THE SLAGER EDITION

The

PRACTICAL TANYA

PART THREE

LETTER ON REPENTANCE

RABBI

SHNEUR ZALMAN *of* LIADI

ADAPTED BY

CHAIM MILLER

GUTNICK LIBRARY
OF JEWISH CLASSICS

ISBN-13: 978-1-934152-64-5 | ISBN-10: 1-934152-64-1

© Copyright 2018 by Chaim Miller

Published and distributed by: Kol Menachem, 827 Montgomery Street, Brooklyn, NY 11213.

1-888-580-1900 | 1-718-951-6328 | 1-718-953-3346 (Fax)

www.kolmenachem.com | orders@kolmenachem.com

Contact the author at: chaimmiller@gmail.com | rabbichaimmiller.com

First Edition — 2018.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission from the copyright holder, except in the case of brief quotations in reviews for inclusion in a magazine, newspaper or broadcast.

Praise for *The Practical Tanya*

"An astonishing accomplishment... and suitable for anyone... even those who do not read in Hebrew and are not familiar with esoteric texts."

—Rabbi Moshe Wolfson, *Mashgiach Ruchani Yeshivas Torah Ve-Da'as.*

"It is wonderful that this sacred text has now been clarified in a way that anyone can benefit from it."

—Rabbi Gavriel Zinner, author *Nitei Gavriel,* Rav of Congregation *Nitei Gavriel.*

"An important contribution... makes the flow of the *Tanya* very clear for all who study.

—Rabbi Yehuda Leib Schapiro, *Yeshiva Gedola* Rabbinical College of Greater Miami.

"With a masterful command of the English language, Rabbi Miller has managed to open up the *Tanya* to the wider public... not an easy task!"

—Rabbi Nochum Kaplan, Director, *Merkos* Office of Education.

"A lucid and scholarly translation... will undoubtedly assist multitudes."

—Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky, *halachic* authority, author of *Vedibarta Bam* series.

"Brings the warmth, genius, and inspiration of the *Tanya* to life.... This work will certainly help inspire souls."

—Rabbi Zev Reichman, Director, Mechina Program, Yeshiva University.

"Rabbi Chaim Miller has made it accessible to everyone.... This book will awaken, inspire, and challenge you."

—Daniel Matt, translator of *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition.*

"Quite simply the best version in the English language."

—Rabbi Dov Greenberg, Chabad of Stanford University.

"A wonderful work which makes the *Tanya* accessible and understandable to a whole new generation of spiritual explorers... beautifully written."

—Rabbi Mark Wildes, Director, *Manhattan Jewish Experience.*

"A new classic.... Practical and relevant in the fast-moving, rapidly-changing technological era in which we live."

—Rabbi Mendel Lew, Stanmore & Canons Park Synagogue, U.K.

"Rabbi Chaim Miller's crisp, lucid and contemporary translation promises... concrete strategies for personal spiritual growth."

—Henry Abramson, Dean, Touro College, Brooklyn.

UPPER TESHUVAH

111 Chapter Eight
Shifting to "Upper *Teshuvah*."

1. G-d's compassion.

2. The definition of "Upper *Teshuvah*."

3. The process of "Upper *Teshuvah*."

119 Chapter Nine
Living at "Upper Teshuvah."

1. Rebuilding your emotional core.

2. Worship at the level of "Upper *Teshuvah*."

3. A special type of "Upper *Teshuvah*."

127 Chapter Ten
More on "Upper *Teshuvah*."

1. Absorbing "Upper *Teshuvah*."

2. "Upper *Teshuvah*" and prayer.

3. "Lower *Teshuvah*" remains relevant.

