanyas* were to be reproduced from the Vilna edition. Initially these efforts were not coordinated, resulting in different source texts being used, some of which were outdated. This prompted the Rebbe to establish a central office for the printing campaign, which was managed by Rabbi Shalom Jacobson, under the aegis of Kehos. See *Likutei Sichos* vol. 26, p. 319.

70. *Toras Menachem, Hisva'aduyos* 5744, vol. 2, p. 724. See also ibid, pp. 811-6, 834-5, 853; *Likutei Sichos* ibid. pp. 320-7. For other directives of the Rebbe see: Bukiet, *Nezer Ha-Tanya*, volume 2, pp. 267-281.

71. See introduction to *Mivtza Hadfasas Sefer Ha-Tanya* (Kfar Chabad: Agudas Chasidei Chabad, 2008). The pamphlet also lists all editions that had been printed in Israel at the

of *Tanya* into different languages,[72] and editions have appeared in Yiddish (1956), English (1962), Italian (1967), Spanish (1969), French (1975), Arabic (1976), Russian (1976), Portuguese (1981), German (1985), Hungarian (2001) and in Braille (1991-2).

COMMENTARIES ON THE TANYA

a.) Commentary in discourses of the Chabad Rebbeim

Rabbi Shneur Zalman's successors, the Rebbes of Chabad, did not offer a formal, systematic commentary on the *Tanya*.[73] Their preferred mode of teaching was the *ma'amar* (Chasidic discourse), an oral presentation which differed considerably from the *Tanya*, both in style and content.[74]

Surprisingly, direct references to the *Tanya* in the discourses are relatively sparse. From the nearly two hundred volumes of discourses which have been published by Kehos,[75] comments on the first book of *Tanya* fill only two volumes.[76] This material is complex, and is, generally speaking, not

time of publication. *Tanyas* have been printed in such unusual locations as: The jail cell in which Rabbi Shneur Zalman was imprisoned, Kennedy Airport, Yasser Arafat's office and Mount Everest!

72. *Likutei Sichos* vol. 22, p. 186; vol. 24, p. 10; *Sichos Kodesh* 5728, p. 298.

73. With the exception of the *reshimos* of the Seventh Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, as we shall see below, section 'e.' Some written notes of the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn (*Tzemach Tzedek*) on *Tanya* have appeared in *Kitzurim Ve-Ha'aros Be-Sefer Ha-Tanya* (Brooklyn, Kehos 1948). A few notes of *Tzemach Tzedek* are found in *Likutei Hagahos Le-Sefer Ha-Tanya* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 1974).

74. For the differences in approach between *Tanya* and the discourses in the works of Rabbi Shneur Zalman, see: Rabbi Nachum Greenwald, *The Transformation Of The Besht's Teachings, And Those Of His Students, From Oral To Written Form* [Hebrew], in *Heichal Ha-Besht* issue 9, (Rabbi Ya'akov Leib Altein *et. al.,* eds., Brooklyn 2004), p. 40*ff.*

75. A partial list includes: Rabbi Shneur Zalman, *Ma'amarei Admor Ha-Zaken*, 27 volumes; Rabbi Dovber Shneuri ("Mitteler Rebbe," 1773-1827), *Ma'amarei Admor Ha-Emtzoie,* 18 volumes; Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn (*Tzemach Tzedek,* 1789-1866), 41 volumes; Rabbi Shmuel Schneersohn ("Rebbe Maharash," 1834-1882), *Likutei Torah, Toras Shmuel,* 19 volumes; Rabbi Shalom Dovber Schneersohn ("Rebbe Rashab," 1860-1920), *Sefer Ha-Ma'amarim,* 26 volumes; Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn ("Rebbe Rayatz," 1880-1950), *Sefer Ha-Ma'amarim,* 21 volumes; Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994), *Sefer Ha-Ma'amarim,* 31 volumes.

76. Rabbi Aharon Chitrik ed., *Likutei Amarim Tanya Be-Tziruf Ma'arei Mekomos, Likut Perushim, Shinui Nuscha'os* (Brooklyn: Kehos 1992), 2 vols. An expanded treatment by Kehos (*Likutei Amarim Tanya im Likut Peirushim Me-Raboseinu Nesi'einu*), incorporating texts published subsequent to Rabbi Chitrik's anthology, began to appear in 2014. As of this writing, pamphlets have appeared on chapters 2-7 and 19. Many additional

aimed at clarifying the literal meaning of the text, but rather, elaborating on Chabad theosophy.

b.) Early Commentaries

Very little commentary on the *Tanya* was formally penned or published before the second half of the twentieth century.[77] This was probably due to both the large cost of printing, and the general conservatism which prevailed in the Chasidic community, which discouraged the publication of original Torah thoughts.[78]

c.) The Tomchei Temimim School

The establishment of the Lubavitch Yeshivah (*Tomchei Temimim*) in 1897, led to a traditional school of *Tanya* interpretation associated with the Yeshivah's teachers and its students. The most significant figure in this movement was Rabbi Shmuel Grunem Esterman (1860-1921). From the Yeshivah's beginnings, Reb Grunem taught in various branches of the organization, and in 1905 he was formally appointed *mashpia* (spiritual mentor and teacher of Chasidus) in the central Yeshivah in Lubavitch.

