

THE MAGERMAN EDITION

THE STEINSALTZ
TANYA

SHA'AR HAYIHUD VEHA'EMUNA
IGGERET HATESHUVA

COMMENTARY & TRANSLATION BY
RABBI ADIN EVEN-ISRAEL
STEINSALTZ

Steinsaltz Center
Maggid Books

The Steinsaltz Tanya:
Sha'ar HaYihud VeHa'emuna and Iggeret HaTeshuva
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Steinsaltz Center is the parent organization of institutions
established by Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz
POB 45187, Jerusalem 91450 ISRAEL
Telephone: +972 2 646 0900, Fax +972 2 624 9454
www.steinsaltz-center.org

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Executive Director, Steinsaltz Center

Rabbi Meni Even-Israel

Editor-in-Chief

Rabbi Jason Rappoport

Translators

Rabbi Simcha Mirvis, Senior Translator

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Design & Typesetting

Raphaël Freeman MISTD

Technical Staff

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Adina Mann

Avi Steinhart

Dedicated to
my wife, **Debra**,
and my children,
Elijah, Zachary, Sydney, and Lexie.

May this new translation of the Tanya,
along with the commentary from Rabbi Steinsaltz (z"l),
bring us closer to hasidic teaching and
help us connect with the mystical meaning
behind the Torah.

*May all the children of Israel use
the Tanya's knowledge and wisdom
to work together to hasten the coming of Mashiah.*

DAVID M. MAGERMAN



ספר התניא מלמד אותנו שהנפש האלוקית מסורה כל כולה לקב"ה והיא מבחינה זו חסרת אנוכיות או תחושת ישות. הנפש הבהמית לעומת זאת מרוכזת בעצמה ומסורה לקיומה הנפרד.

לפיכך לימד אותנו האדמו"ר האמצעי שכאשר שני יהודים לומדים או משוחחים בעניני עבודת ה' הרי אלו שתי נשמות אלוקיות כנגד נפש בהמית אחת. הנפש הבהמית לא מצטרפת עם חברתה משום שכאמור היא מסורה לעצמה אבל הנפשות האלוקיות מצטרפות יחד בלי כל חציצה או הבדל.

(מתוך: "היום יום" כ' לטבת)

לזכות

משה ליב בן זיסל שיחי' לאיוש"ט
שולמית בת זהרה שתחי' לאיוש"ט



The *Tanya* teaches us that the divine soul is fully devoted to G-d, and therefore it is selfless. By contrast, the animal soul is selfish, devoted only to maintaining its own existence.

The Mittlerer Rebbe, Rabbi Dovber of Lubavitch, taught that when two Jews learn or discuss matters pertaining to service of God, there are two divine souls against one animal soul. The animal soul thinks only of itself and will not attach itself to the animal soul of the other. But the two divine souls are joined together with no division or barrier.

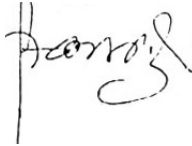
(Cited from *HaYom Yom*, 20 Tevet)

In the merit of

MOSHE LEIB BEN ZISEL
SHULAMIT BAT ZOHARA

A blessing from the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, regarding Rabbi Steinsaltz's unique commentary on the *Tanya*, dated 21 Av 5721 (August 3, 1961):

(ואית- פהא, ונפ' אעתינ)
ומובן ג"כ, שאין הנ"ל שולל כלל וכלל-שקו"ט בענינים המובאים
בחניא, כן-ביאור קצר או גם ארוך, ובסגנונו ערוכים בלשון בני דורנו, אבל

זכור לברכה


In December 2012, the final volume of the Hebrew edition of *The Steinsaltz Tanya* was published. That year, at a hasidic gathering, Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz shared why he wrote the book. He explained that Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the author of the *Tanya*, had poured his entire soul, his love and awe, his soul-wrenching oneness with God into that concise book, into pages that obscured his immense spirit so well. Through his commentary, Rabbi Steinsaltz strove to reveal to us this spirit, that powerful fire just barely contained by the words of the *Tanya*.

And he certainly succeeded. Yet he failed to mask his own burning spirit, his own love, awe, and closeness to God, as he had attempted to do his entire life.

The publication of this English edition of *The Steinsaltz Tanya* is the fulfillment of Rabbi Steinsaltz's vision to make the teachings of the *Tanya* accessible to every single individual. At the height of the preparations for this edition, our teacher Rabbi Adin Even-Israel passed away.

In this book, one learns how the life of the tzaddik lives on in this world, in those who learn his works. It is through those students who are open to receiving his teachings and are inspired to build upon his words that his light remains with us. We pray that this commentary of Rabbi Steinsaltz will introduce many generations of Jews to the world of the *Tanya* and to the path of authentic devotion to God.

May it serve to elevate his soul.

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For the Hebrew Tanya Vilna edition, open from the Hebrew side of the book.

Publisher's Preface

The insights and elucidations of this seminal commentary were adapted from weekly lectures on the *Tanya* that Rabbi Steinsaltz delivered to a small group of Jerusalemites from 1977 to 1980, as well as classes broadcast on the Israeli radio station Kol Yisrael. Those teachings were later transcribed, edited, and published as a commentary to the *Tanya* in Hebrew. The commentary was well received and has since been revised and reprinted.

This is the first volume of the Steinsaltz commentary on the *Tanya* to be published in English. It contains two self-contained sections of the *Tanya*: *Sha'ar HaYihud VeHa'emuna*, or “The Gate of Unity and Faith,” and *Iggeret HaTeshuva*, “Letter on Repentance.” The series will ultimately consist of six volumes spanning the five sections that comprise the *Tanya*. The first section of the *Tanya*, *Likkutei Amarim*, will be divided into volumes 1 and 2, *Sha'ar HaYihud VeHa'emuna* and *Iggeret HaTeshuva* comprise volume 3, while the fourth and fifth sections of the *Tanya*, *Iggeret HaKodesh* and *Kuntres Aharon*, will comprise volumes 4–6.

The Steinsaltz Tanya offers the original Hebrew *Tanya* text, an English translation of the *Tanya*, and a running commentary by Rabbi Steinsaltz. Care was taken that both the *Tanya* text and the commentary be true to the original, though it is important to bear in mind that the translation necessarily has to relinquish some of the pungency of the original discourses.

The Commentary

Rabbi Steinsaltz's commentary on the *Tanya* reverberates with authenticity, expressing the ideas and spirit of Jewish thought in a way

that is simultaneously traditional and yet profoundly original. His style passes freely from one topic to another and then returns to the original idea without belaboring it. He also employs a wide variety of modes of explanation, including philosophical logic, textual exegesis, and scientific illustration, as well as symbolism, story, and parable.

