



As the Chasidic Movement grew in popularity and expanded, opposition to its teachings and practices increased. Particularly in the scholarly circles of Lithuania, opposition became fierce and eventually involved the secular authorities. Some of the leaders of Chasidism even left for the Holy Land. Rabbi Shneur Zalman prepared to do likewise, but instead returned to Lithuania to spread the Baal Shem Tov's doctrines there.

The battle continued over the next twenty years. After the passing of the saintly Gaon of Vilna, the strongest oppositional figure, strife erupted again more fiercely than ever. This time the focus of opposition was Rabbi Shneur Zalman, due in part to the great strength the movement had gathered under his leadership. But perhaps the strongest reason for the violent feelings was the publication of his seminal work, the Tanya. A special committee was formed with the express purpose of destroying Chasidism. It was decided to use the power of the central government in St. Petersburg to this end, and the Rebbe was accused of treason. Since the Rebbe had established a fund for aiding the indigent of the Holy Land, which was then under the sovereignty of Turkey and an enemy of Russia, the opponents accused him of disbursing funds to a foreign power. They also added the charge that in his teachings he denigrated the importance of kingship.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman was arrested and driven in the dreaded "Black Mary," a special vehicle reserved for the transport of the worst criminals, to the frightful Fortress of Petropavlovsk where he was detained for fifty-two days. He was endlessly interrogated regarding the charges and other matters of the Jewish faith in which the government interested itself.

The interrogators were greatly impressed by the strength of Rabbi Shneur Zalman, who preserved his composure in the most trying of circumstances, and answered their inquiries with extraordinary wisdom. Even in matters totally divorced from the trial proceedings, the gentle prison officials were able to see the great saintliness of their prisoner. Once, the Rebbe was interred in a room which was pitch black, as dark in the day as in the night. His only source of light was a small lamp. One day, at about two o'clock in the afternoon, the Rebbe was told that the time was already past midnight and he should go to sleep. "Right now," the Rebbe retorted, "the time is two hours and five minutes past noon."

The astonished jailers asked him how he could possibly know that, to which he replied: "Every day is illuminated by the twelve forms of the letters of the Ineffable Name (Tetragrammaton), while the night is illuminated by the twelve forms of the Name denoting G-d's Lordship. By experiencing these various forms I know how to distinguish between the day and night, and between one hour and the other."

During the term of the Rebbe's imprisonment, the Chief of Police had discussed the case with the Czar, telling him that he perceived the prisoner to be a saintly individual who was the victim of false charges stemming from jealousy and hatred. The Czar became curious to meet such an extraordinary person and decided to draw his own conclusions. He disguised himself as an ordinary clerk of the court and went to see the Rebbe for himself. But as soon as he entered the cell, the Rebbe rose and uttered the blessing which is recited before royalty. The disguised Czar asked him in surprise why he stood and appeared to accord him such great honor, as he was a mere clerk.

The Rebbe replied, "For you must be the Czar! Our Sages teach us that 'sovereignty on earth is similar to the sovereignty of the Heavens.' Just as the fear of G-d is great, so too, did I experience an unusual sense of awe when you entered, such as I have never felt before any other official. I therefore concluded that you must be the Czar." The Czar left convinced of both his saintliness and innocence.

Throughout his terrible ordeal the Rebbe never doubted his salvation. When the time came for the Rebbe to be brought to court for an important interrogation, he was led from his underground cell out into the cold night air. He was seated on the deck of a ferry which was to bring him across the river to the Imperial Court. The Rebbe suddenly saw emerging from behind a cloud the sliver of a new moon. He turned to the officer who was escorting him and requested that the boat be stopped so that he might utter a brief

prayer – the *Kiddush Levana* – which is said when the new moon is sighted. The officer replied that it would be impossible, but the words had hardly left his lips when the boat stopped of its own accord. The Rebbe recited the Psalm which precedes the blessing, and the boat continued across the river. A few seconds later the Rebbe repeated his request to halt the boat. The officer replied that he would heed the request, but wished that the saintly rabbi give him a blessing. This the Rebbe did, writing the blessing on a piece of paper, and the attendant stopped the boat while the Rebbe completed the blessing on the new moon. The court officer rose to a prominent position and kept the note inscribed with the blessing in an ornate golden frame which was passed as an inheritance to his descendants.