Notes from Reb Grunem's in-depth *Tanya* classes in the Yeshivah survived, and have circulated in type-written copies for decades.[79] They have recently been published in a number of editions.[80]

Reb Grunem also influenced a generation of students, a number of whom became notable teachers of *Tanya* in the interwar years and early post-World War Two period. Notes or classes have been published from the following students of the Lubavitcher Yeshivah in Russia: Rabbi Shmuel

discourses elaborate on themes discussed in the *Tanya*, without directly referencing the work.

77. Exceptions are: Rabbi Aaron Horowitz of Starosselje (1766-1828), *Sha'arei Avodah* (Shklov, 1821); Rabbi Avraham Tzvi Brodna, *Kuntres Likutei Biurim Be-Sefer Ha-Tanya* (Jerusalem, 1922). We also have a significant Kabbalistic commentary on the *Tanya* penned as marginal notes by the Seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe's father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson (1878-1944), *Likutei Levi Yitzchak, Ha'aros al Sefer Ha-Tanya* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 1970). A nineteenth century *Tanya* commentary which has recently been published from manuscript is: Rabbi Ya'akov Kadaner, *Biur Tanya* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 2012).

78. See comments of the Seventh Rebbe when attempting to reverse this trend, in *Sefer Ha-Sichos* 5748, vol. 1, (Brooklyn: Kehos, 1989), p. 249. See note 114.

79. Printed in Brooklyn (1957, 1960), Montreal (1958), Kfar Chabad (1967, 1979). Parts of the commentary were also included in Rabbi Aharon Chitrik's, anthology (see note 76).

80. Chaim Luria (ed.), *Kisvei Ha-Rashag Esterman* (Israel, 2015); *Biur al Ha-Tanya me-ha-Mashpia Shmuel Grunem Esterman z'l* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 2016).

Levitin (1883-1974),[81] Rabbi Avraham Eliyahu Plotkin (1889-1949),[82] Rabbi Alter Simchovitch (1890-1939),[83] Rabbi Chaim Shaul Brook (1894-1965),[84] Rabbi Shlomo Chaim Kesselman (1894-1971),[85] Rabbi Nissan Nemenov (1904-1984),[86] Rabbi Alexander Sender Yudasin (d. 1982),[87] and Rabbi Yehoshua Korf (1905-2007).[88]

None of these works, however, provided a full, running commentary on the *Tanya*, clarifying the text line-by-line. Rather, they offered elucidation of difficult points and offered in-depth analysis based on Chasidic discourses. They were, to draw a parallel to *Talmud* commentary, the *Tosfos* and not the *Rashi*.

d.) Running Commentaries

The first complete, running commentary to the *Tanya*, accessible even to the beginner, was *Lessons in Tanya* by Rabbi Yosef Wineberg (1917-2012). Rabbi Wineberg was born in Poland to a family of Trisker Chasidim and studied in the Lubavitcher Yeshivah in Warsaw/Otwosk for several years, until its destruction at the outbreak of World War Two. (The center of the Lubavitch movement had relocated to Warsaw in 1934, after the Sixth Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, was forced to leave Russia in 1927). From 1960, Rabbi Wineberg began to broadcast regular *Tanya* classes in Yiddish over the WEVD radio network in New York, based on the lessons he had heard in the Lubavitcher Yeshivah in Poland, delivered by Rabbi Baruch Friedman *hy'd*. Rabbi Wineberg's broadcasts were acclaimed for their clarity and he eventually completed the five books of *Tanya* over the course of twenty-two years. They were published in book form, initially in

81. Notes from his *Tanya* classes penned by one of his students, appear in Rabbi Avraham Weingarten, *Nitzotzei Ohr* (Brooklyn, 2007), pp. 38-93.

82. Rabbi Shmuel Plotkin (ed.), *Biur Le-Tanya* (Brooklyn, 2015).

83. Rabbi Alter Simchovitch (Rabbi Yitzchak Wilhelm ed.), *Kuntres Tziyunim L'Tanya* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 2014).

84. Recorded by his students in Uri ben Shahar (ed.), *Sefer Zikaron Le-Ha-rav Ha-Ga'on Ha-Chasid, Reb Chaim Shaul Brook a'h* (Rishon Letziyon, 1971).

