
אגרת הקודש
קונטרס אחרון
THE STEINSALTZ TANYA

Iggeret HaKodesh
Kuntres Aḥaron

VOLUME VI



Steinsaltz
Center



MAGGID

THE MAGERMAN EDITION

THE STEINSALTZ
TANYA

IGGERET HAKODESH 27–32
KUNTRES AHARON

COMMENTARY & TRANSLATION BY
RABBI ADIN EVEN-ISRAEL STEINSALTZ

Steinsaltz Center
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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' לאיש"ט
שולמית בת זהרה שתחי' לאיש"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)

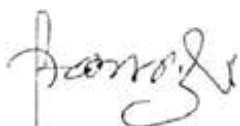
In the merit of

MOSHE LEIB BEN ZISEL
SHULAMIT BAT ZOHARA

A blessing from the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menahem Mendel Schneerson, dated 21 Av 5721 (August 3, 1961), viewing with favor Rabbi Steinsaltz's project of writing a short commentary, with longer explanations, on the *Tanya* in a style accessible to the contemporary reader:

(ושאלות ותשובות – כהמצורף למכתבו) בענייני
המובאים בתניא, כן ביאור קצר או גם ארוך, ובסגנונו,
ערוכים בלשון בני דורנו...

בברכה לבשו"ט



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.

אגרת הקודש

Iggeret HaKodesh

The Holy Epistle

Epistle 27

EPISTLE 27, ONE OF THE MOST WELL-KNOWN OF THE *Iggerot HaKodesh*, is a condolence letter to the hasidim of the tzaddik Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel of Vitebsk (or, as Chabad hasidim call him, Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel of Horodok) following his passing away in the Land of Israel in 5548 (1788).

This letter is very personal, particularly its first part. One can feel the pain and personal connection of the author of the *Tanya*, who viewed Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel as his rebbe. But the significance of this letter transcends that specific event. This letter¹ presents a seminal perspective on the meaning of a tzaddik's *histalkut* (literally, “elevation,” referring to a tzaddik's death) and on how to relate to him after his death. This topic is especially important in the hasidic movement, in which the influence and inspiration of the tzaddik – not only through his writings and his students but through his person – transcends his place and time. This letter establishes the fundamental principles of how to understand these profound matters (which have been discussed by subsequent Chabad Rebbes as well²).

More than any other epistle of the author of the *Tanya*, this letter is written in a classical literary style weaving together verses and rabbinical statements. This is possibly an outcome of the nature of this letter: because, in words

-
1. As well as the following letter, epistle 28. And in greater detail in the discourses of the author of the *Tanya* 5566, Part 1, p. 147.
 2. The letter is printed in full with a commentary in *Kuntres Inyan HaHishtatḥut* by the second Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Dovber Schneuri, and parts of it have been inserted in other essays and talks over the course of generations.

of consolation, there is no place for the presence of the consoler, the author of the *Tanya* conceals himself almost entirely in these phrases. Nevertheless, like everything else that he wrote, this letter is something that every person can study and apply throughout his entire life. Thus, this letter has two aspects. One, it is a short letter of condolence, speaking to the hearts of the mourners. And two, it transmits a profound perspective on the tzaddik following his *histalkut*: where he is now, how he continues to exercise an influence on his followers, and how they should conduct themselves. This spoke to the hearts of Rabbi Menahem Mendel's hasidim, who had loved him and had been connected to him, and who were now grieving. But for other hasidim who were not of this group, this letter remained almost completely sealed. And therefore, in an uncharacteristic maneuver, the author of the *Tanya* appended an "explanation" to this letter.

The letters in *Iggeret HaKodesh* are arranged thematically. Therefore, although this is one of the earliest letters, it is placed toward the end. Seemingly, however, it is completely different from the previous letter, which has no connection to any specific event but deals entirely with an abstract topic, in contrast to the present letter, which is of a personal nature – more so, perhaps, than any other in *Iggeret HaKodesh* – discussing a particular event. However, a connection between these two letters does exist. The previous letter discussed the revealed and hidden Torah. The revealed Torah is clothed in this world's concepts and physicality, and the hidden Torah is the Torah's inner aspect that is not clothed in this world, nor in any other world, but transcends this world's existence. That idea is connected to this letter, which discusses the tzaddik's influence: an influence that is both clothed in this world (in his body and in the matters of this world with which he is involved) and beyond this world, after he has passed away. The latter influence parallels the hidden Torah, which is not clothed in this world and so

continues in the World to Come. The tzaddik's life, which is entirely spiritual and dedicated to serving God – since all of his days are holy and separate from the things of this world in and of themselves – continues after his *histalkut*. This consists of a continuation for his hasidim in this world, because he remains with them even after he leaves his body, and it is a continuation as well for the tzaddik, even as his soul rises ever higher.

The editors added an introduction to this letter, as they did in the case of a few other epistles as well,³ as follows.

(מֵה שְׁפָתַי לְיוֹשְׁבֵי אֶרֶצְנוּ הַקְּדוֹשָׁה
תִּבְנֶה וְתִבְנוֹן בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ אָמֵן) (This is a letter that the author of the *Tanya* wrote to those who dwell in our Holy Land – may it be built and established quickly, in our days, amen.)