This is not a commentary that aims for the comfort of being spoon-fed the simple explanation of each line. Instead, one gains an appreciation of the profundity and brilliance of the *Tanya*, as well as the penetrating insights and genuine perspective that Rabbi Steinsaltz lends to it.

The commentary is comprised of two sections. The main body is a running elucidation of the *Tanya* text, one segment at a time. As a supplement, we have included a companion section of additional insights, which can be found in the gray boxes that run across the bottom of the pages. This supplemental material provides a broader context and a deeper look at the concepts presented in the main body of the commentary. Here the reader will find hasidic teachings, tangents from other disciplines, such as physics and mathematics, and analogies and hasidic stories.

At the end of each section there is an outline that summarizes the flow of ideas throughout the chapters.

The Hebrew *Tanya* Text

This volume presents the original Hebrew text of the *Tanya* in two formats. In accordance with the Chabad hasidic tradition, and by specific directive from the Lubavitcher Rebbe to the author, we have included the Hebrew text as it was printed in the Vilna edition in 1900, without vocalization or punctuation. This unembellished *Tanya* text, which can be found at the end of this book, connects and anchors the modern commentary with the authentic chain of hasidic teachings, originating with the author of the *Tanya* himself. In addition, it furnishes the reader the opportunity to reflect on the text as one uninterrupted unit, affording a person a broad perspective on the flow of ideas.

Second, to make the *Tanya* text more accessible to the contemporary reader, a vocalized and punctuated version of the Hebrew text is provided. This text is presented alongside the English translation of

the *Tanya* and is divided into phrases according to the content of the commentary. This version also furnishes sources for citations, and abbreviations and acronyms have been expanded.

Both versions of the *Tanya* text contain the *Moreh Shiur*, the annual calendar for daily study of the *Tanya*.

The English *Tanya* Text

One of the major contributions of this work is a groundbreaking English translation of the Hebrew *Tanya* text. The *Tanya* is a classic, canonic work, and its author invested deep meaning into the minutiae of its language and style. The outcome is an esoteric and dense text, which presents a formidable challenge when rendering the *Tanya* into contemporary English.

This rendition, in the tradition of previous classic Steinsaltz translations, combines rigorous fidelity to the nuances of the original text along with clear and contemporary English translation. Careful effort was invested to represent each word of the original Hebrew in the translation using bold font, while interlacing words in nonbold to clarify the meaning and flow of the text.

Certain expressions in the original, common to the style of rabbinic Hebrew, would have obscured the clarity of the English rendition. Such words, such as *beḥinat*, *yitbarakh*, *barukh hu*, and *hineh*, are not always rendered into English or represented in a different form. For example, *yitbarakh*, used as a term of reverence referring to God, has been rendered most often as “God’s.” Thus, instead of rendering עֵצְמוּתוֹ יְתַבְרַךְ as “His essence, may He be blessed,” the phrase was rendered as “God’s essence.”

In addition, although the original text was written as a flowing discourse with no punctuation, we have composed the English translation according to conventional syntax, inserting transitions in non-bold where necessary.

The English translations of verses and passages from the *Tanakh* and Talmud cited in this work were taken from *The Steinsaltz Tanakh* and *The Koren Talmud Bavli*, the Steinsaltz English edition of the Talmud. In several instances, context dictated minor variations to those translations.

The English *Tanya* text is presented in segments that serve as headings for each passage of commentary. The division of the text follows the content of the commentary. Therefore, each segment does not necessarily constitute a single self-contained thought. The reader may find it worthwhile to first read several English segments of *Tanya* at a time, skipping over the commentary, to digest the overall idea of the *Tanya* and then return to each segment to delve into the commentary itself.

Naturally, all these features – the translation, the punctuation, and the sources – are a reflection of Rabbi Steinsaltz's interpretation of the *Tanya*.

A Note on Gender

For the sake of convenience, this book was written using male pronouns to refer to individuals and not because it is a book for men only, which it is not. Neutral language was used wherever possible when it did not interfere with the accuracy or clarity of the content.

Acknowledgments

This commentary comprises an “oral Torah” that emerged from a series of weekly classes in Chabad Hasidism and, in a different fashion, from *Tanya* classes broadcast over *Kol Yisrael*, the Israeli State radio station. The participants in these *Tanya* classes added so much – through their questions, their comments, and even their very listening. For all the many ways they have enriched me and my classes, I am deeply grateful.

A project of this magnitude could not have been realized without the support of Debra and David Magerman. Thank you for your generous contribution to this edition of the *Tanya*.

I reserve a special thanks for my friend Rabbi Meir Hanegbi, the adapter and editor of this material. With immense dedication and extreme effort, he took all of this oral material and turned it into a book, adding many comments, explanations, source references, and an extensive bibliography. Due to his efforts, its end is certainly better than its beginning.

He merited to learn in order to teach, and to teach in order to actualize – and for this, may he be blessed with continued fortitude.

Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz

Introduction

The author of the *Tanya*, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, was among the greatest Jewish personalities of his time: great in Torah, both in its exoteric or revealed aspect (that is, Talmud and *halakhah*) and in its esoteric dimension. He was also learned in secular knowledge, a virtuoso of the Hebrew language, a master writer and editor, a born leader, and superb administrator in addition to being a charismatic leader, an ecstatic mystic, and a composer of music. In each of his creative fields, he wrote books of permanent value that have become classic works of hasidic thought, particularly Chabad Hasidism, for all generations.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman was born on 18 Elul 5505 (1745) in the town of Liozna in White Russia (now Belarus). His father was Rabbi Barukh, a descendant of the famed Maharal, Rabbi Loewe of Prague.

From his early childhood, Rabbi Shneur Zalman's genius and prodigious Torah knowledge were widely recognized. A few years after his marriage in 1760, he decided to study Torah at one of the great Torah centers. The two centers he considered were Vilna, home to the famed Gaon of Vilna, and Mezeritch, where the great Maggid, Rabbi Dov Ber, successor to the Ba'al Shem Tov (founder of the hasidic movement) taught. Feeling that he knew a little about how to study Torah but virtually nothing about how to pray, he decided to go to Mezeritch.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman arrived in Mezeritch in 1764. Despite his student's youth, the Maggid soon counted him among his inner circle of disciples. The Maggid greatly appreciated his talents and Torah knowledge, giving the young man the task of compiling a new and updated *Shulhan Arukh*, the Code of Jewish Law. Rabbi Shneur Zalman labored at this task for many years, but tragically most of the work was

destroyed by fire. Only a part of it – most of *Orah Hayyim* and a few chapters from the other three sections – survived and was published after his death. The book, which is not a specifically hasidic work, is known as *Shulḥan Arukh HaRav*. It is a halakhic masterpiece, adapting and condensing the gist of Torah law up to that time, and it serves as the basic halakhic source for hasidim in general and Chabad hasidim in particular. Were it not for the violent opposition to Hasidism that prevailed at the time, it would doubtless have earned a more central position in halakhic literature.