4. Combining "Lower" and "Upper *Teshuvah*."

139 Chapter Eleven
The Joy of *Teshuvah*.

1. Feeling joy all the time.

2. Proof that G-d always forgives.

3. Why daily atonement is acceptable.

4. Recalling your sins.

153 Chapter Twelve
Atonement in This World.

1. Accepting suffering joyously.

2. An illustration.

INTRODUCTION

1 Author's Title Page

ROLE OF FASTING

5 Chapter One
The Definition of *Teshuvah*.

1. Atonement.

2. The *mitzvah* of *teshuvah*.

3. The role of fasting and suffering.

4. Fasts connected with *teshuvah*.

33 Chapter Two
The Role of Fasting.

1. A post-atonement "Gift" to G-d.

2. Fasts connected with *teshuvah*.

3. The "Secret" of fasting.

45 Chapter Three
Redeeming Your Soul

1. Three views of fast calculation.

2. When not to fast.

3. A practical solution.

4. A more stringent approach.

5. Is there a limit to charity?

LOWER TESHUVAH

59 Chapter Four
G-d's Name in Your Soul.

1. Some questions on *teshuvah*.

2. The soul's root.

3. The Tetragrammaton.

4. Tetragrammaton in the soul.

79 Chapter Five
How Sins Affect Your Soul.

1. The soul's connection in this world.

2. The spiritual meaning of *kareis*.

3. The delayed effects of *kareis*.

87 Chapter Six
The Meaning of "Exile."

1. The (non) effect of *kareis* during exile.

2. Why the wicked prosper.

95 Chapter Seven
Keeping it Authentic.

1. Two suggestions for authentic teshuvah.

2. Feeling G-d's presence more.

3. A meditation to humiliate the ego.

4. The cumulative effect of smaller sins.

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

THE THIRD BOOK OF TANYA

The *Tanya* was first published in 1796 as a single volume containing two separate works, *The Book for Inbetweeners* (*Sefer shel Beinonim*), and *Gateway to Unity and Faith* (*Sha'ar Ha-Yichud Ve-Ha-Emunah*).[1] These have been translated and elucidated in volumes one and two of this series.[2] The present work, *Letter on Repentance* (*Igeres Ha-Teshuvah*), appeared as a third section in later printings of the *Tanya*, and was the final section of the work to appear in the author's lifetime.[3]

While *Letter on Repentance* did not appear in the first published edition of the *Tanya,* it had already been in circulation in manuscript form for a number of years. The author had begun publicly distributing hand-written copies of the *Tanya* as early as 1792, and surviving manuscripts from this period speak of the "Small Tanya," a reference to the *Letter on Repentance* before it was formally named.[4]

After its initial publication in 1796, in Slavita, Ukraine, the *Tanya* was published for a second time in 1799 in Zolkiva (Zhovkva), Galicia, by R' Ya'akov son of Rabbi Naftali Hertz of Brod.

1. For bibliographic details see Rabbi Yehoshua Mondshine, *Torath Habad: Bibliographies of Habad Hasiduth Books,* volume 1, (Brooklyn: Kehos, 1981, Hebrew), pp. 15-16.

2. Rabbi Chaim Miller, *The Practical Tanya, Part One: The Book for Inbetweeners* (Brooklyn: Kol Menachem, 2016), and *Part Two: Gateway to Unity and Faith* (Brooklyn: Kol Menachem, 2018). For biographical information on the *Tanya's* author, a history of its composition and printing, the origin of the *Tanya's* teachings and its methodology, see my "Translator's Introduction" in Part One. I will only add here additional information pertinent to this volume.

3. A later printing, published posthumously by the author's sons in 1814, included a fourth part, *Sacred Letter* (*Igeres Ha-Kodesh*) containing various scholarly letters written by the author; and a fifth part, *Final Tract* (*Kuntres Acharon*), containing material which the author had composed at the same time the original *Tanya* was being written.

4. Since the *Letter*, too, begins with the Hebrew word *Tanya,* and it is a much shorter work. For details of the early circulation of *Tanya* manuscripts see my "Translator's Introduction" to Part One, p. xiii.

R' Ya'akov was an active publisher during the 1790s and 1800s, and was instrumental in the printing of a variety of works, including volumes of *Midrash, Musar* and *Halacha* and even one other Chasidic work.[5]

R' Ya'akov's second printing of the *Tanya*, in 1799, clearly violated the five year ban against any further publication, pronounced in the Rabbinic approbations to the original 1796 edition.[6] In his Publisher's Forward, R' Ya'akov stated that his community in Galicia did not have open trade for Jewish books with Ukraine, where the *Tanya* had appeared, apparently defending his printing of the work during the five year period.