On the nineteenth of Kislev in the year 1799, Rabbi Shneur Zalman was vindicated, declared innocent of all charges and released from prison.

THOUGHTS
THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

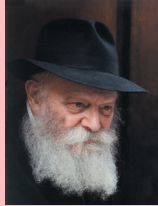
"I have sojourned with Lavan... and I have an ox, a donkey, flocks, servants and maids..."(Gen. 32:4,5)
In order to frighten Esau, Jacob told him that he had "an ox and a donkey." Why would Esau be afraid of a donkey? Yaakov was referring to the donkey upon which Moshiach will ride. Moshiach will ride on a donkey because of his humility. He will also overcome all the nations of the world in a quiet way, without war, just as Jacob overcame Esau. (Breishit Rabah)

When Esau my brother will meet you, and ask you saying: Whose are you, and where are you going? (Gen. 32:18)
Esau's question is remarkably similar to the Mishna in Ethics of the Fathers: "Reflect on three things...know from where you came, where you are going, and before whom you are destined to give a future account and reckoning." Why would the evil Esau suddenly adopt the pious tone of the Mishna? Rather, this question – "Where are you going?" – may be asked by both the Good and the Evil Inclinations. When asked by the Good Inclination, it prevents the person from committing a sin. The Evil Inclination, however, poses the same question in its attempt to bring the individual to despair. In such a case, one must remember that the mere fact that one is a Jew causes unlimited joy and appreciation Above. (Chidushei Harim)

And Jacob was left alone (Gen. 32:25)
This concept of "alone," of the absolute unity and Oneness of G-d, was bequeathed by Jacob to his descendants forever. For whenever the Jewish people would be forced to do battle with Esau, they would yearn for the time when G-d's Oneness will be manifested openly, i.e., the era of Moshiach. (Rabbi Boruch of Mezhibozh)



4:17 Candle Lighting Time
NY Metro Area
15 Kislev/Nov 19
Torah Portion Vayishlach
Shabbat ends 5:18pm



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

The Haftora for *Vayishlach* is the entire book of Obadiah, which is the only book of the Bible that has just one chapter. The Haftora tells of the fate awaiting Edom, Esau's children, when Moshiach comes.

What are the attributes of Esau that he passed on to his descendants?

Esau often deceived his father, being disingenuous about his observance of his father's teachings. A second attribute of Esau was his coldness towards G-dliness in general. This is something that we see today, as we experience a barrage of godless laws being passed all over the world, in the name of progress. Where G-d is being erased from everywhere possible, and where all sense of morality and decency is being wiped out. We also see how the good people of the world are being treated badly, while governments bend backwards to make evil regimes happy.

The connection to the Torah portion is clear. The portion tells of the confrontation between Jacob and Esau's angel, Jacob and Esau and Esau's departure from Canaan to Mount Seir. The Haftora continues with Esau's future and tragic end.

Odavia was chosen to convey this prophecy, because he was an Edomite who converted to Judaism. As the expression goes, "From the forest itself comes the handle of the ax." In other words, that which destroys the forest, comes from the forest itself. Here too, Odavia who came from Edom, prophesizes Edom's destruction. Odavia merited to be a prophet, because he saved 100 prophets, hiding them from the wicked Jezebel, and borrowing money to sustain them.

The Haftora begins with the words "*Chazon Odavia*." "*Chazon*" means vision, hinting to the verse that tells us that when Moshiach comes, "from my flesh I will envision G-dliness," i.e. at that time we will see the G-dliness in the physical. Obadiah's name actually means "to serve G-d." The prophet's name teaches us that we can bring Moshiach by serving G-d in the same manner as Obadiah – with action and self-sacrifice. Obadiah hid and sustained 100 prophets when they were being hunted down and killed by the wicked Ahab and Jezebel. The story continues, that Odavia met Elijah the Prophet, who is the one who will herald the coming of Moshiach.