To whom was this letter written? In Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menahem Mendel Schneerson's list of errata, he notes that the words "to those who dwell in our Holy Land..." are an error, because the letter was written to Chabad hasidim outside the Holy Land. *Beit Rebbe*, too, states that this phrase is clearly a mistake, as may be seen from the body of the letter – and in particular from its second half (which was not published in *Iggeret HaKodesh*) in which the author of the *Tanya* explicitly addresses the hasidim outside the Holy Land, telling them to continue sending money to the Holy Land. However, the Lubavitcher Rebbe states further on that erasing this phrase would be wrong, because it was allowed to remain by the rebbes of Chabad throughout the generations, beginning with the author's sons (who edited and approved the text of *Iggeret HaKodesh* as published in the introductions to the *Tanya*) and the Tzemaḥ Tzedek, and this is how it appears in the first edition of *Kuntres Inyan HaHishtatḥut*. Therefore, this phrase possesses a certain level of authority. The Lubavitcher Rebbe proposes that both versions of the text be preserved, with the presumption that one version of the letter (which was preserved only

3. Epistles 2, 16, 28.

in part) was sent to the hasidim in the Land of Israel, and another version – the version that we possess in full – was sent to the hasidim outside the Holy Land.

לְנַחֲמָם בְּכַפְלָיִים לְתוֹשִׁיָּהּ **To console them with double alleviation (Job 11:6),**

The author of the *Tanya* characterizes his words of consolation as possessing “double alleviation.” This alludes to the character of the entire letter, and may even be considered its motto. Words of consolation, in particular those of a rebbe, not only express the consoler’s participation in the mourner’s suffering, which is itself deeply comforting, but are an attempt to transform the situation. The suffering and loss are a reality that cannot be changed, but other aspects can help a person elevate himself. In the midst of their suffering, mourners cannot as a general rule see these other aspects, and so other people’s words of consolation are required. Therefore, in this letter, the author of the *Tanya* explains that the tzaddik’s passing away brings about rectification and elevation on the level of “double alleviation”: referring to the reality after he has passed away and even retrospectively to the situation prior to his having passed away. ❧

עַל פְּטִירַת הַרֵב הַגָּאוֹן הַמְּפֹרָס,
אִישׁ אֱלֹקִים קְדוֹשׁ, נֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל,
עֲמוּד הַיְמִינִי, פֶּטִישׁ הַחֹזֵק **on the passing away of the famous,
brilliant rabbi, the holy man of
God, the lamp of Israel, the pillar
on the right side, the powerful
hammer,**

This is a description of Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel’s greatness in Torah.⁴

The tzaddik is like a lamp, and he is the soul of the entirety of the people of Israel.⁵

4. See Kings II 4:9. This in keeping with the term, “Moses, the man of God” (Deut. 33:1, and elsewhere).

5. See II Sam. 21:17. See the commentators who state that this is comparable to the life and soul of all Israel; and that if it were extinguished, heaven forbid, the lamp of all Israel would be extinguished.

He is the principal pillar upon which the house stands.⁶

This relates to his greatness in Torah, in keeping with our Sages' interpretation of the verse, "like a hammer that shatters the rock" (Jer. 23:29).

All of these descriptions are how Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai was eulogized by his students (*Berakhot* 28b). In using them here, the author of the *Tanya's* sons hint that Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel was a leader of Israel on a rarely equaled scale.

מִזְרְנוּ הָרַב וְדִבְנוּ רַבֵּי מְנַיִם our master, the rabbi, and our rabbi,
מֵעֵנְדֵל נִשְׁמָתוֹ עֵדֶן Rebbe Menaḥem Mendel, his soul is
in Eden).

Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel of Vitebsk was among the greatest students of the Maggid of Mezeritch. After the Maggid passed away, Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel was recognized as his successor. In fact, he was the last hasidic leader to be unilaterally accepted by all of the other hasidic leaders. The author of the *Tanya*, who was among the youngest students

DOUBLE ALLEVIATION

☞ This expression appears as well in *Likkutei Amarim* (chap. 35, and elsewhere). There, it describes the consolation given to a soul upon its descent into a body in this world. That descent parallels the descent from the level of a tzaddik to the level of a *beinoni*. All of a person's service of God in this world cannot restore to his soul the love and fear that it had possessed before its descent. (See *Likkutei Amarim*, chap. 12 and onward.) Nevertheless, despite all of the hardship and even suffering caused by this descent, the soul can now attain a level even than it could have attained previously. Therefore, this apparent descent

contains the potential for ascent immeasurably greater than had existed previously. That reflects the entire aim of the hasidic approach and of a person's service of God: to transform the mundane into holiness, darkness into light, and descent into ascent. This message is consolation with "double alleviation."

In using this expression here, the author of the *Tanya* expresses the same idea: that with the passing away of Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel, his students and hasidim have experienced a descent. But now they can ascend even higher than they could have before.

6. See I Kings 7:21.

of the Maggid, related to him as his own rebbe, although even in Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel's lifetime, The author of the *Tanya* had already set forth his own path of Chabad Hasidism. ¶

This concludes the introduction to the letter. Now the letter itself begins.