85. From the notes of his students, published in Rabbi Avraham Wolf (ed.), *Biurey Reb Shlomo Chaim* (Kfar Chabad: Kehos, 2011).

86. Recorded by his student, Rabbi Shalom Dovber Shanowitz (ed.), *Biurey Ha-Rav Nissan al Ha-Tanya* (Brooklyn, 1996).

87. Written and published by the author as *Ha-Lekach Ve-Ha-Libuv* (Kfar Chabad, 1968), 2 volumes.

88. Rabbi Yehoshua Korf, *Likutei Biurim Be-Sefer Ha-Tanya* (Brooklyn, 1968-1980), 2 vols. In addition to insights from Reb Grunem, Rabbi Korf also included material from Rabbis Plotkin, Brook and Nemenov. Of all the above works, Rabbi Korf's is the most thorough and probably the most influential.

Yiddish as *Shiurim Be-Sefer Ha-Tanya* in 1980,[89] and were later translated into English, as *Lessons in Tanya.*[90]

Rabbi Wineberg's classes were considerably enhanced by the encouragement and editorial collaboration of the Seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson. The Rebbe rigorously edited all of Rabbi Wineberg's transcripts before they were broadcast, correcting and extensively annotating the text. In hundreds of concise, penetrating analyses, the Rebbe contributed greatly to the understanding of many points in the *Tanya*, and his overall editorial supervision lent authority to the work.[91] In addition to personally encouraging Rabbi Wineberg in his efforts, the Rebbe also praised the *Tanya* broadcasts publicly on several occasions in his sermons.[92]

A recurring theme in the Rebbe's annotations was his deference to the oral tradition of *Tanya* interpretation as it had been taught in the Lubavitcher Yeshivah system in Russia. Since Rabbi Wineberg had the "luxury" of the Rebbe reviewing his work, he was more than content for his esteemed editor to be final arbiter of any unclear passages. The Rebbe, however, would regularly respond to Rabbi Wineberg, "Clarify how this was learned in *Tomchei Temimim," i.e.,* in the Lubavitcher Yeshivah. The Rebbe himself had not studied in the Yeshivah, and humbly prioritized any available traditional interpretation over his own analysis.[93]

89. *Shiurim Be-Sefer Ha-Tanya* (Brooklyn: Kehos 1980), on chapters 1-34. A volume on the entire *Sefer Shel Beinonim* appeared in 1982, on *Sha'ar Ha-Yichud Ve-Ha-Emunah* and *Igeres Ha-Kodesh* in 1984; and on *Igeres Ha-Kodesh* and *Kuntres Acharon* in 1986.

90 Rabbis Levy Wineberg and Shalom B. Wineberg (trans.), *Lessons in Tanya* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 1987-1993), 5 volumes.

91. Even before the publication of *Shiurim Be-Sefer Ha-Tanya,* many of these annotations had been collected by Rabbi Yehoshua Mondshine and included in Rabbi Yehoshua Korf's, *Likutei Biurim Be-Sefer Ha-Tanya*. From there, they were also reproduced in Rabbi Aharon Chitrik's anthology. Recently, scans of the Rebbe's handwritten edits of the entire series have been made available online at http://www.hagaos.com/ (accessed June 2016).

92. For a list of citations, see Rabbi Michoel Seligson, *Sefer Ha-Maftechos Le-Sichos Kodesh* 5695-5752 (Brooklyn, 2011), p. 991 (entry "Radio").

    Another series of beginners' *Tanya* classes over the radio were delivered in Israel, beginning shortly before Rabbi Wineberg's broadcasts, by Rabbi Nachum Goldshmidt (1905-1976). Rabbi Goldshmidt was a childhood friend of the Rebbe, and had learned in the Lubavitcher Yeshivah in Rostov from 1923. He was a gifted teacher of Chasidic thought, and after emigrating to Israel in 1935, devoted much energy to this cause. His radio *Tanya* classes (on the first fifteen chapters of *Likutei Amarim*) were published posthumously from his notes, in *Biurey Ranag al Ha-Tanya* (Bnei Brak, 1977).

93. The Rebbe was familiar with the printed notes from Rabbi Shmuel Grunem's classes, which he references regularly in his *reshimos* on *Tanya* (see below). But he was

A further significant development in the elucidation of *Tanya* was a masterful oral presentation by Rabbi Yoel Kahn. Rabbi Kahn was born in Russia in 1930, and emigrated with his family to Israel at the age of six. He studied in the Chabad *Yeshivas Achei Temimim* in Tel Aviv, where he learned from Chasidic mentor Rabbi Chaim Shaul Brook, and Talmudic scholar Rabbi Dovid Povarsky (who later led the Ponevezh Yeshiva).