Similarly, we should strive to serve G-d with action and self-sacrifice as did Obadiah. Especially by supporting Jewish educational programs for our youth who, like the prophets, ensure the future of Judaism.

Through our efforts to make Moshiach real we will soon experience the final verse of the Haftora. "And the saviors will go up onto Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Esau," referring to the first stage of Moshiach's coming. And then ultimately the final stage when, "G-d will be King." May it happen soon.

Adapted by Rabbi Yitzki Hurwitz from the teachings of the Rebbe, yitzkihurwitz.blogspot.com. Rabbi Hurwitz, who is battling ALS, and his wife Dina, are emissaries of the Rebbe in Temecula, Ca.

Talking Turkey

What is particularly interesting at this time of year about the gallinaceous birds of the family Meleagrididae we commonly call "turkeys"? Well, when we think of turkeys, we are more likely to think of waddling on two feet than wings beating in graceful flight. Nevertheless, turkeys can fly, albeit only for short distances and quite clumsily.

And now we have an excuse to ponder the imagery of wings and flight in Jewish teaching and thought:

The "wings" of the *Shechina* is often used when referring to being shielded by G-d's Divine Presence.

The cherubs that stood atop the ark in the Holy of Holies had the faces of children and wings rising out of their bodies. When the cherubs were face-to face and their wings were outstretched one toward the other, it was a sign that the Jewish people were united with each other and at one with G-d.

In our own personal attempts to connect with G-d, the imagery of wings is also present. Love and awe of G-d are likened to two wings. We are encouraged to properly develop these two traits so that we can use them to rise above our daily constraints and challenges.

Contrast a turkey with a very distant cousin: the eagle. Immediately we note a number of differences, especially in their flying ability. Eagles are known for their strength, speed and grace in flight. So synonymous are eagles with swiftness that when someone tells

you he's going to "fly like an eagle" it means he's planning on getting somewhere very quickly.

In the *Mishna* – Chapters of the Fathers – we are instructed to be "light as an eagle" to fulfill personal mission with which G-d has entrusted each of us. In reality, an eagle is far from light; despite its weight, it flies very high and as if it were light. The eagle and its powerful wings are teaching us the importance of having "high" ideals, even when those ideals are "heavy."

For an eagle to fly with the force and precision for which it is known, it has to have powerful, finely developed wings. And to get the most mileage out of those two wings they need to be of equal strength.

The two types of *mitzvot* (commandments) that we have been given – those between a person and another person and those between a person and G-d – are also regarded as wings. By observing both kinds of mitzvot, we can soar to great heights.

However, Jewish teachings discourage us from favoring one "wing" over the other. We cannot neglect those mitzvot between ourselves and G-d in favor of the interpersonal mitzvot, for then we would be like a bird with only one wing.

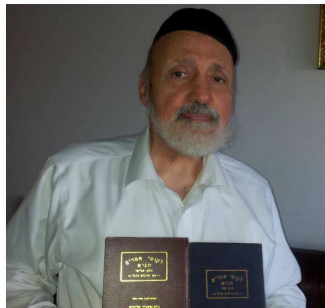
The *Midrash* teaches that when Moshiach comes, we will fly to the Land of Israel on the wings of eagles. As we develop our personal wings we hasten the realization of our people's eternal prayers for the ultimate Redemption.

Dedicated in Honor of Our Dear Parents
Misha and Olga Rovner
And our dear children
Jacob and Jordanna Rovner
by Anna and Serge Rovner

SLICE OF LIFE

The Holy Tanya

by Menachem Mendel Arad



Rabbi David Bouskila omb

Rabbi Leibel Raskin, sent by the Rebbe to Morocco in 1959, sat in his office and thought about the study of *Tanya* – the basic book of Chabad Chasidic philosophy. If *Tanya* would be translated into Arabic, local Jews would be able to study and understand Chasidic philosophy.