> *"I have received many requests to publish this holy book which was printed in another country, whose doors are closed and locked. For this reason this work has not reached our country, and, as far as I have seen, not one copy is to be found in the city."*[7]

R' Ya'akov had obtained a manuscript copy of the "Small Tanya," and published it for the first time in his 1799 edition. He introduced the work with the following note.

> *"In my possession is a fine pearl from the esteemed author, a handwritten pamphlet which discusses matters relating to repentance, and for the benefit of the public it is being published here."*[8]

The work was not yet named *Letter on Repentance,* and simply bore the title *"Tanya Part Three: an explanation of matters pertaining to repentance."* It was also not divided into chapters.

The third section of *Tanya* was not printed in the author's homeland for almost a decade after the appearance of the initial two parts, first appearing in the 1806 Shklov edition. During the interim period, the author, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, had been imprisoned and released twice, in 1798 and 1800, and had subsequently relocated to Liadi. After his release, the length,

5. In 1799 R' Ya'akov re-published *Igeres Ha-Kodesh* of Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk (Rabbi Shneur Zalman's senior colleague and teacher), which had first appeared in 1794. For an overview of the publishing activity of R' Ya'akov see Rabbi Ephraim Grossberger, "The Publisher R' Ya'akov ben Rav Naftali Hertz from Brod," in *Ohr Yisrael,* issue *27,* (Monsey, 2002), pp. 206-210.

6. *The Practical Tanya, Part One,* pp. 6, 8.

7. Publisher's Forward of R' Ya'akov son of Rabbi Naftali Hertz of Brod to the 1799 edition of *Tanya,* p. 74b, (reproduced in Mondshine, p. 40). The point is reiterated in the Rabbinic approbations which R' Ya'akov received (ibid. p. 42).

8. 1799 Edition, p. 67a, Mondshine, p. 39.

depth, and sophistication of Rabbi Shneur Zalman's discourses increased noticeably.

It is therefore significant that, during this period of intensification of his teachings, the author carried out a major revision of the third part of *Tanya* before its publication. While the first and second parts of the printed version of *Tanya* also differ from their earlier manuscript form, the changes are minimal when compared with the editing and reworking of the third part, that appeared in 1806.[9] The Fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Shalom Dov Ber Schneersohn noted that *Letter on Repentance, "was rewritten by the Rebbe after (his imprisonment in) Petersburg in a different style.... We see that several passages, when revised the second time, are expanded upon, with more profound scholarship."*[10] In a similar vein, the Seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, observed: "*In Letter on Repentance the discussions of Kabbalah, Chasidus and classical sources are more developed than in the rest of the Tanya."*[11]

The 1806 version has became the standard edition, forming the basis of subsequent printing and study.[12] It also formally named the work as *Letter on Repentance*.

While a relatively small book of just twelve chapters, *Letter on Repentance* is far longer than one would expect from a "letter," (it also does not appear to ever have been sent as a letter). The name therefore invites some interpretation.

In one of his talks, the Rebbe offered two insightful explanations. Practically, the *Letter* is a guide to *spiritual recovery*, the restitution from a state of sin. Recovery is not supposed to be a permanent activity: you recover, and then you move on. Therefore the work was named a "letter," to emphasize its *temporary status,* for, unlike a book, one generally disposes of a letter after use.

The mystical dynamic of *teshuvah* is a process of reinventing oneself through drawing on transcendent energies. In the language of Kabbalah, *teshuvah* is powered by *Binah,* the Divine "womb," from which the energies

9. The first edition is printed in *Likutei Amarim First Versions, Based on Earliest Manuscripts* (Kehos, 1981). Rabbi Shneur Zalman's hand written edits, used to produce the second edition, have survived. For a facsimile, see Mondshine p. 19.

10. Rabbi Shalom Dov Ber Schneersohn, *Toras Shalom* (Kehos, 1947), p. 55.

11. Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Toras Menachem,* vol. 60 (Lahak, 2017), p. 195.