Rabbi Kahn served for over forty years as the chief scholar responsible for memorizing[94] the Seventh Rebbe's highly complex talks as they were delivered, so that they could be later transcribed. He edited and annotated many of the Rebbe's sermons/discourses for publication, and he also compiled the Chabad Encyclopedia.[95] He has been a mentor and teacher to generations of Chasidim and is considered a uniquely authoritative exponent of Chabad thought.

Rabbi Kahn's in-depth, running commentary on the *Tanya* was formally recorded in 566 segments of approximately 20-30 minutes each. (The total run time is 219 hours!) Rabbi Kahn's delivery (in Yiddish) is energetic and renders subtle concepts with exceptional clarity. He draws extensively from the *Tomchei Temimim* school and from the Rebbe's comments (in Rabbi Korf's *Likutei Biurim*), to which he adds his own insights and analogies. The result is a blend of traditional and scholastic interpretation, which is both comprehensive and lucid.[96]

conscious that students in the Yeshivah may recall various interpretations that had not been written down. For the decision of the Rebbe's father not to send his son to the Lubavitcher Yeshivah, see Rabbi Chaim Miller, *Turning Judaism Outward* (Brooklyn: Kol Menachem, 2014), pp. 4-5 and notes 10-11. In his handwritten edits, the Rebbe would often write "Clarify how this was explained in *Tomchei Temimim*" (see for example his comments on chapter 38, p. 10 and 14 at http://www.hagaos.com/). Responding to one of Rabbi Wineberg's requests for clarification in 1963, the Rebbe wrote: "Are there not members of the community here, especially elders and Rabbis, who learned *Tanya* in *Tomchei Temimim*, or from the elders in their generation? If you can find a few such people, at least, clarify this matter with them" (*Teshurah*, Spritzer-Rosenfeld, 5767, p. 11).

94 Jewish law forbids the use of recording devices on the Sabbath and Festivals when most of these sermons were delivered.

95. *Sefer Ha-Arachim — Chabad*, 7 vols. (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1970-2009).

96. I mention Rabbi Kahn's treatment in particular, due to its exceptional clarity and reliability, but there are many other talented teachers of *Tanya* in our generation who have recorded and disseminated their oral classes. Among those available on the internet today include classes of (in Hebrew): Rabbis Chaim Shalom Deitsch, Zalman Gopin, Mendel Vechter, Yechezkel Sofer and Mordechai Elon; and in English: Rabbis Yosef Yitzchak Jacobson, Manis Friedman, Shneur Zalman Gafne, Yehoshua Gordon z'l, Moshe Weinberger, Ben-Tzion Krasnianski and Ronnie Fine. Two written commentaries to the *Tanya* which aim to offer a basic understanding are: Rabbi Avraham Alashvili, *Tanya Mevuar* (Nachlas Har Chabad: Nachlas Sefer, 1998), and Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchak Frank, *Tanya Le-Am* (Acre, Israel: 2010), 2 volumes.

While many of Rabbi Kahn's interpretations are his own original thoughts, his treatment has become authoritative and popular. Years before the rise of the internet, his lectures on *Tanya* enjoyed wide dissemination through the "Chasidus over the Telephone" network, and recently they have been adapted into written form.[97]

e.) Reshimos

After the Rebbe's passing in 1994, a project was initiated to publish the contents of his private notebooks (*reshimos*). Among the six hundred pages of *reshimos*, forty pages contained a near complete work entitled, "sources, notes and short comments on the Book for Inbetweeners." The notes had been composed in three drafts, the first dating back to the 1930s with later, expanded versions following, perhaps as late as the 1960s, when further sources had became available. In his introduction to the 1953 *Kehos* reprint of the *Tanya*, the Rebbe announced that the publication of a "complete *Tanya*" with annotations was "forthcoming," but for reasons that remain unclear, the work did not materialize in his lifetime.

In their current published form, the *reshimos* on *Tanya* are presented alongside the text of the *Tanya,* with elucidation and annotation from the editors. A parallel commentary, entitled *likutei perushim,* collects other previously published comments from the Rebbe on *Tanya,* including his annotations on *Lessons in Tanya,* as well as insights scattered in sermons and correspondence. (The references in this book do not distinguish between the *reshimos* and *likutei perushim,* and refer to them both simply as *Notes on Tanya*).[98]

f.) Recent Multi-volume Works

The most recent phase of commentaries on *Tanya* has been a series of multi-volume works (in Hebrew) based on the above material, and offering further clarification. These works are Rabbi Yekusiel Green's *Tanya im Maskil Le-Eitan* (20 volumes),[99] Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Ginsberg's *Peninei*

97 Rabbi Moshe Link (ed.), *Likutei Amarim Tanya im Biurim u-Peninim,* (Israel: Machon Ma'or She-be-Torah, 2013), 2 volumes. Additional volumes have appeared on the other sections of *Tanya*.