12 Heshvan

11 Heshvan
(leap year)

אַהֲבֵי אֶחָי וְרַעִי אֲשֶׁר כְּנַפְשִׁי
בִּי

**My beloved ones, my brothers and
friends who are as close to me as my
soul...**

The salutation has always been meaningful in letters written by hasidic tzaddikim. This greeting, “My beloved, my brothers and friends who are [as close to me] as my soul...,” which is found in a number of the letters (9, 16, 22, addenda to 22 and 23), expresses exceptional closeness and affection. This greeting relates to what the author of the *Tanya* will say later on. He is addressing those who are especially

RABBI MENAḤEM MENDEL AND THE AUTHOR OF THE TANYA

¶ In the year 5537 (1776-77), Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel led a large group of hasidim to the Land of Israel. He went for a number of reasons, among which were the personal attacks directed against him by the opponents of Hasidism. Initially, the author of the *Tanya* wished to join this group, but he did not do so, principally because Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel requested that he remain in his place. Later on, Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel appointed the author of the *Tanya* his successor in Lithuania and White Russia (see *Sefer HaToledot* 18, and also *Iggeret HaKodesh*, epistle 122, from the Kherson archive). Even after Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel's ascent to the Land of Israel, the two maintained a close connection. Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel sent many letters to the author of the *Tanya*, and put him in charge of collecting money for his hasidim's support. Rabbi Menaḥem Men-

del's passing away was a hard blow for hasidim everywhere, and raised the question of who would lead the movement, both in and outside the Land of Israel. Outside the Land of Israel, in those areas that had been under the influence of Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel, the author of the *Tanya* was recognized as his successor and as a significant figure in his own right. The author of the *Tanya*'s unique approach of Chabad Hasidism was already an independent movement that had grown significantly beyond the dimensions of the other students of the Maggid and Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel. The author of the *Tanya* also saw himself as responsible to an extent for the hasidim in the Land of Israel. That is the background against which he wrote his letter of condolence to the hasidim, both in and outside the Land of Israel.

close to him and he will implicitly demand a great deal from them: not only to overcome their loss emotionally but to elevate the situation so that each person will receive something from the tzaddik and, with the attendant strength and responsibility, will himself be like the tzaddik. ❧

ה' עֲלֵיהֶם יִחִיו "חַיִּים עַד הָעוֹלָם"
(תהלים קלג, ג), וְצִאצְּאֵיהֶם אִתָּם,
זֶרַע אֱמֶת (ירמיה ב, בא) בְּרוּכֵי ה'
הַמָּה, "מִעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם"
may God be over them, that they
should live "life for eternity" (Ps.
133:3), and their offspring with them,
who will be a seed of truth (Jer. 2:21)
they are blessed by God, from now
and forever.

The author of the *Tanya* blesses the hasidim for the future. The blessing that these mourners need after the passing away of the tzaddik is life (see Isa. 38:16). As the verse states, "The Lord commanded the blessing of life for eternity" (Ps. 133:3). Not only do they need a replacement of the life they lost, whose stay on earth was temporary, but they need life that will last forever.

This blessing continues beyond their days, to their offspring after

MY BELOVED ONES

❧ *Likkutei Hagahot LaTanya* (p. 81) comments on these phrases in keeping with hasidic explanations (see e.g., *Torah Or* 36d; *Likkutei Torah*, Lev. 35a, 74b) that are based on the following midrash: "A king had an only daughter..., whom he called 'my daughter.' He came to love her so much that he called her 'my sister.' At last, he called her 'my mother'..." (*Shemot Rabba* 52:5). *Likkutei Hagahot LaTanya* draws a correlation between the phrases of the author of the *Tanya*'s salutation and the king's locutions.

"My beloved" corresponds to "my daughter."

"My brothers" corresponds to "my sister."

"Friends" corresponds to "my mother."

"Who are [as close to me] as my soul" corresponds to the level of calling them "by my very name," to the essence of the soul."

The ellipsis corresponds to *yehida*.

"May God give them life." Previously the author of the *Tanya* spoke about the level of the "inner essence" and now he speaks about the level of "encompassing."

"Life forever." This implies the binding between the encompassing with the inner essence.

them, so that the latter will be “a seed of truth blessed by God,⁷ from now and forever,⁸” that is to say, blessed with true, eternal life. ☞

These words of opening and blessing are not simply expressive, but rather, they are intended to foreshadow the content of the epistle, which will show how these words of blessing actually happen, and how they can and should be received.

אַחֲרֵי דְרִישׁת שְׁלוֹמָם כִּמְשַׁפֵּט
לְאוֹהֲבֵי שְׁמוֹ After inquiring after their well-being,
as is proper for those who love His
Name,

“Those who love His Name”⁹ refers to every Jew. As *Likkutei Amarim* explains (chaps. 14–15) every Jew’s divine soul possesses a hidden love for God. This love is so great that when it is revealed it vanquishes a person’s entire being, to the extent that he will be prepared to literally sacrifice himself. This is so characteristic of a Jew, that Jews are called “those who love His Name.”