12. There were, however, a few subsequent printings of the first edition. See Mondshine p. 16, note 55. As noted in Part One of the *Practical Tanya,* this work is based on the text of the 1900 Vilna edition, which contains the "second edition" of *Igeres Ha-Teshuvah*.

that conduct the universe are "born." *Teshuvah* brings a person to be "re-born" by channeling fresh transcendent energies from *Binah*.[13]

A letter has the specific connotation of content that has been *sent from one place to another. Teshuvah,* the Rebbe suggested, resembles a "letter" which "sends" healing energies from a distant, transcendent place (*Binah*), down to the penitent on earth.[14]

TESHUVAH IN JEWISH MYSTICAL SOURCES

The third part of *Tanya* is a discussion of the theory and practice of *teshuvah* (repentance), both from a legal/Talmudic and a mystical perspective. The *Letter* builds on a vast Rabbinic and Kabbalistic literature on the topic,[15] and seeks to guide the reader on a path of *teshuvah* that is fitting for the emerging Chasidic movement.

One of the major innovations of the Kabbalah's treatment of *teshuvah* is an emphasis on the spiritual damage caused by sin and the corresponding healing properties of *teshuvah.*

The Zohar teaches:

> *"'If a man opens a pit or if a man digs a pit (and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls into it)'* (*Exodus* 21:33). *What is written next? 'The owner of the pit shall make restitution...'* (ibid., 34). *If such is the case in this situation, all the more so with one who harms the world by his sins! ... Teshuvah restores everything—repairing above, repairing below, mending oneself, mending the whole world."*[16]

13. See *Zohar, Raya Mehemna,* 3, 122a.

14. See Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Sichos Kodesh* 5731, vol. 2, pp. 21-24. The Rebbe also notes that the first two parts of *Tanya* correspond to the lower energies of *Zeir Anpin* (*Sefer Shel Beinonim*), and *Malchus* (*Sha'ar Ha-Yichud Ve-Ha-Emunah*). Presumably this is because the first book of *Tanya* is aimed at *emotional management,* reflecting *Zeir Anpin,* the realm of emotions; and the second book of *Tanya* is aimed at achieving *awareness of G-d's presence* in the world, an expression of *Malchus,* the Divine power of manifestation.

15. For a good review in English of *teshuvah* in classical Jewish sources see Shimon Shokek, *Kabbalah and the Art of Being: The Smithsonian Lectures* (London and New York: *Routledge*, 2001), pp. 127-147. For a list of important Rabbinic works on *teshuvah* see idem., p. 160, n. 4.

16. *Zohar* 3, 122a (Daniel Matt trans., *The Zohar, Pritzker Edition,* volume 8, (Stanford University Press, 2014), pp. 290-1).

The principle is explained beautifully by Rabbi Eliyahu de Vidas in his *Reishis Chochmah.*

> *"The word teshuvah refers to the intention to restore previous levels and repair them to their original status. This can be compared to the removal of water flowing from a fountain, in order to nourish various gardens, orchards, fields, and vineyards; along comes some fool who diverts the (channel of) water toward the trash, or to some empty place where it will serve no purpose. The owner of the fountain will be angry at him, first because he caused this watering of his fine gardens to be stopped, and secondly because he spoiled and broke the (original) channel."*
>
> *"The consequences of actual sin are much more grave than in this case. For if one spoils the channels of the divine flow from coming to their appropriate places, by diverting them, he has angered the King, the G-d of Hosts; he takes holiness and diverts it to impurity; he causes a place that should be dry and barren (of support) and waters and saturates it.... Teshuvah repairs the broken channels, restores the flow to its proper place, everywhere according to the flaw within him."*[17]

The *Zohar* develops this theme further, depicting sin as causing a fragmentation in G-d's name, the Tetragrammaton. Specifically, it is the letter *hei* that becomes detached from the other three letters of the name, a defect which is restored by *teshuvah.* Following this insight, the word *teshuvah* can be read as *tashuv-hei,* "return the *hei.*"

In one key passage, the Zohar delineates different levels of *teshuvah.*

> *"There are many types of teshuvah a person can do, all good, but not all are identical in character."*
>
> *"One person may have been a complete rasha (wicked human) all his life, transgressing many prohibitions, but subsequently he regrets his actions and confesses them. Afterward he does neither good (acts of kindness and charity), nor bad (transgressions). Such a person will certainly be forgiven by the Blessed Holy One, but he will not merit 'upper teshuvah.'"*

17. Rabbi Eliyahu De Vidas, *Reishis Chochmah, Sha'ar ha-Teshuvah,* ch. 2, sect. 2. The translation here is from Daniel M. Horwitz, *A Kabbalah and Jewish Mysticism Reader* (Jewish Publication Society, 2016), p. 221.