In 1767, Rabbi Shneur Zalman was appointed Maggid in his hometown of Liozna, and beginning in 1772, highly talented young men began to come to him for instruction in Torah and the service of God. Rabbi Shneur Zalman arranged these disciples in three *chadarim* (“rooms” or classes), instructing each according to his level. According to Chabad tradition, this is when Rabbi Shneur Zalman began to consolidate his unique Chabad philosophy and approach, and it is thus considered the founding year of Chabad Hasidism.

In 1774, following the death of the Maggid, the hasidic community accepted the central leadership of Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel of Vitebsk. But in 1777, under the pressure of persecution and excommunication by the opponents of Hasidism, which were directed mainly against the hasidim of White Russia, Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel and a large group of hasidim emigrated to the Land of Israel. Rabbi Shneur Zalman, who was initially in the group, was persuaded to return home and he became one of the leaders of the hasidic community in White Russia, together with Rabbi Yisrael of Plotsk and Rabbi Yissachar Dov of Lubavitch. In 1788, Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel, in a letter from the Land of Israel, appointed Rabbi Shneur Zalman as the sole leader of the hasidim in this region.

This was merely a confirmation of the de facto state of affairs, because Rabbi Shneur Zalman’s comprehensive educational endeavor, both written and oral, and his impressive success in many public debates with Hasidism’s opponents (including the famous disputation in Minsk in 1783) had made him the most important hasidic leader in White Russia. Moreover, by this time his teachings had also consolidated into a unique system within Hasidism, the system of “Chabad”

(an acronym for *hokhmah, binah, da'at* – wisdom, understanding, knowledge).

Rabbi Shneur Zalman's influence continued to grow. Copies of his writings on hasidic teaching circulated widely, and his published works, initially published anonymously, added considerably to the spread of the Chabad approach and to the author's reputation. If his *Hilkhot Talmud Torah* ("Laws of Torah Study," published anonymously in 1794) demonstrated his knowledge of *halakhah* and of Torah in general, his *Tanya* (published in 1797) was a lucid and systematic articulation of the fundamentals of hasidic teaching.

His influence spread not only throughout White Russia but increasingly also in Lithuania and even in Vilna itself, to the extent that several community leaders in this bastion of opposition to Hasidism were among his followers. This aroused the wrath of the *mitnagdim*, the opponents of Hasidism. They realized that their old recourse of excommunication would be ineffective, so they availed themselves of their last remaining weapon: informing against Rabbi Shneur Zalman to the Russian government, which had recently annexed White Russia and Poland. The chief rabbi of Pinsk brought a formal complaint to the Russian authorities, accusing a number of hasidic leaders, and in particular Rabbi Shneur Zalman, of various offenses, both religious and political: sending money to the sultan of Turkey (actually funds raised for the support of the hasidic community in the Holy Land, then under Turkish rule) and the creation of a new religious sect, which Russian law strictly forbade.

In 1798, as a result of these accusations, Rabbi Shneur Zalman was arrested and brought as a criminal offender to St. Petersburg. After a secret trial, whose details only fully came to light in recent years, he was exonerated of all charges and released from prison on the nineteenth of Kislev of that year. This day came to symbolize the public victory of Hasidism over its opponents and was established, in the lifetime of Rabbi Shneur Zalman, as a festival of redemption.

That day came to represent a watershed in the development of Hasidism: From that point, it grew stronger, accelerated its spread, and gained tens of thousands of new followers. Hasidim viewed the Russian authorities' verdict as, in its inner essence, the supernal verdict. The

earthly court's decision to free Rabbi Shneur Zalman merely echoed the decision of the heavenly court, expressing the supernal vindication of Hasidism. Thus, Chabad Hasidim celebrate the nineteenth of Kislev as the New Year's Day for Hasidism to this day.

The nineteenth of Kislev also marks a new period in Rabbi Shneur Zalman's teachings and works. Before St. Petersburg, Rabbi Shneur Zalman did not convey his esoteric teachings openly and clearly, leaving much to allusion. After St. Petersburg, the trickling wellspring became the great river of Chabad Hasidism, because Rabbi Shneur Zalman then felt that there was no longer any divine impediment to the teaching of Hasidism, and the time had come to elaborate on it and disseminate it without inhibition.

Following further slanderous accusations, Rabbi Shneur Zalman was summoned to a second interrogation in St. Petersburg in 1800, and after a lengthy imprisonment, though under much easier conditions, he was finally released by command of the new czar, Alexander I. On his return from prison, he moved to the town of Liadi and thus came to be known as Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi.

After Rabbi Shneur Zalman had largely overcome the opposition to Hasidism from without, a bitter dispute broke out within the hasidic community, mainly over the intellectual nature of the Chabad system. The leader of the dispute was Rabbi Avraham of Kalisk, a disciple of Rabbi Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk, who was later joined by Rabbi Barukh of Medzibozh, the Ba'al Shem Tov's grandson. This dispute caused Rabbi Shneur Zalman deep sorrow, but it did not affect his standing. Instead, it actually highlighted the uniqueness of his personality and his philosophy.

When Napoleon invaded Russia in 1812, Rabbi Shneur Zalman was among the fiercest opponents of the French conquest. He feared that French rule would grant emancipation to the Jews and accelerate assimilation, and he therefore supported Russia with all his power. As the French army advanced, he was forced to flee behind the Russian army to the interior of the country. He fell ill on the journey, and on 24 Tevet 5573 (1812), he died in the remote village of Piena. He was buried in the nearby town of Haditz.

The *Tanya*

Rabbi Shneur Zalman left behind a great legacy that formed the underpinnings of Hasidism, and particularly Chabad Hasidism: his halakhic masterwork *Shulḥan Arukh HaRav* on one hand and his mystical work of ethics, the *Tanya*, on the other. If it is at all possible to define a work such as the *Tanya*, then its best description lies in the words of the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzḥak of Lubavitch, who said, “*Tanya* is the ‘Written Torah’ of hasidim, and studying it is like studying *Ḥumash*: Everyone studies it, from the greatest scholars to the most simple of folk; each, according to his level, understands what he understands, and no one understands it at all.”