98. After gradually appearing in pamphlet form from 1995 onwards, the *Notes on Tanya* were eventually published in book form in 2014.

99. Rabbi Yekusiel Green, *Tanya im Maskil Le-Eitan* (Kfar Chabad, 1982-2014). Seven volumes are devoted to *Likutei Amarim*. A further four volumes explain *Sha'ar Ha-Yichud Ve-Ha-Emunah,* one volume on *Igeres Ha-Teshuvah* and five volumes on *Igeres Ha-Kodesh/Kuntres Acharon.* Additional volumes analyze various themes in the *Tanya*. Rabbi Green's work was first to gather all extant *Tanya* commentaries into one place and is helpful as an encyclopedic resource. It is, however, surpassed in clarity by the works of Rabbis Ginsberg and Altein.

Ha-Tanya (11 volumes),[100] and Rabbi Ya'akov Leib Altein's *Tanya im Perush Chasidus Mevu'eres* (4 of 7 projected volumes have been published).[101]

f.) Other works

In recent years, a number of commentaries have been published on the *Tanya* which are not predominantly based on the above material, and are largely written for (and by) non-Chabad audiences. These include Rabbi Adin Steinsalz's *Biur Tanya,*[102] Rabbi Yoram Abergel's *Betzur Yarum*,[103] Rabbi Moshe Wolfson's *Likutei Oros* and the *Tanya* lectures of his son-in-law, Rabbi Mordechai Silver,[104] Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Morgenstern's *Biurim Be-Sefer Ha-Tanya,*[105] and Moshe Hallamish's *Nesiv Le-Tanya*.[106]

g.) Sources of the Tanya

A number of works have sought to trace the numerous sources cited by the *Tanya*. Rabbi Jacob Immanuel Schochet was the first to make available

100. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Ginsberg, *Peninei Ha-Tanya* (Kfar Chabad: Ufaratzta 1993-2016). 11 volumes covering the entire *Likutei Amarim* and one volume on *Igeres Ha-Teshuvah*. *Peninei Ha-Tanya* is an extremely readable, exhaustive treatment of the *Tanya*, based primarily on the commentary of Rabbi Yoel Kahn. The author digresses frequently to elaborate on various themes as they are explained in Chabad discourses and the work is aimed at those that have studied in Chabad Yeshivos (and are not offended by the author's messianist beliefs, which are reiterated throughout the book).

101. Rabbis Ya'akov Leib Altein *et. al*, *Likutei Amarim Tanya im Perush Chasidus Mevu'eres* (Brooklyn: Heichal Menachem, 2008-2016), 4 volumes covering chapters 1-29. Rabbi Altein's work is the most rigorous *Tanya* commentary to date, and is pitched primarily to those that have studied in Yeshivos (both non-Chabad and Chabad).

102. Rabbi Adin Even-Israel/Steinsalz, *Biur Tanya* (Jerusalem: Sifrei Milsa, 1997), 8 volumes, is based on a series of orally delivered classes by the author, adapted for publication in Hebrew by Meir Hanegbi. Part of the commentary has appeared in English in Rabbi Yaakov Tauber and Yaacov David Shulman (trans.), *Opening the Tanya* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), on chapters 1-12; *Learning from the Tanya* (2005), on chapters 13-26; and *Understanding the Tanya* (2007), on chapters 27-37. Rabbi Steinsaltz does draw from some of the texts mentioned above, but the commentary is largely his own thoughts and elaborations. Aimed at a general audience unfamiliar with Chasidic literature, the work has enjoyed a considerable degree of popularity.

103. Rabbi Yoram Abergel, *Betzur Yarum* (Netivot, Israel: Kol Rina, 1997-2013), 7 volumes (2 volumes on *Igeres Ha-Teshuvah* and five volumes on *Likutei Amarim* chapters 1-29). Rabbi Abergel was a leading Sefardic Rabbi in Israel until his untimely passing in 2015, at the age of 58.

104 Rabbi Moshe Wolfson, *Likutei Oros* (Brooklyn 2009), on chapters 1-7; Rabbi Silver's lectures have been adapted in: Rabbi Zev Reichman, *Path to the Tree of Life* (Judaica Press, 2014-16), 2 volumes, on chapters 1-19.