> *"Another person, after repenting of his sins and achieving atonement, will follow in the path of the commandments and devote himself with all his abilities to revere and love the Blessed Holy One. Such a person will merit 'lower teshuvah,' called (returning the) hei (of the Tetragrammaton). This is 'lower teshuvah.'"*
>
> *"Then there is the person, who after regretting his sins and repenting, studies the Torah with reverence and love of the Blessed Holy One, not with the expectation of reward."*
>
> *"Such a person will merit the letter vav, (of the Tetragrammaton) who is the 'son' of yud-hei (of the Tetragrammaton. Then the vav) is called the son of Binah (since Binah is composed of the word ben, 'son,' plus the letters yud and hei). And this person will cause vav to return to (the first) hei (of the Tetragrammaton)."*
>
> *"And that is why the word 'teshuvah' means return ('tashuv,') the vav to hei."*[18]

Letter on Repentance is largely built on this passage from the *Zohar*. Rabbi Shneur Zalman seeks to clarify the meaning of these two levels of "upper" and "lower" *teshuvah*, both in terms of the mystical processes the Zohar indicates, and their practical implementation as states of consciousness. Chapters four to seven expound upon 'lower *teshuvah,'* and chapters eight to twelve focus on "upper *teshuvah."*

THE ROLE OF FASTING

The first three chapters of *Letter on Repentance* are devoted to the question: Is fasting a necessary component of *teshuvah*?

Some historical context is in order here. The *Talmud*, in its various discussions of *teshuvah,* does not stipulate fasting as a requirement for repentance. Maimonides, in his codification of *Talmudic* law, states simply, *"What is teshuvah? That the sinner stops the sin, removing it from his thoughts, deciding in his heart not to do it again."*[19]

While this establishes *teshuvah* as a purely mental process, in subsequent centuries, a demanding regimen of fasting became the normative prescription in Rabbinic literature for those seeking to repent. This was largely a result of the literature of the *Chasidei Ashkenaz,* a group

18. *Zohar, Raya Mehemna,* 3, 123a.

19. *Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Teshuvah* 2:2; see below pp. 19, 27.

of pietists active in German Rhineland during the 12th and 13th centuries.[20] While the *Chasidei Ashkenaz* were a relatively fringe group, their approach to *teshuvah* proved to be extremely influential after being adopted extensively by the mainstream Halachic responsa in the 12th-15th centuries. As a result *teshuvah* came to mean, in the eyes of many people, a mental process that had to be accompanied by a Rabbinically advised penitential schedule, (which usually included fasting).[21]

This unique development of medieval Ashkenazi Judaism was not an organic development of earlier practice. *Letter on Repentance* makes this clear in chapter one, and stresses the *Talmudic/Maimonidean* model: *"The mitzvah of teshuvah, from the Torah is: just the decision to stop sinning."*[22] In other words, no fasting at all is technically required.

This discouragement of fasting accords with the popular characterization of the *Ba'al Shem Tov's* Chasidic movement as a form of pietism that rejected asceticism. For the *Besht*, *devekus* (Divine consciousness and emotional connection) was paramount, and self-mortification was likely to lead to sadness, a mood which compromises the capacity for *devekus.*

The following statement, by early Chasidic Master, Rabbi Ze'ev Wolf of Zhitomir is typical:

> *"I have heard that in the days of the Besht there was such a person who engaged in self-mortification... and the Besht said that in the world to come they are laughing at him. For the truth is that all of this is not necessary, particularly when one's heart is lacking in the essential worship, namely, devekus."*[23]

The *Besht* likewise similarly wrote to his disciple Rabbi Ya'akov Yosef of Polonye:

20. The penance literature of the *Chasidei Ashkenaz* was authored by Rabbi Shmuel *Ha-Chasid* of Speyer, his son Rabbi Yehudah *Ha-Chasid* of Speyer/Regensburg and by Rabbi Yehudah's disciple, Rabbi Elazar of Worms. The two innovations in this literature about *teshuvah* are: 1. that the sinner must go to a Rabbi in order to receive a prescription for penance; 2. that this prescription would invariably require fasting and other modes of physical suffering. For an exhaustive discussion see Emese Kozma, *The Practice Of Teshuvah (Penance) In The Medieval Ashkenazi Jewish Communities* (Phd dissertation, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, 2012).