At first glance, the *Tanya* seems to affect the style of an ordinary book of *mussar*, practical advice intended to direct people in the path of God’s service and of self-perfection. In truth, it takes an original approach to the fundamental elements of self-improvement, applying the principles of Hasidism to reveal the root causes of human failings and to devise comprehensive solutions. The *Tanya* seeks to demonstrate to every man or woman that knowledge of God is there for the taking, that spiritual growth to ever higher levels is real and immanent, if one is willing to engage in the struggle.

The *Tanya* is not only one of the fundamental works of Hasidism, but it is also one of the greatest books of moral teaching of all time. Although the author of the *Tanya* modestly describes himself as a “compiler,” this is a most original work, both in its basic premise as well as in the many ideas and insights it expresses parenthetically. And though the author repeatedly notes that the book is intended for a select audience, for “those who know me personally,” it strives to solve the dilemmas with a most broad and comprehensive approach – an approach that is not specific to a particular person, time, or outlook. The *Tanya* does not, in the main, address specific problems but delves into their root causes, seeking to distill the predicaments of humankind down to their most elementary maxims and to solve them in the most comprehensive way.

But these points, despite their centrality to the work, do not summarize the *Tanya*. This is a book in which the incidental ideas, as well as the supporting chapters surrounding the central theme, are no less

important than the main topics. The more one studies this book, the more one discovers illuminating thoughts and ideas, a comprehensive outlook on life, insight into the structure of Jewish history, and moral guidance on countless problems. This short book encapsulates an entire philosophy and guide to life. As Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev expressed it, “How did he put such a great and awesome God into such a small book?”

שַׁעַר הַיְחֻד וְהָאֱמוּנָה

Sha'ar HaYihud VeHa'emuna

The Gate of Unity and Faith

Preface to

Sha'ar HaYihud VeHa'emuna

Sha'ar HaYihud VeHa'emuna, the second section of the *Tanya*, also known as *Ĥinukh Katan*, “Education of a Child,” was apparently written before part 1, the section commonly referred to as *Likkutei Amarim*. Its content too seems to pave the way for the first section, providing an ideological foundation for the development of the divine service described in *Likkutei Amarim*. It seems that the author of the *Tanya* himself considered starting the *Tanya* with *Sha'ar HaYihud VeHa'emuna* rather than with *Likkutei Amarim*, but due to various reasons, it was ultimately printed second.¹

The topic of *Sha'ar HaYihud VeHa'emuna*, like its name, is unity and faith. *Yihud*, “unity,” means absolute divine oneness that precludes the

1. See commentary to the introduction below, which points out textual cues to support this thesis, that the author of the *Tanya* originally intended *Sha'ar HaYihud VeHa'emuna* to be the first section of the *Tanya*. The Lubavitcher Rebbe treats this subject at length in *Likkutei Siḥot, Shabbat Parashat Shelah* 5747. He explains there that the first section, *Likkutei Amarim*, corresponds to the first letter of the Torah, *bet*, which is the second letter of the alphabet. *Sha'ar HaYihud VeHa'emuna*, on the other hand, corresponds to the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the *alef* of *Anokhi*, the first of the Ten Commandments, which is the command to believe in the existence of God. When learning the Torah, we first learn *Bereshit*, the account of the Creation, and then we can proceed to learn about *Anokhi*, the overarching divine reality. While *alef* comes first on a theoretical plane, it is from the second letter that we can gain access to the more fundamental first letter. For this reason, the study of the “Book of *Beinonim*” (as the section of *Likkutei Amarim* is called), which lays out the path of divine service in this world, precedes the study of *Sha'ar HaYihud VeHa'emuna*, whose depths reveal the fundamental truths of existence.

existence of anything else. This perfect unity is inherently incomprehensible and unverifiable through the human intellect, or through any intellect. Only through *emuna*, “faith,” can a person apprehend this truth. Nevertheless, the author’s approach to attaining steadfast faith that can be applied in one’s daily life entails nurturing and building it specifically through the human intellect. This explains the name, “The Gate of Unity and Faith.”

Yet this book does not offer an entirely thorough examination of the topic of unity and faith. It deals primarily with one issue: the reality of the constant presence of the Divine in the world. The knowledge that everything we see, the physical, the spiritual, and our very selves, is nothing other than a manifestation of the Divine.

This is the totally all-encompassing divine oneness about which the Torah states, “There is no other besides Him” (Deut. 4:35), and it is this awareness that the author of the *Tanya* refers to as “higher unification.” “Lower unification,” on the other hand, embodies the perspective from below through which the world appears to be a substantive, tangible reality, while the Divine is relegated to the realm of the incomprehensible. It is the interplay between the higher unification and the lower unification that is the foundation and gateway to understanding the topic of unity and faith.

While the author of the *Tanya* defines the concepts of higher unification and lower unification in chapter 7, the climax of the book, he presents his thesis statement at the very beginning, in chapter 1, which serves as a motto of sorts for the whole book:

“[This work is a gateway] to understanding a minute fraction of the *Zohar*’s statement that [the verse] ‘*Shema Yisrael . . .*, Hear, Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord is one (Deut. 6:4), is the higher unification, and [the phrase] ‘Blessed is the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever’ is the lower unification.”

“Hear, Israel” embodies the perspective from above, a glimpse through the lens that perceives God’s perfect, seamless unity with absolutely no differentiation or multiplicity whatsoever. It offers the experience of the higher unification, of the Divine as the sole, actual being into which all of reality is subsumed. It is the perfect awareness that “God is one and His name is one,” of the totally all-encompassing,

transcendent divine oneness about which the Torah states, “There is no other besides Him” (Deut. 4:35).

“Blessed is the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever” embodies the perspective from below through which the world and the self appear to be substantive and tangible. Yet “the name of His glorious kingdom” – a glimmer of His light from the divine attribute of *Malkhut* (Kingship) – enlivens and sustains all of the worlds “forever and ever,” manifest in the worlds on both the macro and micro scale.

This book aims to illustrate how these two perspectives are really two facets of the same existence.

The reality that we experience of a tangible world that conceals the Divine, sometimes so intensely that we are unaware that we should even be searching, is the only way in which we, creatures of the lower world, are capable of perceiving reality. As a result, life appears detached from the Divine. God seems to be confined to heaven, ethereal and far away, shining a distant divine light, while we are grounded in the “real world,” picking up glimmers of His vague illumination. This book, however, illustrates how our material reality is nothing but a reflection of an inner spiritual reality, a crystallization of the word of God existing on the landscape of the Divine itself.

Nothing exists outside God because nothing can. God is not just the source of the reality that He creates. He gives life and sustains that reality every instant from absolute nothingness. Reality is not a petrified world created once and existing now as a hardened mold with no vitality. It is a living world whose life force comprises the fabric of its existence, an existence that is being renewed constantly at every moment.