105. On chapters 1-24, printed in *Yam Ha-Chochmah* 5769, (Jerusalem, 2009), pp. 455-565,

106 Moshe Hallamish, *Nesiv Le-Tanya: Biurim Be-Ha'aros Le-Sefer Shel Beinonim* (Jerusalem 2005), offers extensive annotations and insights into all 53 chapters.

an extensive list of sources,[107] and the subsequent publication of the Lubavticher Rebbe's *reshimos,* added to this field considerably. Drawing on these two works, further source lists were presented by Rabbi Avraham Alashvili in *Tanya Mevuar,*[108] Rabbi Ya'akov Leib Altein in *Chasidus Mevu'eres and* Moshe Hallamish in *Nesiv Le-Tanya*. A recent annotated *Tanya*, building on all these resources, and adding further cross-references to published works of Rabbi Shneur Zalman (and other classical texts), has been published by *Pe'er Mikdashim*.[109]

THE "PRACTICAL TANYA"

While many excellent summaries of the *Tanya* have been written to convey its message, without the reader having to decipher the complex Hebrew original,[110] somehow, the *Tanya's* "magic" only seems to work if you study the text itself. Therefore, while I have preferred in the past to adapt Chasidic works rather than to translate them, I have opted in this case for a direct translation with commentary.

107. Rabbi Jacob Immanuel Schochet, *Ma'arei Mekomos Ba-Sefer Ha-Tanya* (Brooklyn: Kehos 1987).

108. See note 96.

109. Rabbi Moshe Yehudah Kroll *et. al, Sefer Likutei Amarim Tanya* (Bnei Brak: Pe'er Mikdashim, 2014).

110. Summaries of each chapter were first prepared by the Third Lubavitcher Rebbe, *Tzemach Tzedek* (see note 73). For a list of works summarizing the *Tanya* see Mondshine, *Torath Habad,* pp. 200-206. Helpful summaries are also found in the *Tanya* commentaries of Rabbis Green, Ginsberg and Altein (see notes 99-101). For recent, book-length chapter summaries see: Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz (Yehuda Hanegbi trans.), *The Long Shorter Way: Discourses on Chassidic Thought* (New Jersey: Jason Aronson, 1988; reprinted by Maggid Books, Jerusalem, 2014); Rabbi Shmuel Weinfeld, *Simanei Ha-Amarim,* (Jerusalem: Eshkol, 1990); Shulamis Shmida, *Tanya Ohr Ayn Sof* (Israel, 2008); Robert Kremnizer, *Sparks of Tanya: A Simplified Guide To Knowing, Understanding and Applying Chabad Philosophy* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 2014), 2 vols.; Rabbi Nadav Cohen (Zalman Nelson trans.), *G.P.S. For The Soul: A Clear, Easy to Understand Exploration of the Tanya's Essential Concepts* (Kfar Chabad: Chish, 2014). Audio chapter summaries are available from Rabbi Manis Friedman. For general themes of the *Tanya* see: Nissan Mindel, *Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, volume 2, The Philosophy of Chabad* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 1973; revised edition, 2007); Roman A. Foxbrunner, *Habad: The Hasidism of R. Shneur Zalman of Lyady* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1992); Rabbi Tuvia Blau, *Ner Limshichi: Iyunim ve-Ha'aros Be-Tanya Kadisha* (Jerusalem: Chazak, 2014; third edition); Yechiel Harari, *The Psychology and Biography of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot, Sifre Chemed, 2015). Since the structure and content of the *Tanya* has been amply reviewed in these works, I will not delve into the matter here.

This has posed a number of challenges. First, the Hebrew text of the *Tanya* is extremely hard to translate since, besides its propensity for long, run-on sentences, the language is dense and esoteric. A direct, word-for-word translation without any elucidation or commentary would therefore be virtually incomprehensible to the uninitiated reader. I have attempted to solve these problems in this edition by adding extensive interpolations and comments in a lighter typeface, offset from the actual translation, which appears in bold.

In the published *Tanya* commentaries that are available, there is a tendency to elaborate upon the slightest of details, in an attempt to unearth the enormous insight buried within the text. While this material is often fascinating, I have tried to avoid this type of exegesis out of the concern that *Tanya* study should not become a totally cerebral exercise. Ultimately, the *Tanya* is a guide to "worshiping G-d with the heart and the mind,"[111] and I have tried to capture this emphasis in the commentary. When translating terms and explaining the text, my concern has always been: What does this mean for us readers, practically speaking, as we struggle to experience G-d and worship Him?

I have endeavored to render the *Tanya* clear and understood, without unnecessary embellishment. If a passage is self-explanatory with a plain translation, I leave it at that. On the other hand, an esoteric phrase or complex citation might require a whole page of commentary to be understood. My concerns are always: 1.) translate, 2.) clarify and 3.) render practical, as briefly and as clearly as possible. It is due to this emphasis that I have named this work the *Practical Tanya*.[112]

Another important theme in the commentary is the *flow of argument* in the text. In many instances, it is not immediately clear why the author introduces certain ideas or citations. Other passages seem, at first glance, repetitive. Making extensive use of the published *Tanya* commentaries, I have tried to discern the meticulous inner structure of the text, pointing out how each phrase continues from the previous one, and what unstated questions the author might implicitly be answering. In a similar vein, I have also tried to indicate how each chapter follows from the previous one, and

111. Handwritten note of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, reproduced in *Teshurah,* Block-Wenger 2016, p. 90.