בָּאתִי לְדַבֵּר עַל לֵב נִדְכָּאִים
הַנִּנְאָנָחִים וְהַנִּנְאָנָקִים I have come to speak to the heart of
those who are downcast, the sighing
and the mournful,

Those who are “downcast, sighing and mournful” are the hasidim mourning the loss of their rebbe. The halakha states that a student must mourn for his principal rabbi even to the extent of tearing his

A SEED OF TRUTH

☞ The expression, “a seed of truth,” has an additional meaning. In exile, as the Divine is concealed (in particular, when a tzaddik passes away) the people of Israel are like a seed planted in the ground that disintegrates yet which afterward grows

far beyond what it had been. Thus, during this period of suffering, when the hasidim are depressed and desolate, the author of the *Tanya* blesses them that they will be like a seed that flourishes multiple times beyond its crushed state.

7. This expression is based on Isa. 65:23: “For they are the descendants of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.”

8. In a number of places in Prophets and the Writings; for instance, Isa. 9:6, *ibid.* 59:21, Ps. 113:2, 115:18, and elsewhere.

9. See Ps. 119:132 (and see also *ibid.* 69:36).

clothes – and how much more must hasidim mourn their rebbe. For the hasidim, the rebbe to whom they are attached is more than a rabbi who has taught them wisdom; he is also their father and king. His loss affects almost every area of their lives: Torah, prayer and the commandments (which, overall, comprise the entire life of this world). And this loss affects the life of their spirit as well: the *sefira* of *Hesed*, associated with love, corresponds to the father; the *sefira* of *Gevura*, associated with fear, corresponds to the king; and the *sefira* of *Tiferet* corresponds to the rabbi. A person who loses all of these has nowhere to escape from his sorrow. ❧

וּלְנַחֲמָם בְּכַפְּלַיִם לְתוֹשִׁיָּהּ, אֲשֶׁר
שָׁמְעָה אָזְנִי וַתִּבֶּן לָהּ (איוב יג, א) עַל
מֵאֲמַר רַבּוֹתֵינוּ ז"ל 'דְּשָׁבַק חַיִּים
לְכָל חַי' and to console them with double
alleviation that my ear has heard
and understood regarding the
description of our Rabbis of
blessed memory that a person
who has died is someone “who
has left life for all the living.”

“My ear has heard and understood” (Job 13:1): “My ear has heard” from others, “and [I] understood” myself (*Likkutei Hagahot LaTanya*).

“Who has left life for all the living”:¹⁰ This expression has a secondary

DOWNCAST, THE SIGHING AND THE MOURNFUL

❧ This terminology may support the proposal of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menahem Mendel Schneerson, that at least a partial version of the letter was written to the hasidim of the Land of Israel. That is because for the hasidim outside the land, the image of Rabbi Menahem

Mendel was no longer vivid. More than ten years had passed since he had made aliya, and although there were still those who remembered him or who had heard stories about him, his presence was no longer so powerful that his death would cause them to be “downcast, sighing and mournful.”

10. A similar phrase appears in the words of our Sages: “The Master has not left life to any person” (*Berakhot* 61b, quoted as well in *Likkutei Amarim*, chap. 1. And see a variant in *Bava Kama* 91b, and elsewhere). However, that phrase is speaking of this as something negative, not as the description of a person passing away from the world. In terms of the meaning used by the author of the *Tanya* here as referring to someone passing away, this expression appears in the words of the

meaning that offers consolation: the tzaddik has left his life here, giving it to those who live in this world.

Now, the author of the *Tanya* explains the meaning of the tzaddik's life while he was alive and the power of the life he leaves behind.

כִּי צַדִּיק בְּאַמוּנָתוֹ יִחְיֶה (חבקות
ב,ד), וּבְיִרְאַת ה' לְחַיִּים (משלי
יט,כג), וּבְרֶשֶׁת אֵשׁ שֶׁלֶהֱבֵת
אֶהְבֶּתוּ

This is because “the tzaddik lives by his faith” (Hab. 2:4), by “the fear of the Lord, which leads to life” (Prov. 19:23), and by the flames of fire, a burning flame of his love for God.

Clearly, the tzaddik's life – that which engages him, moves him and fills his soul all the days of his life – is not like that of other people. Most people are involved first and foremost with the life of this world, with its benefits, victories, fears, and so forth – in short, with themselves and their survival, and everything connected to that. Their life of this world is ongoing, whereas their thoughts of God are sporadic. However, for some people, God is everything, and it is with this that they live (and as for the life of this world, they think of it only in connection with the Divine). These people are the tzaddikim. A tzaddik's life therefore consists of his relationship with God, which includes faith, fear and love. He lives with faith because for him faith is not a cloudy concept but an existential reality. He lives with the fear of God because it is what he experiences. When a person is frightened of something in this world, he has no rest and no life, because everything is colored by that fright. But the tzaddik fears God. That is his life. And he lives with the love of God. Sometimes a person experiences a fiery love that fills his entire life until nothing else interests him, and he cannot deal with anything but the object of his love. In the same way, the tzaddik's love of God constitutes his life.

Rishonim in a somewhat different form in the text of the *halitza* document (see, for instance, Rambam, *Hilkhot Yibum VeHalitza* 4:30: “and when he dies and leaves life to the rabbis and to all Israel”). Only later on (perhaps at the end of the period of the *Rishonim*) is the expression used with the meaning familiar to us: of someone passing away (as in *Responsa Maharam Padua* 73, *Responsa Rabbi Moshe Alsheikh* in a number of places, and elsewhere).