From the very inception of the world, the process of creation has not ceased. While there is no longer the same degree of perceivable, perpetual newness, existence does continue to undergo a creative regeneration, constantly being manifest from absolute nothingness every instant. The mechanism describing how God endows existence with life force is found early in the first chapter of the *Tanya*: divine speech. All of reality is manifest by God’s spoken word, as articulated in the ten utterances found in the biblical account of the Creation. The word of God continually speaks and says, “Let there be a firmament. . .

Let the earth sprout grasses. . . . Let us make man. . . .” God perpetually verbalizes the narrative that we call life, granting our reality existence at every moment.

The divine force that brings the world into existence through the ten utterances is not apparent to us. God cloaks Himself in darkness, as it were: “He engulfed His secret place in darkness” (Ps. 18:12). Yet it is only from our perspective that the cover of darkness obscures. All of reality remains nothing other than divine speech, unified with and subsumed in His divine being. We only perceive the spoken word through the existence that we see around us. If we would only see the divine force speaking, we would perceive how the speech and thought are utterly subsumed in the One who speaks and thinks them.

This is the aim of this book: to explain how this concealment happens, why we see only one side of the whole picture, and how we can contemplate the source in an attempt to catch a glimmer of God’s unity.

This book is not intended to serve as a theoretical analysis of the Creation – the manner in which the word of God creates the universe – but rather to provide context for the individual’s relationship with God. The most fundamental point made in this book is the extraction of the act of Creation from ancient history and the repositioning of it in the present. God did not just create the world way back when; He continually creates the world right here, right now. The world a moment ago was a totally different world. The present universe is brand new, constructed by God Himself every instant.

The understanding that the Divine constantly permeates every particle of existence, that He perpetually brings into being every iota of reality from absolute nothingness, forms the basis of many concepts in the first section of the *Tanya*, *Likkutei Amarim*, which focuses on the individual’s service of God. Man does not have to constantly fight an unending war of good and evil his whole life. He must only make the choice in the present moment and nothing more. In that moment, he creates his world, of one kind or another. In a world where man’s actions deem him either righteous or wicked, a person need not be subjugated to the whole spectrum of his failings, be they in the realm of thought or action. Right now he can start something new; he can choose his reality. Every moment heralds the creation of a new universe,

bringing with it a fresh proclamation: What are you, born anew, doing with this unique and singular moment of history? And each person is beckoned to answer.

Sha'ar HaYihud VeHa'emuna, the second section of the *Tanya*, therefore deals with the foundational understanding of a reality that is none other than the word of God. God creates the world, God speaks to the world – and from within the world, man answers Him. Other creations are incapable of answering because they are an extension of divine speech. Man is the only one capable of responding.

The Title Page

THIS TITLE PAGE APPEARS IN THE ORIGINAL WORK, AND the wording is that of the author of the *Tanya* himself. Therefore, it is customary to begin the study of *Sha'ar HaYiḥud VeHa'emuna* with these words.

ליקוטי אמרים *Likkutei Amarim*
חלק שני Part 2
הנקרא בשם חינוך קטן entitled *Hinukh Katan*
(Education of a Child)

4 Sivan
6 Sivan
(leap year)

Sha'ar HaYiḥud VeHa'emuna begins with a title page, in which the author of the *Tanya*, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, presents this section, part 2 of the *Tanya*, with the title *Hinukh Katan*, or “Education of a Child.” In the introduction that follows, he will explain his reason for calling the second part of the *Tanya* by this name.

Although it is part 2 of the *Tanya*, *Sha'ar HaYiḥud VeHa'emuna* deals with more fundamental issues than those discussed in part 1, *Likkutei Amarim*. While *Likkutei Amarim* discusses the soul and the deliberations of the individual seeking his path, *Sha'ar HaYiḥud VeHa'emuna* deals with issues on a big-picture level: the relationship between God and the universe, the concept of creation, and the dynamic between humans and God.

Various explanations have been offered as to why *Sha'ar HaYiḥud VeHa'emuna* was not designated as part 1 of the *Tanya*. One reason is revealed here in the introduction: The purpose of hasidic works is not abstract, metaphysical speculation, but rather to serve as guidance for one's service of God. Therefore, the first part of the *Tanya* addresses

immediate human concerns – practical service – and the second part examines their theoretical underpinnings.

**מְלוֹקֵט מִפִּי סִפְרִים וּמִפִּי סוֹפְרִים
קְדוּשֵׁי עֲלִיּוֹן נִשְׁמָתָם עֵדוּ,** **Compiled from the works and teachings of the holy masters, whose souls are in the Garden of Eden,**

As was the practice of other authors who wished to conceal their identity, the author of the *Tanya* does not state that he wrote this work but merely compiled it. Nevertheless, without a doubt, the *Tanya* is not a compilation. Rarely citing earlier sources, it presents an original perspective and line of thinking.

It is commonly accepted that the “works” he refers to, besides the basic canonical texts, are the works of the Maharal of Prague (the author’s antecedent by seven generations, father to son), *Shenei Luhot HaBerit* by Rabbi Yeshaya HaLevi Horowitz, and *Reshit Hōkhma* by Rabbi Eliyahu de Vidas.

The “masters” refer primarily to the Maggid of Mezeritch, Rabbi Shneur Zalman’s foremost mentor; Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel of Vitebsk, the Maggid’s disciple and successor, who later moved to the Land of Israel; and the Maggid’s son, Rabbi Avraham, famously known as “Rabbi Avraham HaMalakh” (Rabbi Avraham the Angel), who was both a peer and teacher of the author of the *Tanya*, Rabbi Shneur Zalman. It is told that Rabbi Shneur Zalman would teach Rabbi Avraham Talmud and *halakha* for two hours every day in exchange for receiving two hours of tutelage in Kabbala. Rabbi Shneur Zalman related that he would adjust the hands of the clock in his favor so that he could learn more from his teacher. He later commented that he never regretted those “thefts” of time.¹

**מִיּוֹסֵד עַל פְּרָשָׁה רִאשׁוֹנָה שֶׁל
קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע** **based on the first paragraph of the Shema**

Sha’ar HaYihud VeHa’emuna focuses primarily on the meaning of the word *eḥad*, “one,” at the end of the first verse of the *Shema*. It reveals the divine unity that permeates every aspect of reality and traces its

1. See *Beit Rebbe*, part 1, chap. 2.

progression through the phrase “Blessed is the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever,” culminating in the directive to “love the Lord, your God....”²

2. This refers to the progression from the higher perception of the divine unity to the lower perception of that unity, which the author of the *Tanya* will go on to delineate and explain in subsequent chapters of *Sha'ar HaYihud VeHa'emuna*.