112. The *Tanya* is, of course, inherently practical without my commentary, as it was based on actual advice that the author offered to his disciples. Also, by using this title I do not wish to imply that all the other excellent commentaries on the *Tanya* are impractical. I simply aim to highlight that my primary concern has been to render the text as a clear, practical guide — not to detract in any way from the important endeavor of plumbing the depths of the text and demonstrating the wisdom in its smallest nuances.

which clusters of chapters seem to be addressing a single theme. I have also subdivided each chapter into sections, each with their own heading, to make study easier and the *Tanya's* structure more apparent.

To understand and elucidate the text I have relied primarily on three commentaries: The Lubavitcher Rebbe's *Notes on Tanya,* Rabbi Yoel Kahn's lectures and Rabbi Yehoshua Korf's *Likutei Biurim*.[113] Since these works have been drawn upon extensively, in almost every line of this book, I have not cited them each time. I have, of course, adapted their ideas into my own words, and, where necessary, added my own elaborations to bring out the practical relevance of the text.[114]

The *Tanya* makes hundreds of citations from Scripture, *Talmud, Midrash, Zohar,* texts of Lurianic Kabbalah and other classic works, all of which are sourced in my translation. As is common in Rabbinic works from this period, citations are also made for linguistic/stylistic purposes. For example, a scriptural verse may be employed, not to offer an original insight or proof, but simply to add a certain richness to the text. Sometimes the citation will be altered to fit the syntax of the *Tanya*, with a change of tense, wording or other slight modifications.[115] In all these cases I have presented such phrases as actual citations, noting their source in parentheses, so that the reader gets a sense of how the *Tanya* text has been woven together. It also makes clear to the English reader why the *Tanya* sometimes makes use of seemingly extravagant or "flowery" wording, because it is, in fact, borrowing from Scripture or another classic work.[116]

113. Discussed above, pp. xxv-xxviii. The works of Ginsberg and Altein, which are based on these three sources, have also been helpful in clarifying certain passages.

114. A statement attributed to the Fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Shmuel Schneersohn, sanctioned students to offer commentaries on the *Tanya*, even if the student could not be certain of their authenticity, provided that the insights were of practical relevance in worship (Rabbi Shalom Dov Ber Schneersohn, *Igros Kodesh,* vol. 2, p. 720; Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, *Sefer Ha-Sichos* 5702, p. 83). The Seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe greatly encouraged his disciples to think and write creatively in both Talmudic and Chasidic teachings. See sources in Golomb, *Sha'arei Limud,* p. 33-5.

115. The precise use of citations and their "modification" from original sources, receives much scholarly attention in the Rebbe's *reshimos.*

116. Regrettably, I have not always been able to include a translation of the words *yisborach* (blessed) or *baruch hu* (blessed is He), which appear frequently in the *Tanya* after G-d's name. In English, the term interrupts the flow to a greater extent than in Hebrew, and in a long, run-on sentence I have sometimes felt it necessary to omit it. I have also not rendered all the parentheses from the Hebrew text into the English translation, and, on occasion, I have added parentheses to the translation to make longer sentences more comprehensible.

In addition to direct citations, I have also added references to unidentified sources from which the *Tanya* seems to have drawn some of its themes and ideas. Many of these have already been noted in existing works mentioned above, and, in the limited time available to me for further research, I was able to identify quite a few additional sources.

The Hebrew text of the *Tanya* appears twice in this book. On the top of the page is the text of the classic Vilna edition, with which most existing students of the *Tanya* are already familiar; and below, the corrected, vocalized (*menukad*) Hebrew text appears, blended with the translation and commentary.[117]

In preparing the translation I have aimed to be as literal as possible, out of respect for the precision and sanctity of the original text. But good translation is always a judicious balance between precision and flow, and in a text as difficult as the *Tanya*, an entirely literal translation would often be unreadable. One significant modification I have made consistently is to switch the third person references ("he will come to realize") to the second person ("you will come to realize."). This, I believe, better captures in English the practical orientation of the text.

A PERSONAL NOTE

The *Tanya* has had an enormously positive influence on my life, and I hope that you, too, will benefit greatly from its wisdom. My first encounter with the book was in the summer of 1992, when I was a twenty year-old college student attending the *Ivy League Torah Study Program* in upstate New York. We only managed to study a few chapters that summer, but I was intrigued and purchased a set of *Lessons In Tanya* before returning to Leeds University, in England. That year, I studied the whole book, and even drew diagrams to summarize every chapter.