At that time, the *Tanya* was already translated into French and Italian, but Arabic?! It was definitely a huge project. Rabbi Raskin (*of blessed memory*) would not decide on his own. He wrote a letter to the head of the Rebbe's Secretariat, Rabbi Isaac Chadakov, "Is it worthwhile and permissible to translate the *Tanya* into Arabic, and do we have permission to do so, because it entails great responsibility and later this will also involve expense."

A short while later, Rabbi Raskin received a response from Rabbi Chadakov that if the translation would be a good one it was worthwhile."

For this undertaking, Rabbi Raskin reached out to Rabbi David Bouskila omb. Rabbi Bouskila was the general superintendent of the *Otzar Ha'Torah* network of schools in Morocco. He was fluent in Hebrew (the language in which *Tanya* was written), French and Arabic. Educational booklets that he wrote were very popular among Moroccan Jews. Rabbi Raskin began studying *Tanya* with him.

While Rabbi Bouskila's roots were in the Sefardic community and the Otzar Ha'Torah schools he headed were run by the Lithuanian community, he a strong connection with Chabad. "Throughout the years, I was a true friend of Chabad. I loved the Rebbe's emissaries, admired their work, and was even jealous of their self-sacrifice for Jewish education. Whenever the emissaries asked me for anything, I immediately helped them out.

"When Rabbi Raskin came to me with the suggestion of translating the *Tanya*, I was very apprehensive. I knew it was a tremendous responsibility. In order to translate, you need to be an expert in both languages as well as the subject matter which you are translating. I knew that every word in *Tanya* is precise, so of course I was nervous. 'How can I translate concepts like the Ten *Sefirot*, *Olam HaAtzilut*, etc.' I wondered, but Rabbi Raskin encouraged me. 'First, let us learn it well together and only then will we tackle the translation.'"

In the summer of 1974, Rabbi Raskin updated Rabbi Chadakov on their progress and asked for approval to certify Rabbi Bouskila as the official translator of the *Tanya* into Arabic. He quickly received the okay.

Rabbi Raskin and Rabbi Bouskila worked for over two years together to study, translate and edit the second of the five sections of *Tanya* – *Shaar HaYichud V'Haemunah*.

Due to many considerations, while the translation was into the Arabic language, it was written in Hebrew letters.

In December 1976, 180 years after the first edition of the entire *Tanya* was printed, the translation into Arabic of part of *Tanya* was printed and presented to the public.

Rabbi Sholom Mashash, who at the time was the chief rabbi of Casablanca, wrote an emotional letter to the Rebbe: "The *Tanya* which has been newly translated into Arabic made a tremendous impression in our community and the entire nation is learning it with wondrous zest, may his merit protect us and all those involved in this, especially Rabbi Yehuda Raskin who worked on this with zest and enthusiastic desire, may G-d send His help from the holy, amen."

It had been a difficult experience dealing with the corrections and printing of the *Tanya*, and so Rabbi Raskin did not plan on continuing with the entire book. However, the Rebbe asked for the translation of the rest of *Tanya*. Over the next ten more years the

main section of *Tanya* as well as Iggeret HaTeshuva was meticulously and flawlessly translated into Arabic.

In 1980, after Iggeret HaTeshuva had been translated and printed, Rabbi Raskin invited Rabbi Bouskila to go with him to the Rebbe so they could both give it to him.

Rabbi Bouskila remembered his private audience with the Rebbe. "What can I tell you ... the entire time that I spoke to him, my eyes shed tears. His awesomeness ... when you see his face, you are seeing an angel of G-d. We were not used to seeing pure faces like these. The Rebbe spoke to me quietly and gently. I felt that to him there was no one else in the world except for the person speaking with him at that moment. The Rebbe was completely and solely with me during the private audience. The Rebbe thanked me a lot for my work in translating the *Tanya*.

"Before I learned *Tanya*, I did not really know G-d. If you don't learn *Tanya*, you simply do not really know G-d. It is like a baby who knows there is a G-d, you learn about Him, but you don't really understand; surely not what the meaning of love of G-d and fear of G-d is. That is so with all those things which are above and beyond you: without learning *Tanya*, they are above you, you do not grasp them.