Introduction

THIS SHORT PREFATORY DISCOURSE, WHICH IS COMMONLY referred to as *Hinukh Katan*, serves as an introduction to *Sha'ar HaYihud VeHa'emuna*, the second section of the *Tanya* that as a whole is also referred to as *Hinukh Katan*. Along with an explanation of why the second section was given this name, this introduction clarifies the importance of this volume that we know of as *Sha'ar HaYihud VeHa'emuna*, whose abstract topics do not seem to have any direct relation to the practical service of God.

“חֲנוּךְ לְנֶעַר עַל פִּי דְרָבּוֹ גַם בִּי יִזְקִין לֹא יִסּוֹר מִמֶּנּוּהָ” (משלי כב,ו). “Train the lad in accordance with his way; even when he grows old, he will not turn from it” (Prov. 22:6).

This verse, a cornerstone of educational methodology, will now be elucidated in a new light.

הִנֵּה מִדְּבַרְתִּיב: “עַל פִּי דְרָבּוֹ” מְשִׁמַּע שְׂאִינָה דְּדֶרֶךְ הָאֱמֶת לְאִמִּיתוֹ, וְאִם בֶּן מֵאֵי מְעַלְיוֹתָא שְׁ”גַם בִּי יִזְקִין לֹא יִסּוֹר מִמֶּנּוּהָ”? The wording of this verse, “in accordance with his way,” implies that it is not referring to the way of absolute truth. If so, of what benefit is it that “even when he grows old, he will not turn from it”?

As he does in many places, the author of the *Tanya* begins his introduction with a question designed to elucidate rather than to challenge. Through this question, he emphasizes a specific facet of the verse quoted, and then he goes on to examine it thoroughly.

The beginning of the verse, “Train the lad in accordance with

his way,” is an instruction geared toward the educator to adapt his teaching style and material to the level and disposition of his student. As Rambam explains in his introduction to *Guide of the Perplexed*, for didactic reasons an educator cannot and may not always explain the topic at hand in its entirety. He must partially conceal some of the subject matter, intentionally leaving it somewhat obscure.

However, this directive seems to contradict the second half of the verse, “Even when he grows old, he will not turn from it.” If the goal of education is to impart an indelible imprint that will not lose its value over time, the educator must transmit the content with the utmost accuracy and truth not necessarily compatible with the current level and “way” of the child. Furthermore, if the child learns according to his current capacity, he is at risk of being confined to these immature schema as he grows older. How, then, is it possible to educate “in accordance with his way” in a manner that will also befit him “even when he grows old” so that “he will not turn from it”?

אֲךָ הִנֵּה מוֹדַעַת זֹאת כִּי שְׂרָשֵׁי
עֲבוֹדַת ה' וְיִסּוּדוֹתֶיהָ הֵן דְּחִילוֹ
וְדַחִימוֹ: **However, it is known that the roots of
the service of God and its foundations
are fear and love.**

The author of the *Tanya* delves into answering the question by exploring the keys of cultivating faith and only returns to his question regarding the verse from Proverbs at the end of the introduction.

He begins by pointing out that the basic impulses that lie at the root of cultivating heartfelt service of God, which even permeates the realm of interpersonal relationships, can be boiled down to love and fear.

הַיְרָאָה - שְׂרָשׁ וְיִסּוּד לְסוּר
מִרַע, **Fear of God is the basis and foundation
of avoiding evil,**

Avoidance of evil, in all its forms and fashions, stems from fear. Although fear has many variations and levels, at its essence it serves as the impulse behind one's avoidance of evil.

וְהָאֱהָבָה - לְוַעֲשֵׂה טוֹב וְקִיּוּם כָּל
מִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה דְאוּרֵי־תָא וְדִרְבָּנֵן
כְּמוֹ שִׁית־בְּאֵר בְּמִקְוֵי

and love of God is the foundation for doing good and performing all the positive commandments, both those commanded in the Torah and those instituted by the Rabbis, as explained in the relevant place

The definitive human expression of a person's love of God is the performance of the positive commandments. This love is expressed as a desire to be close to God, to achieve a deep and close connection with Him, and this is facilitated by the fulfillment of the commandments, as explained in several places.¹

(וּמִצְוֹת הַחֵינוּךְ הֵיא גַם כֵּן בְּמִצְוֹת
עֲשֵׂה כְּמוֹ שֶׁפְּתוּב בְּ"אוֹרַח חַיִּים"
סִימָן ש"מ"ג). (and the mitzva of education itself
is also a positive commandment, as
stated in the *Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ
Ḥayyim* 343).

Although a minor is not obligated to fulfill the commandments in his own right, it is a mitzva for his father to train him in their performance and guide him to avoid transgressions.²

וְהִנֵּה בְּאֱהָבָה כְּתִיב בְּסוֹף פְּרָשַׁת
עֵקֶב (דְּבָרִים י"א, כ"ב): "אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי
מִצְוָה אֶתְכֶם לַעֲשׂוֹתָהּ, לְאֱהָבָה
אֶת ה' וְגו'". With regard to love, it is written at
the end of *Parashat Ekev*, "That I
command you to perform it, to love
the Lord your God..." (Deut. 11:22).

One of the mitzvot we are commanded to perform is to love God. Ostensibly this is a commandment like any other. However, anyone

1. See *Likkutei Amarim*, chaps. 4, 41.

2. Rabbi Hillel Malisov of Paritch, a Chabad rabbi who lived in Russia, explains that unlike an adult who performs mitzvot autonomously, a minor performs mitzvot as a function of his father, who trains him to fulfill them. These two modes represent two different aspects of fulfilling mitzvot: one, like an adult, stemming from an expanded, mature consciousness, and the other, like a minor, with a constricted, more immature consciousness. Love of God, a positive commandment in its own right (as explained below), also can be performed in these two ways: with an expanded consciousness or with constricted consciousness.

who endeavors to fulfill it and examines its implications realizes the complexity of this undertaking.

**וְצִדִּיק לְהַבִּין אֵיךְ שִׁייד לְשׁוֹן
עֲשִׂיהַ גְּבִי אֶהְבֶּה שְׂבִלֵב.** **It is necessary to understand how the expression of “performing” employed by the verse applies to love of the heart.**

When God commands us to don *tefillin* or shake the *lulav*, the intent is clear: Execute a specific action. However, the mitzva to love God is another matter entirely. The term “perform” does not apply to love. Love is an emotion, not an action.