מַחַיִּים לְכֹל בְּהֶן, חַיֵּי רוּחוֹ
 [נוֹסֵחַ אַחֵר: וְנִשְׁמָתוֹ] כָּל
 יְמֵי חַלְדָּו
 These traits are even greater **than life** for
 the tzaddik, so that **he incorporates into**
them the life of his *ruah* [a different ver-
 sion: and of his *neshama*] **all the days of**
his earthly life.

The tzaddik's faith, fear and love are even more real and critical for him than life¹¹ itself, more than what others see as life, more than everything that connects him to the life of this world.¹² Throughout all the days of his life in this world, the sole involvement of his *ruah*¹³ (and his *neshama*¹⁴) is the fear and love of God. In matters of this world, only his body and his vital *nefesh* are engaged and only regarding his most basic survival needs, whereas the entire inner being of his *nefesh*, *ruah* and *neshama* are involved in the Divine.¹⁵

וַיְהִי בְּהִעָלוֹת ה' (מלכים
 ב ב,א), "רוּחוֹ וְנִשְׁמָתוֹ אֵלָיו
 יֵאָסֹף" (איוב לד,ד) וַיַּעֲלֵה
 בְּעֵילָיו אַחֵר עֵילָיו עַד רוֹם
 הַמַּעֲלוֹת
 "And when the Lord raises" (II Kings 2:1)
 "and gathers his *ruah* and his *neshama*
 to Himself" (Job 34:14), and he rises,
 elevation after elevation, to the exalted
 heights,

11. See Ps. 63:4: "For Your kindness is better than life."

12. Regarding the wording of, "the days of his earthly life," see *Likkutei Amarim*, end of chap. 31.

13. See Isa. 38:16.

14. The difference between the texts is a disagreement as to whether the tzaddik's influence on the hasidim is only on the level of the *ruah* or also on the level of the *neshama*. *Likkutei Hagahot LaTanya* notes that apparently the tzaddik's influence on his students reaches only as far as the level of the *ruah*. If so, the variant reading is to be rejected. And *Likkutei Hagahot LaTanya* adds that possibly the variant text relates to the tzaddik's influence on his son. And see *HaLeKaḥ VeHaLibuv*, which states that "his *ruah*" includes the "faith, fear and love" mentioned earlier, whereas the additional variant text, "and his *neshama*" relates to the statement at the end of the commentary on this letter that there is yet another level of illumination for the tzaddik's students, which comes from the elevation of his *ruah* and his *neshama* to the Source from which he was hewn.

15. This is in keeping with the author of the *Tanya*'s teaching in a number of places on the verse "The toil of your hands ..." that in regard to matters of this world, one needs toil of the hands only and not the intellect and the inner being of the *nefesh*. See *Likkutei Torah, Derushim LeRosh HaShana* 63b, and elsewhere.

When a tzaddik passes away, his *ruah* and *neshama*¹⁶ that were connected to his body and to his life in this world are freed and rise, and God gathers them to Himself.

In addition, when the souls of different people are elevated, they are gathered together. In this world, the people's souls were separated from each other, each one experiencing itself as a separate entity. But when they rise from this world of separation, they gather together to be with the one God.

The tzaddik rises, ascent after ascent. Usually, when a person dies, as his *ruah* and *neshama* rise, they are disconnected from his body and from this world.

On the other hand, if a person was so deeply connected to his body that his life consisted solely of what occurs in this world, something of that connection remains like a pleasant memory even after he passes away, and that prevents his spirit from freeing itself entirely to be able to rise.

But the tzaddik is not like either of these two types of people. During his lifetime in this world, his soul was connected to the upper worlds. His entire connection to his body and this world was imposed upon him from without, and he only awaited his moment of release. Therefore, his passing away is a mighty, unlimited liberation. All of the parts of his divine *nefesh*, *ruah* and *neshama* unite and rise toward their supernal root, that being "a portion of the Divine above." He had been connected, to some extent, to the forms of this world: to people, to practical commandments. However, these connections do not hinder him after his passing. Instead, he considers them, takes them into account, and then rises further, elevation after elevation. Since his life below had been meaningful, there is meaning as well to every level that he passes through until he reaches the highest heights. ❧

שֶׁבַק חַי רֹחוֹ, פְּעוּלָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר
עָבַד בָּהּ לְפָנִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל

he then leaves behind the life of his *ruah*, and his activity that he had formerly engaged in among the people of Israel.

16. His *ruah* and his *neshama*, but not his *nefesh*. That is because the level of the *nefesh*, which is connected to the body, retains that connection and does not rise, elevation after elevation.

Although the tzaddik rises, he does not entirely take leave of the lower realm. What remains of a person after he dies? If he had lived only in the physical realm, it is possible that after his death nothing remains. But regarding the tzaddik, whose life had been spiritual, the death of his body is not the death of his spirit. That continues to exist, even if not via the body, but through the “activity that he had formerly engaged in.” The tzaddik acted in this world and worked in it, he influenced it and improved it. And this activity remains in the world even after his *histalkut* as a vessel for his spirit. The Hebrew for “formerly” can also be translated as “inner being.” The tzaddik’s activity and work affect the inner dimension of the world. Work that affect the world’s external realm, which is no more than preparation for something else, may not last, because its scope is temporal and local. But an activity aimed at inner essence lasts forever. And all of these things are recognized and impressed in this world in a Jew’s soul and life.