The *Tanya* opened a world of insight for me that I did not believe existed within Judaism. I had grown up with some traditional observance, and had attended Kenton United Synagogue, but I had found no real intellectual or spiritual stimulation in these activities. Being Jewish was important to me in a cultural sense—I mixed in the social circles of North-West London, and I was committed to marrying Jewish—but for my first twenty years I had

117. There has been an aversion to printing the *Tanya* text with vowels (*nekudos*), due to a Chasidic tradition which discouraged it (see Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, *Igros Kodesh,* vol. 4, p. 267). In recent years, however, a number of vocalized editions have appeared, and, out of deference to the tradition, they are always printed as an accompaniment to the non-vocalized text.

seen no indication that Judaism offered real insight into higher living. For me, being Jewish was just an ethnicity, and sometimes a challenging one.

The *Tanya* changed all this. In these pages, I discovered that Judaism was intellectually sophisticated, not only in the Maimonidean sense of abstract philosophy, but as a deep psychology. The *Tanya* was extremely relatable; it offered a "guide to the soul" which resonated as real and applicable. And its sublime, esoteric terminology added a transcendent dimension so that the *Tanya's* wisdom was directed simultaneously at the body, mind, emotions and spirit. Somehow, all these psychospiritual tools had been seamlessly integrated with traditional Judaism, the Biblical and Rabbinic laws with which I was (to some extent) familiar. As I absorbed more of the *Tanya's* wisdom, I experienced an inner transformation.

When Rabbi Yeremi and Shoshana Angyalfi, the Chabad representatives in Leeds, invited me for the first time to stay for Shabbos in the spring of 1993, they were shocked to discover that a student in the university, who showed no outward signs of being a Chasid, was familiar with the entire *Tanya!*

Providence works in strange ways. Five years later, I married the Angyalfi's oldest daughter, Chani. Countless times, my father-in-law would encourage me, "You must translate the *Tanya*!" but I was always deterred by the enormity of the project.

Now that the first part has been completed, I feel that a circle has been closed. I hope this work will repay my "debt," in some small measure, to this special and sacred book.

Amid the elation of having translated and explained all fifty-three chapters of the *Tanya*, I am reminded of the Rebbe's words to "the participants in the publication of the small edition of the Bilingual *Tanya,*" in 1981.

"I take exception, however, to the comment, 'the project is now completed—not to imply, G-d forbid, that the publication part of it is in any way incomplete. But this part is only a prelude to the essential part of the project, namely, to disseminate this sacred book and its central message.... This task — to see to it that the book and its message reach every Jew, man and woman... is only in its beginning."[118]

118. Letter dated 21st *Iyar* 1981, reproduced in *Teshurah* Ohana-Gorman.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost I extend my gratitude to David and Lara Slager whose outstanding generosity has made this book possible, as well as most of my other works throughout the last decade. The Slager family have set an example to the Jewish community, both in their personal lives and with their outstanding philanthropic efforts towards an impressive array of causes across the globe. I wish David, Lara, and their precious children Hannah and Sara Malka, all the abundant blessings that they deserve.

I extend my heartfelt wishes to Rabbi Meyer Gutnick, co-founder and director of Kol Menachem publishing, who had the courage to invest in an unknown author, and since then has been an unfailing source of material support and moral encouragement for my work. Motivated by a great love for the Rebbe, and recognizing the urgency of spreading his Torah teachings, Rabbi Gutnick has chosen to invest his own natural talent at "getting things done" into a very worthy cause. In the merit of this, and all his many other impressive philanthropic efforts, may G-d bless him, together with his dear wife Shaindy, and all their wonderful children and grandchildren, with *chasidishe nachas* and only revealed and open goodness.

I am grateful to my father-in-law, Rabbi Yeremi Angyalfi for scrutinizing the entire text and offering many helpful corrections and comments; and to Rabbi Yisroel Dovid Klein, for critically reading the entire manuscript and checking many of the sources. I extend my thanks to Rabbi Shmuel Rabin for carefully checking the Hebrew texts. The beautiful cover of this book was designed by the exceptionally talented Yossi Belkin. I am also grateful to Adam Greiss, my teacher at the School of Visual Arts, for astute critique of the typographic design.

For assistance with proofreading I thank: Yehudis Homnick and Natalie Ling.

To my parents, Trevor and Denise Miller, for their love, for investing in my education and for supporting me in becoming a rabbi, even if they would have preferred I had become a doctor.

And finally, to my greatest support, my wife Chani, and to my wonderful children: Leah, Mendel, Mushka, Levi, Esther Miriam, Ariella and Menucha, my greatest pride and joy.

Chaim Miller

16th *Tammuz*[119] 5776

119. The day on which the Torah was first translated, into Greek. See *Likutei Sichos* vol. 24, pp. 1-11.