Moreover, love is a spontaneous feeling, subject to the heart’s disposition. One either loves or does not love. How can the Torah speak of generating love, using such a concrete term as *la’asota*, “to perform it”?

To unravel this fundamental issue, we must cultivate a deeper understanding of the concept of love for God and where it stems from in the heart.

**אֵךְ הָעֲנָן הוּא דִּישׁ שְׁנֵי מִינֵי
אֶהְבֶּת ה'. הָאֶחָת, הִיא כְּלוֹת
הַנֶּפֶשׁ בְּטִבְעָהּ אֶל בּוֹרְאָהּ.** **However, the fact of the matter is that there are two types of love of God. The first is the soul’s innate pining for its Creator.**

Underlying the countless variations of love for God are two basic levels. The first level of love, as the author of the *Tanya* goes on to delineate, stems from the very essence of the soul and its intrinsic connection with God. The human soul, a portion of the Divine, has an innate drive to draw close and bond to the source of its existence as much as possible. This sentiment is referred to as the “soul’s pining,” because the soul thirsts to become subsumed in its source, even at the cost of the total nullification of its individual identity, intentional or not.

**כִּאֲשֶׁר תִּתְגַּבֵּר נֶפֶשׁ הַשְּׂבִלִית
עַל הַחֹמֶר וְתִשְׁפִּיל הוּ וְתִכְנִיעֶהוּ
תַחְתֵּיהָ,** **When the rational soul prevails over the physical body, subjugating and subduing it,**

This love is not apparent in every person at any given time, because a

human being is not comprised of a pure soul alone. The human soul, cloaked by layer upon layer of physical desires and cravings, is pulled in many directions, which do not necessarily all oppose the innate course of the soul – its yearning for its Creator – but they do differ from it.

Since matter is drawn toward matter, the body focuses only on fulfilling its physical and biological needs. Bodily desire dulls and conceals the yearnings of the soul to such a degree that sometimes a person becomes nothing more than an expanded expression of his body. At that point, despite all his intrinsic spiritual capabilities, the person is reduced to a bundle of biological drives, no different from a wild beast.

Likewise, the human soul, which is attached to the body, can become subservient to the body and its desires, until it too becomes no more than the spiritual expression of the body, its faculties directed to aid the body in achieving its desires. Only when the rational soul overcomes the corporeal body, and the material ceases to be the exclusive subject of a person's thoughts and desires, when the body is no longer the dominant voice in the body-soul dynamic, when the pure voice of the soul itself is finally heard, then a person can feel the love of the soul pining for its Creator.

אִי תִתְלַהֵב וְתִתְלַהֵט בְּשֵׁלֶהֶבֶת
הָעוֹלָה מֵאֵלֶיהָ, וְתִגַּל וְתִשְׂמַח
בָּהּ עוֹשֶׂה וְתִתְעַנֵּג עַל ה' תִּעְנוּג
נִפְלְאָ.

**then it will be aroused and set ablaze
with a flame that rises on its own.
The soul will then exult and rejoice
in God, its Maker, delighting in God
with wondrous bliss.**

Once the veil of the physical is lifted, this love for God is aroused automatically. There is no need for any contemplation or action to generate it. The soul's love of God, its Creator and its source, does not require any explanations or clarification. The essential soul by nature speaks, acts, and pulses with this yearning.

The soul's pining to cleave to God, yearning, thinking, dreaming of God as if nothing else exists, becomes the center of the soul's existence and the core of its vitality. Nothing gives it pleasure other than close proximity to God, as the divinely inspired poet King David declared, "As for me, nearness to God is good" (Ps. 73:28).

His description of "good" does not refer merely to a reward, both in

this world and in the next, as payment for seeking closeness with God. It is the natural outcome of achieving this love, the palpable feeling in the soul that God is real. No pleasure or love can surpass this feeling, which is the epitome of connection – God is here! And there is nothing more that a person could ever want.

וְהַזֹּכִים לְמַעַלְת אֱהָבָה רַבָּה זֶה
הֵם הַנִּקְרָאִים צְדִיקִים בְּדַבְרֵי
"שִׂמְחוּ צְדִיקִים בַּיהוָה" (תהלים
צו, יב). **Those who merit achieving the level
of this great love are the ones who
are called tzaddikim (righteous), as it
is written, "Rejoice in the Lord, you
righteous ones" (Ps. 97:12).**

This love, which stems from the awareness that God is present in the world, and this deep feeling of delight, which stems from closeness to God alone, is a very rare level.³ This level is a defining characteristic of the tzaddik, whose soul delights in God effortlessly, without any expectation of receiving anything other than a close connection with Him.

אֲךָ לֹא כָּל אָדָם זֹכֶה לָזֶה, כִּי
לָזֶה צָרִיךְ זִיבוּךְ הַחֹמֶר בְּמֵאֵד
מֵאֵד. **However, not every person merits this,
since attaining this level demands refin-
ing the physical body to an extreme
degree.**

This level that the tzaddik achieves is not one that the average person can acquire. Most people cannot merit the experience of this type of love for two reasons. First, to reach the level in which the soul experiences the sublime joy that comes from closeness to God, the body must not interfere. The body need not disappear, because, after all, a living person needs his body to function, but rather the body must be refined to the degree that it will cease to be a pitfall of distraction, constantly pulling the soul in other directions. At the very least, the body must integrate and identify with the soul's desire so that rather than presenting itself as an obstacle, it becomes an accessory for the harmony that is engendered within the soul when the body aligns with the soul's aspirations.

3. See *Likkutei Ma'amarim*, chap. 10.

Contemplation is an intellectual activity, but it is not sufficient to merely ponder this idea occasionally; one must contemplate it “thoroughly.” This entails not just getting a general impression that a concept exists, nor does it mean studying as if for an exam that one hopes to pass. Rather, one should intensely apply his mind to consider the matter repeatedly until he achieves a clear understanding of it from every angle and perspective.

The second requirement is to contemplate these matters “in the depths of his heart,” with the utmost seriousness and self-identification with the topic. A person could study this topic just as people study science: They may understand the material well, but they do not invest themselves in it in a way that spurs meaningful growth. However, the contemplation of this matter requires full focus and attention. One must connect with the subject matter and not treat it as an abstract intellectual exercise. Contemplating God the way one thinks about

THE REVELATION OF THE NESHAMA-LEVEL SOUL

☞ As in other areas of human endeavor, effort and energy are not enough. A minimal level of aptitude and skill in any specific area is also necessary. Someone who is totally lacking talent in the arts or mathematics cannot achieve real accomplishment in those fields. Likewise, in order to achieve this level of love of God, the person’s higher level of soul must be actualized within and not remain latent in the form of potential as it exists within every Jew. The *neshama* must become a substantial and influential force in the person’s consciousness, so that he experiences and views life through his *neshama* and it becomes his voice, his “I.”