21. See below pp. 23-24.

22. See below, p. 17-23.

23. Rabbi Ze'ev Wolf of Zhitomir, *Ohr ha-Meir*, p. 43b.

> *"You write that you are forced to fast, and my innards grew angry from what I read."*
>
> *"I hereby add by a most holy oath... that you must not endanger yourself in this way for this is a depressing and sad act. G-dliness will not rest where there is depression, but rather, where there is the joy of a mitzvah."*[24]

However, as *Letter on Repentance* subsequently demonstrates, the notion that Chasidism rejected the approach of fasting is an oversimplification.

First, Rabbi Shneur Zalman does not reject outright the literature of the *Chasidei Ashkenaz*. His point is that fasting is not an *intrinsic* or *necessary* part of the *teshuvah* process and can therefore be dispensed with. He does, however, concur that penitential fasting could (in certain circumstances) assist with atonement, the Divine forgiveness that follows *after* a person's *teshuvah*.[25]

There is another body of pietistic, penitential literature, which in many ways resembles the works of the *Chasidei Ashkenaz,* though was composed independently from it—the texts from the school of Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, (*Arizal,* 16th century). Basing himself on Kabbalistic *gematria* (numerology), *Arizal* recommended a rigorous scheme of fasting for a variety of different transgressions, often along with accompanying meditations.[26]

This material was accepted more enthusiastically, though not unreservedly, by Rabbi Shneur Zalman. In principle, he writes, the fasts recommended by *Arizal* should be carried out, but only if they will not be injurious to health, in which case they can be substituted by charitable donations. For those who are able to carry out the fasts, certain *halachic* leniencies are encouraged, to ease the process.[27]

24. *Shivchei Ha-Besht* p. 105.

25. For the distinction between *teshuvah* and atonement, see the extensive discussions in Chapter One.

26. These are reproduced in Rabbi Meir Poppers (ed.), *Sha'ar Ha-Yichudim, Sha'ar Tikunei Avonos;* Rabbi Emmanuel Chai Ricchi, *Mishnas Chasidim, Maseches Teshuvah;* Rabbi Naftali Hertz Bacharach, *Eimek Ha-Melech, Sha'ar Tikunei Avonos.*

27. These are discussed in Chapter Three. Rabbi Shneur Zalman frames this activity (in Chapter Two), not as a means of securing atonement, but in the spirit of the sacrifices brought in Temple times, as a post-atonement "gift" to G-d, so as to be pleasing again in His eyes.

Beshtian Chasidism, then, at least in the *Tanya's* formulation, did not reject fasting outright; it followed a more nuanced approach. Early Chasidism, it turns out, was somewhat encouraging of fasting, and saw great spiritual benefits to the activity, in those cases where it would not compromise health.[28]

Needless to say, the *Letter on Repentance* does not constitute an exhaustive treatment of the topic of *teshuvah,* a theme which is expanded upon greatly in the later discourses of Rabbi Shneur Zalman and his successors.[29] The Seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe made *teshuvah* a central theme of both his public discourse and communal work, and he vigorously encouraged the study of *Letter on Repentance,* often advising that it be studied before the other parts of *Tanya*.[30]

COMMENTARIES ON THE THIRD BOOK OF TANYA

The third book of *Tanya, Letter on Repentance,* has been the subject of significant commentary and analysis. Some of the commentaries on books one and two also discuss book three, so I will recap these first. Since they have already been described in the "Translator's Introduction" to book one, I will mention them just briefly here.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Notes on Tanya*[31] and various *sichos* (talks).[32]

28. Today, however, the recommendations of *Arizal* appear to be rarely, if ever, practiced in the Chasidic community.

29. For a comparative survey of *teshuvah* in the writings of the Chabad leaders see Dov Schwartz, *Chabad Thought: From Beginning to End* (Heb). (Bar Ilan, 2011), chapter 5.