Forty years after the work of translating the *Tanya* into Arabic began, Rabbi Boaz Kali omb began translating it into literary and classic Arabic, printed in the Arabic alphabet. (Rabbi Kali, who had many connections in the Druze and Arab communities, was very involved in disseminating the seven Noahide laws.)

Rabbi Kali had been involved in the Rebbe's campaign to print the *Tanya* "wherever there are Jews, even one Jew from Haifa where he was an emissary of the Rebbe. He expanded the Rebbe's campaign to include Druze and Arab villages.

"When the Rebbe announced the campaign to print the *Tanya*, he said that it was worthwhile to print it wherever there are Jews, even one Jew. From information we have from Yad L'Achim, we know that there is no Arab village or town without Jews," explained Rabbi Kali.

"Today there are so many 'Achmad ben Sarahs' (and tragically, some of them hate Jews). All the effort is worthwhile if only the writings of *Tanya* reach their mouths and inspire them.

Adapted from an article in Beis Moshiach Magazine

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

10 Kislev, 5714 [1953]

Greeting and Blessing:

...Our Sages said that 'Each and every soul was in the presence of His Divine Majesty before coming down to this earth,' and that 'The souls are hewn from under the Seat of Glory.' These sayings emphasize the essential nature of the soul, its holiness and purity, and its being completely divorced from anything material and physical; the soul itself, by its very nature, is not subject to any material desires or temptations, which arise only from the physical body and 'animal soul.'

Nevertheless, it was the Creator's Will that the soul — which is truly a 'part' of the Divine Above, should descend into the physical and coarse world and be confined within, and united with, a physical body for scores of years, in a state which is absolutely repulsive to its very nature. All this, for the purpose of a Divine mission which the soul has to fulfill: to purify and 'spiritualize' the physical body and the related physical environment by permeating them with the Light of G-d, so as to make this world an abode for the *Shechinah* [Divine Presence]. This can be done only through a life of Torah and Mitzvot [commandments].

When the soul fulfills this mission, all the transient pain and suffering connected with the soul's descent and life on this earth are not only justified, but infinitely outweighed by the great reward and everlasting bliss which the soul enjoys thereafter.

From the above one can easily appreciate the extent of the tragedy of disregarding the soul's mission on earth. For in doing so one condemns the soul to a term of useless suffering not compensated for, nor nullified by that everlasting happiness which G-d had intended for it. Even where there are brief moments of religious activity in the study of the Torah and the practice of the Mitzvot, it is sad to contemplate how often such activity is tinted by the lack of real enthusiasm and inner joy, not realizing that these are the activities which justify existence.

Aside from missing the vital point through

failure of taking advantage of the opportunity to fulfill G-d's Will thus forfeiting the everlasting benefits to be derived therefrom, it is contrary to sound reason to choose that side of life which accentuates the enslavement and degradation of the soul, while rejecting the good that is inherent in it, namely, the great ascent that is to come from the soul's descent.

It will now become eminently clear what our Sages meant when they said, 'No man commits a sin unless he was stricken with temporary insanity.' No profound thinking is required to realize that since 'life is compulsory,' and since the soul which is a 'part' of the Divine Above is compelled to descend into 'a frame of dust and ashes', the proper thing to do is to make the most of the soul's sojourn on earth; only a life, in which every aspect is permeated by the Torah and Mitzvot, makes this possible.

It is also abundantly clear that since G-d, who is the essence of goodness, compels the soul to descend from its 'sublime heights to the lowest depths,' for the purpose of the study of the Torah and the fulfillment of the Mitzvot — how great is the value of Torah and Mitzvot.

Furthermore, the descent of the soul for the purpose of ascent shows that there is no other way to obtain the objective except through the soul's descent to live on this earth. If there were an easier way, G-d would not compel the soul to descend from the sublime heights of the Seat of Glory down to this nether world, the lowest of all worlds.