Below, the author of the *Tanya* specifies who receives the life that the tzaddik leaves behind.

“פְּעוּלַת צַדִּיק לְחַיִּים” (משלי יטז), לְכֹל חַי, הִיא נֶפֶשׁ כָּל חַי הַקְּשׁוּרָה בְּנֶפֶשׁוֹ בְּחַבְלֵי עֲבוֹתוֹת אֲהָבָה רַבָּה וְאֲהָבַת עוֹלָם, בַּל תִּמּוּט לְנֶצַח

“The tzaddik’s activity is for the living” (Prov. 10:16): for every living being, which is the soul of every living being who is connected to his soul with the thick cords of a tremendous love and a worldly love that will not be moved for all eternity.

The tzaddik’s activity that remains in the world after his *histalkut* is life for the living; for those who are alive. In a simple sense, this refers to those who are alive in this world. More deeply, it refers to those who not

HISTALKUT

☞ The tzaddik’s passing away is called *histalkut*, “elevation.” “Death” is a descent, which is something that has absolutely no connection to the tzaddik. “Passing away” relates to those who remain, those whom the dead person has left behind. That too

does not pertain to the tzaddik (as this letter will explain). But *histalkut* is elevation: the tzaddik is liberated and rises upward, yet without being disconnected from what remains below.

The author of the *Tanya* describes who receives the life of the tzaddik: it is the person who desires the supernal life that the tzaddik brings down, a life that consists of clinging to God with faith, love, and fear.

In this sentence, the word “life” refers to the hasid, to his desire for life and his clinging to the ways of the tzaddik, and the word “living” refers to his receiving the life of the tzaddik, which becomes his own life.

A TREMENDOUS LOVE AND A WORLDLY LOVE

☞ These two terms refer to fundamental Chabad concepts (see, e.g., *Likkutei Amarim*, chap. 43; *Torah Or* 47b). One may assume that the hasidic meaning of these terms – terms that are found in the literature of our Sages and in the prayer book – was already complete in the author of the *Tanya*’s thought, although this letter dates much earlier (written about ten years before the publication of the *Tanya*).

The use of these terms here is unusual, because in general they apply to love of God, and not – as they are used here – to the hasid’s connection with his rebbe. But the basis of the hasid’s relationship with his rebbe is the hasid’s relationship with God. His relationship with his rebbe only provides a model for his relationship with God. His love for his rebbe is nothing in and of itself. It is on the level of “He and His essence are one” (meaning, “He and His vessels, His traits, are one”). The use of these terms here may be explained in light of that. Generally, the term “tremendous love” refers to a person’s supernal love for God Himself, beyond all of His revelations. Such a love is infinite and not conditioned on any external factor. In contrast, “worldly love” is connected to the world, in two ways. First, it relates to God as He is revealed as Creator and Guide. And second, the way a person attains this

love, feels it and is influenced via this world, that is, via contemplating the world and having a feeling about the world. In this sense, the hasid’s connection to the rebbe with ropes of tremendous love is, in essence, his inner connection to God, who is to be found in all of the rebbe’s affairs, intentions and personality. As for “worldly love,” it too, is love for God, but it proceeds via the hasid’s relationship with the rebbe: his personality, manner and form, and the beauty with which he imbues things. This love is apparently limited to the time and state during which the hasid is with the rebbe in this world. Nevertheless, the author of the *Tanya* says that this love “will not be moved for eternity.” This “eternity” is neither finite nor infinite. The concept of “forever” relates to an existence and form within time, into which the infinite that transcends time shines its light (see *Likkutei Torah*, Deut. 67c, where it is similarly explained that it is a concept that relates to the trait of *Malkhut*). It is precisely this, that the author of the *Tanya* is discussing here: the being of the tzaddik, which is within time, within a certain person living in this world as a soul in a body and so forth, yet which also exists beyond that, insofar as the tzaddik possesses faith and the fear and love of God.

The soul of the person who desires life will cling to the way of service that the tzaddik taught the hasidim in general and him in particular.

וְהִיתָה צְרוּרָה בְּצַרְוֹר הַחַיִּים אֶת
ה' בְּחַיֵּי "רוּחַ אֶפְיָנו" (איכה ה),
"אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְנוּ בְּצִלּוֹ נַחֲיָה בְּגוֹיִם"
(איכה שם)

and his soul will be bound in the bond of life with God, and it will be bound with the life of the tzaddik, the one who is "the spirit of our nostrils" (Lam. 4:20) "of whom we have said, 'In his protective shadow, we will live among the nations'" (ibid.).

As explained elsewhere,¹⁸ "the bond of life" (see I Sam. I 25:29) may be thought of as a garment for the soul. A person, who is a created and limited being, can only receive God's pure and infinite light via a garment that is as pure as that light. This garment is made from the Torah and the mitzvot that this person engaged in during his lifetime.

A person creates another garment through his choice of neighborhood and his neighbors, the people around him, what he speaks about, how he speaks, how he interacts with others, and so forth. And he creates yet another type of garment if his thoughts and words in this world are materialistic. After he dies, these become the garments of his soul in the World to Come, with all of the grotesqueness and pointlessness of physicality within that world.