30. See Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Igros Kodesh,* volume 17, pp. 46, 107; volume 21, p. 413.

31. Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Notes and brief comments to Sefer Shel Beinonim* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 2014). I refer to this work here as "*Notes on Tanya."*

32. While the Rebbe quotes all parts of the *Tanya* extensively throughout his vast corpus of published talks, *Letter on Repentance* is unique in that it merited a sustained, systematic treatment from him. These lectures, delivered during the years 1969-1970, have been reprinted a number of times; the best and most recent versions are found in *Likutei Sichos* volume 39 (Brooklyn: Kehos, 2001), pp. 121-160 (talks edited by the Rebbe); and in *Toras Menachem, Hisvaduyos* vols. 56-61 (Brooklyn: Lahak, 2016-2018), see index "Talks on *Letter on Repentance"* (talks transcribed by students and not edited by the Rebbe). The Rebbe also offered extensive commentary on his father's Kabbalistic notes to *Letter on Repentance* (*Likutei Sichos* ibid. pp. 51-159). For the Kabbalistic notes themselves see: *Likutei Levi Yitzchak, Ha'aros al Sefer Ha-Tanya* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 1970).

Rabbi Aharon Chitrik ed., *Likutei Amarim Tanya, Igeres Ha-Teshuvah, Be-Tziruf Ma'arei Mekomos, Likut Perushim, Shinui Nuscha'os,* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 1986), an anthology of comments on the *Tanya* found in the discourses of Chabad Rebbeim. This material is complex, and is, generally speaking, not aimed at clarifying the literal meaning of the text.

Rabbi Alexander Sender Yudasin (d. 1982), *Ha-Lekach Ve-Ha-Libuv* (Kfar Chabad, 1968), the second volume of this series contains commentary on *Igeres Ha-Teshuvah*.

Rabbi Yehoshua Korf (1905-2007), *Likutei Biurim Be-Sefer Ha-Tanya* (Brooklyn, 1968-1980), 2 vols.

Rabbi Yosef Wineberg (1917-2012), *Shiurim Be-Sefer Ha-Tanya, Igeres Ha-Teshuvah* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 1984, Yiddish); Rabbis Levy Wineberg and Shalom B. Wineberg (trans.), *Lessons in Tanya,* volume 3 (Brooklyn: Kehos, 1989, English).

Rabbi Yoel Kahn (b. 1930), (Rabbi Eliyahu Avraham Kirshenbaum ed.), *Igeres Ha-Teshuvah im biurei Ha-Rav Yoel Kahn* (Jerusalem: Mayanosecha, 2009). This is the best in-depth Hebrew commentary available.[33]

Rabbi Yekusiel Green, *Tanya im Maskil Le-Eitan, Igeres Ha-Teshuvah* (Kfar Chabad, 1987, Hebrew).

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Ginsberg, *Peninei Ha-Tanya, Igeres Ha-Teshuvah* (Kfar Chabad: Ufaratzta 1994).

Rabbi Adin Steinsalz *Biur Tanya,* (Jerusalem: Sifrei Milsa, 1997); one volume of this series is devoted to *Igeres Ha-Teshuvah*.

Rabbi Avraham Alashvili *Sha'ar Ha-Yichud Ve-Ha-Emunah ve-Igeres ha-Teshuvah in Perush Katzar* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 2015), is an expanded version of the author's *Tanya Mevuar* (Nachlas Har Chabad: Nachlas Sefer, 1998), and is the best short treatment of *Sha'ar Ha-Yichud Ve-Ha-Emunah*.

33. Rabbi Kahn's commentary on *Igeres Ha-Teshuvah* has also been adapted by Rabbi Moshe Link in his series, *Likutei Amarim Tanya im Biurim u-Peninim,* (Israel: Machon Ma'or She-be-Torah, 2013-4), but the adaptation of Kirshenbaum in this case is by far the superior work.

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

In addition to the above, *Letter on Repentance* has merited the following treatment devoted exclusively to this section of the *Tanya.*

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Katz, *Talelei Teshuvah* (2007), an exhaustive, in depth analysis of the text.

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. For assistance with proofreading I thank Chanan Maister.

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

Rosh Chodesh Sivan 5778