For only here, in the lowest depths, can the soul attain its highest ascent, higher even than the angels, and as our Sages say, 'The righteous precede the foremost angels.

Reflecting upon the greatness of the Torah and Mitzvot, specifically pertaining to this life, reflecting also that the Torah and Mitzvot are the only means to attain the soul's perfection and the fulfillment of the Divine purpose, one will experience a sense of real joy at his fate and destiny, despite the many difficulties and handicaps, from within and without, which are inevitable on this earth. Only in this way can one live up to the injunction: 'Serve G-d with joy,' which the Baal-Shem-Tov made one of the foundations of his teachings, and which is expounded at length in Chabad, and pointed out by its Founder, whose Liberation we commemorate on the 19th day of Kislev, in his monumental work, the *Tanya* (chapters 26 seq., 31 seq.).

With blessing,

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

This coming Tuesday is the 19th of Kislev (November 23 this year). The 19th of Kislev is celebrated as the Festival of Redemption of the first Rebbe of Chabad, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi.

Imprisoned by the Russian government on false charges of anti-government activities, Rabbi Shneur Zalman spent 52 days in the Petersburg Prison. The number of days providentially corresponds to the number of chapters in Rabbi Shneur Zalman's holy book upon which all Chabad Chasidic philosophy is based, Tanya.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman saw his release from prison not simply as a personal liberation, but as vindication and redemption for the entire Chasidic movement and its teachings, of which he was one of the main proponents. For the fledgling Chasidic movement was being heavily denounced and attacked by many Jewish scholars and leaders of those times.

In a letter sent by Rabbi Shneur Zalman to one of his colleagues, he writes: "G-d wrought wonders and performed great miracles within the world...sanctifying His name in public, in particular before the officers of the Czar. They were also amazed by the circumstances and recognized that, "This is from G-d; it is wondrous in our eyes."

The Rebbe stated many times, "All the appointed times for Moshiach's coming have already passed, and all the service necessary has been completed. All that is necessary to do is open our eyes and we can see that the Redemption is already here."

If the Czar's officers over 200 years ago were able to recognize that Divine miracles took place for Rabbi Shneur Zalman and the Jewish people, it is certainly within our ability to "open our eyes and see that the Redemption is already here."

At this auspicious time, may G-d grant each of us the vision to see that the Redemption is here and the strength to implement the spirit of the Redemption in our lives.

Shmuel Butman

L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA

The name of our publication has special meaning. It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson (obm), wife of the Rebbe.



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The Traveling Smile

What happens when we greet every person graciously and with a smile? Exactly what you might imagine! In this cheerful, colorful picture book, each character shares a smile with someone who needs one. It's amazing to see how a smile can travel, spreading from one person to another! *The Traveling Smile* is written and illustrated by Rikki Benenfeld, published by HaChai.



Danger in Iran

In 1979, as the world watched in fear, more than 50 Americans were taken hostage at the U.S. embassy in Tehran. The suspenseful stories in this book are between the Lubavitcher Rebbe and great Torah leaders. In comic book form, written by Mendy Weiss, illustrated by Yacov Yarhi, published by BSD Publishers.



TODAY IS...

16 Kislev

A fundamental principle of Chabad philosophy is that the mind, which by its innate nature rules over the heart, must subordinate the heart to G-d's service by utilizing the intellectualization, comprehension and profound contemplation of the greatness of the Creator of the universe.

MOSHIACH MATTERS

"You should know that thanks to Rabbi [David] Bouskila's translation of the *Tanya* into Arabic, the Final Redemption will come that much sooner. It is written that, in the

End of Days, the strength of the Ishmaelites – the Arab peoples – will be felt all over the world. But by translating our holy books into Arabic we are able to counter their power and influence and hasten the coming of the Messiah." (*The Rebbe, to Rabbi David Bouskila's son Rabbi Gad Bouskila in a private audience before his wedding. Rabbi David Bouskila was the Director of the Otzar HaTorah – Neve Shalom network of schools in Morocco and later in France.*)