But if a person's deeds and thoughts are in Torah and good deeds, in faith, in love and in the fear of God, after he passes away that will be his bond, his garment of life. He will be together with God.

The tzaddik leaves behind his thoughts, words, teachings and prayers to everyone in this world. They give life to those who desire life, who desire the inner essence life as much they desire to breathe air. The tzaddik's influence is all-encompassing. The two terms, "the spirit of our nostrils" and "in his [protective] shadow, we will live," refer to the totality of the tzaddik's spiritual influence upon the hasid and to the connection of the hasid with the tzaddik. ❦

18. See *Likkutei Amarim*, chap. 4; epistle 29; *Torat Hayyim, Parashat Mishpatim* 285c.

אִשְׁרֵי שֶׁבַק לָנוּ בְּכָל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד
 כְּפִי בְּחִינַת הַתְּקִשׁוּרֹתוֹ בְּאֵמֶת
 וְאֶהְבֵּתוּ אֶהְבֵּת אֵמֶת הַטְּהוֹרָה
 מִקְרֵב אִישׁ וְלֵב עֲמוּק בִּי "כְּמִים
 הַפְּנִים וְכוּ'" (משלי כו, ט) וְרוּחַ
 אֵייתִי רוּחַ וְאִמְשִׁיךְ רוּחַ

All this the tzaddik has left for us, each person corresponding to the level of his genuine connection and his pure love – his true love – with the tzaddik, from within himself and from the depth of his heart (see Psalms 64:7). That is because “As water reflects a face to the face, so does the heart of a person to a person” (Prov. 27:19), and “spirit brings spirit and draws forth spirit” (*Zohar* 2:166b and elsewhere).

Now, after the tzaddik’s *histalkut*, we do not seek his influence externally but we seek it by looking within ourselves. Each person may find the tzaddik in his soul.

The text uses the adjectives “genuine” and “pure,” indicating something true, because, as the author of the *Tanya* states in a number of places, truth is something that does not change. The truth is an entity’s central, inner and essential core, unaffected by any external alterations. Thus, the hasid’s genuine connection to and pure love for his rebbe does not change just because the rebbe is no longer in his body. The only difference is that the “garments” have changed.

THE SPIRIT OF OUR NOSTRILS

☞ This metaphor is more extreme than the more common metaphor of food. A person’s dependence on food is not as acute as his dependence on air. Without the life that a person receives from the tzaddik, he has no life at all – not even a momentary illusion of some other, worldly life.

“The spirit of our nostrils” and “in his protective shadow, we will live.”

This is speaking overall of two levels of spiritual influence: inner and encompassing. Food and air are metaphors for inner influence. There is a difference between an inner influence and its recipient. The

recipient has his own existence, and the influence is a life force that he receives. Conversely, an encompassing influence not only gives life to its recipient, but it constitutes the essence of his existence. He exists only within that encompassing influence. That is the meaning of “in his [protective] shadow, we will live.” The shadow is encompassing, and the hasid is within it. The hasid receives the encompassing illumination of the tzaddik in such a way that there is no difference between the influence and the recipient. The hasid has no inherent existence.

To the degree that the hasid's connection to and love of his rebbe in his lifetime was pure – without any admixture, without any superficial motivations – it will grow even stronger after the tzaddik's *histalkut*.

The hasid's connection to the tzaddik must emerge from the depth of his heart: from the core of his heart and the essence of his soul. The more the hasid's connection is genuine and pure, the more it will bring the tzaddik's influence down to him from the tzaddik's inner point of truth and the depth of the tzaddik's heart. Then it will enter and influence the hasid's inner being and depth of his heart.

This metaphor describes the arousal from below: the face that one presents to water is the face that is reflected in them. When a person smiles, the water smiles back. Similarly, that which a person feels in his heart toward another person, that person returns to him.¹⁹ In this context, that which the hasid feels and seeks, he receives from the rebbe.

This phrase expresses the same concept in the language of the *Zohar*, and is discussed at length in hasidic teachings in this context of an arousal from below. The hasid's spirit of connection with his rebbe and love for him draws a spirit of love and connection from the rebbe to him. ☞

וְרוּחוֹ עוֹמֶדֶת בְּקִרְבֵּינוּ מִמָּוֶשׁ,
כִּי בְּרֵאוֹתָו יִלְדִּינוּ, מִעֵשָׂה יָדָיו
בְּקִרְבּוֹ יִקְדִּישׁוּ שְׁמוֹ יִתְפַּרֵּד
אֲשֶׁר יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ

The tzaddik's spirit truly remains in our midst when he sees his children, the work of his hands in his midst, sanctifying God's name, may He be blessed, which is magnified and sanctified,

Even now. This is literally the tzaddik's spirit: not only memories of experiences that we had, but the tzaddik's living spirit within our own spirit.

“His children” refers to the tzaddik's students,²⁰ his hasidim. When the tzaddik's spirit sees that his students are connected to him as

19. Regarding the way of service of “like water, face answers to face...” see at length *Likkutei Amarim*, chaps. 46 and 49.