As the author of the *Tanya* points out, one cannot ascend to higher heights solely by subduing the body. It requires the fulfillment of the Torah and mitzvot, which serve as the vehicle to reveal the *neshama* beyond the levels of *nefesh* and *ruah*. The

soul levels of *nefesh* and *ruah* are capable of relating to the Divine as either filling all the worlds or encompassing all the worlds. At the level of *neshama*, it is possible to directly apprehend sacred, abstract matters without parables and ambiguity. The *neshama* relates to the Divine itself.

The love that the individual may achieve through this refinement and revelation of the Divine is not self-generated, nor does it require any particular action or thought. However, one must be on the soul level compatible with these lofty experiences so that the soul will respond in an inherent and authentic way to those very experiences. Not everyone can achieve this level, where the love spontaneously bursts forth from the innermost self. Due to life’s distractions and worries, as well as an individual’s intellectual and emotional limitations, most fail to reach this exceptional level.

a mathematical construct will never trigger an emotional response. On the other hand, contemplating these ideas in the correct way will yield results.

בְּלֵב כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל. in the heart of every Jew.

Even a spiritually average individual can attain, with the proper measures, some level of love for God, simply by virtue of being a Jew. Attaining this love requires focused contemplation of certain ideas and personal investment in the endeavor as opposed to a detached academic study.

The author of the *Tanya* now proceeds to outline the ideas that a person is meant to contemplate.

הֵן דְּרֹךְ כָּלל, **Whether** it means contemplating, **in general,**

The first approach is universal, not designated for a specific individual or a certain revelation of divine providence. It is a path that relates to any person.

כִּי הוּא חַיֵּינוּ מִמּוֹשׁ, **that God is literally our life,**

God is not merely a transcendent being, the Creator and Maker from above. Rather, “God is literally our life.” He is the actual essence of our lives.

One of the initial stages in the development of human consciousness is cognizance of the self. The basic emotions of self-preservation and love of self are dependent on the essential awareness of one’s self. Delving even deeper, one discovers a “self within the self,” which is literally a piece of God, the core of every person’s vitality within. In other words, when a person searches within his body, he discovers the self that is his soul; when a person delves into his soul, he discovers the self that is God.

This discovery is a progressive dawning of awareness, and therefore the contemplation must be undertaken “thoroughly” and “in the depths of his heart.” It is not enough to think about this idea; it must be clear, comfortably settled in the mind, and anchored in the senses. ☞

וְכַאֲשֶׁר הָאָדָם אוֹהֵב אֶת נַפְשׁוֹ and in the same way that a person
וְחַיָּו, בֵּן יֵאָהֵב אֶת ה' loves his own soul and life, so too he
וְיֵאָהֵב אֶת ה' will love God

Just as a person loves his life with the innate emotion of self-love, which did not need to be learned, He will love God in the same manner.

כְּאֲשֶׁר יִתְבַּוֵּן וְיִשִּׁים אֶל לְבוֹ בִּי when he contemplates and recognizes
ה' הוּא נַפְשׁוֹ הָאֱמִיתִית וְחַיָּו that God is literally his true soul and
מִמֶּשׁ, life,

To attain this love, one must relate to God not as a distant, foreign deity but as the inner nucleus of his being. When a person delves into his own self, he starts from the nebulous perception that identifies as a body, then continues deeper to the awareness of a self beyond the external expression of his corporeal being, until he deepens his love of self, touching on his inner will, contemplating deeper and deeper his innermost desires, until he discovers God. When a person discovers that God, in effect, is his soul, his self within self, the ultimate “I” of his personality, then his innate, primal love of self will be directed toward God.

To put it more distinctly, this love of God is an expression of self-love, which may seem to border on egotism. However, as one hasidic master commented, “Love of God is also a form of desire, but to reach this desire, one must first break all of his other desires.” In our context, the path to this love of God traverses love of self. One must first delve

THOROUGH CONTEMPLATION IN THE DEPTHS OF THE HEART

☞ For example, when a person considers the fact that the Earth is round, his natural conclusion may be that those standing on the opposite side of the globe are upside down. Nevertheless, we know that even on the other side people stand upright, as we do. While it is not difficult to grasp the logic of this fact, it does take serious and lengthy contemplation until this picture of reality penetrates. Only such contempla-

tion can expand a person’s perception of the world from a narrow, subjective view to a broader perspective of what is “up” and what is “down.”

In the same sense, a person must contemplate “thoroughly” and “in the depths of his heart” to shift his perception of self and discover that beneath it and beyond it is the “self of God.”

deeply into his concept of self until he shatters all previous notions of “Who am I?” and “What is my soul?” Through this, he comes to the realization that “my soul’s soul is God.”

This approach is typical of the author of the *Tanya* (and to a certain degree, Hasidism in general). It is not a path based on the destruction of physicality, leading to instant inspiration and revelation. While he acknowledges that such paths exist, his doctrine does not advocate engaging in such methods of service. Rather than destroy that which already is, he prescribes deepening and developing one’s existent being. Inherent in the feeling of self-love is an authentic kernel that leads beyond self to love of God.

כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב בַּזוהַר (זוהר ח"ג סח), **as written in the *Zohar* (3:68a) regarding the verse “With my soul, I desired You...” (Isa. 26:9),**
 אַ עַל פָּסוּק: “נַפְשִׁי אֲוִיתִךָ” וְגו’
 (ישעיה כו, ט),

The *Zohar* understands this verse as an exclamation directed toward one’s own soul: “My soul! You, God, are my soul, and therefore I desired you.” When a person encounters God up close and present within the innermost essence of his being, deeper than any definition or sense of self, when he feels God in the same way that he is aware of his own being, he experiences an arousal of love for God, as described in the verse: “I desired you.”

The author of the *Tanya* calls this the general approach, since it is not reserved for a select few, but rather anyone may undertake it. When any person peels away the husks of external expression, he discovers God, the primal “I” of his existence, in his innermost recesses, in the holy of holies of his being.

וְהֵן דְּרַךְ פְּרַט שֶׁשֶׁיָּבִין וַיִּשְׁפִּיל
 בְּגִדוֹלָתוֹ שֶׁל מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים
 הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא דְּרַךְ פְּרַטִּית, **or whether the contemplation is specific, where he understands and considers the greatness of the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, in detail,**

In addition to the general approach that everyone may undertake, there are individual paths, where a person may contemplate matters that demonstrate God’s greatness to him in a personal and emotionally