20. Students are called children, as in Scripture and in the words of our Sages. “Children of the prophets” are the students of the prophets. Elisha calls Elijah “my father.” And this is expressed in various statements of the Sages, such as, “Whoever teaches his comrade's child Torah is considered by Scripture as though he fathered him” (*Sanhedrin* 19b).

children are connected to their father and, moreover, that they are like “the work of his hands,” in that they embody and express his fear and love of God, God’s name is truly “magnified and sanctified,”²¹ just as it is by the tzaddik. “Magnified” means that it is made greater, spreading and permeating all existence. And “sanctified” means that God’s holiness is revealed; the fact that He is separate from and higher than all existence. As explained in hasidic teachings, these are the two levels of the revelation of the divine light: inner and encompassing, also referred to as “filling all worlds” and “encompassing all worlds.”

“AS WATER REFLECTS A FACE TO THE FACE”

Physical water reflecting one’s face” is a tangible metaphor from the nature of the world, whereas “spirit brings spirit” emphasizes that the same principle applies in the spiritual realm.

Furthermore, an additional aspect exists in the spiritual dimension: not only does spirit bring spirit but it draws forth more spirit. As stated elsewhere (see *Ha-Yom Yom*, 20 *Adar Sheni*), “spirit from below brings spirit from above, and draws spirit from above and higher.” In terms of the physical metaphor, what we show to water reflects back to us, no more and no less. But in terms of the spiritual metaphor,

the spirit that rises from below draws spirit from the highest heights, which is much more than the spirit from below. It is important to emphasize this here, because otherwise a person might have thought that the hasid’s connection to the tzaddik after the latter’s *histalkut* is only a type of memory, that he merely recaptures what had once been. Therefore, the author of the *Tanya* stresses that a new spirit comes from the tzaddik, which in scope and tangibility, is far greater than what the hasid had received from the tzaddik in the latter’s lifetime.

WHICH IS MAGNIFIED AND SANCTIFIED

These are the words with which the kaddish begins, the prayer recited in a quorum to magnify and sanctify God’s name as well as to elevate the soul of a person who has passed away – in particular, when he was connected to the person reciting the kaddish. As used here, this term teaches that the hasid’s connection to the tzaddik’s life after the latter’s *histalkut* and the hasid’s walking in the tzaddik’s ways, magnify and sanctify God’s name. This con-

nection elevates the soul of that tzaddik as well, since the hasid’s service of God is powered by him. Then, as this letter will go on to explain, the more the tzaddik’s spirit rises, the more abundance it causes to flow down onto the hasid, even more than he had received in the tzaddik’s lifetime, both in the inner being of the hasid’s soul and in the encompassing illumination from above.

21. See Isa. 29:23.

כְּאִשֶּׁר נִלְךְ בְּדַרְךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר
הוֹדֵנוּ מִדְרָכָיו, וְנִלְכָהּ בְּאוֹרְחֹתָיו

when we will go on the straight road
that he taught us of his ways, and we
will go on his paths,

All of this is the case when the hasidim continue to walk on the path that the tzaddik taught them in his lifetime. Through this, they will continue to go in his ways and they will be connected to him forever, so that no circumstances – in life nor in death, in body nor in soul – will interfere with this living connection.²² ☞

נֶצַח סְלָה וְעַד eternally, always, forever.

As explained elsewhere,²³ in keeping with what is explained in the words of the Sages (see *Eiruvin* 54a), whenever Scripture uses any of

HIS ROADS AND HIS PATHS

☞ The *Zohar* explains, as does somewhat differently the Ba'al Shem Tov, that there is a difference between a “road” and a “path.” It may be noted that The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menahem Mendel Schneerson, also references the *Zohar* 2:215a and *Likkutei Torah*, Song. 12a, which discusses the connection between *oraḥ*, “guest,” and *oraḥ*, “path.” See *Ba'al Shem Tov al HaTorah, Parashat Yitro* 4, *Tzava'at HaRibash, Keter Shem Tov* and *Likkutim Yekarim*. In brief, a “road” is paved, as when a person separates himself from this-worldly matters and engages solely in Torah, day and night, and “path” is the way in which a person speaks with people and about this-worldly matters, but does all of that for the sake of heaven. Thus, a “road” is paved, a way on which many have gone and still go. What the tzaddik teaches others is a straight way on which the tzaddik and others have walked. A “path,” on the other hand, is unpaved and, moreover, has dangers and surprises. It is every individual's personal path. A person cannot only walk upon the straight road that his rabbis taught him. As he lives in the world, he faces opportunities and tests to which he must respond in his own unique way. Although these are the person's own paths, the author of the *Tanya* calls them the tzaddik's paths, because the tzaddik teaches the hasid how to walk upon the unpaved path, the path that his particular soul descended to the world to walk upon, a path that is not outlined in the *Shulḥan Arukh*. The “path” comes from the tzaddik – especially after his *histalkut*. Nevertheless, he leaves something for the hasid beyond making a simple choice between good and evil. Therefore, “we” – his hasidim – “will go on his paths.”

22. See Ps. 107:7 and Isa. 2:3 (also Mic. 4:2).

23. See *Likkutei Torah, Pekudei* 5a, which cites the *Zohar* 3:20a and refers as well to *Mikdash Melekh*, *ibid*.

these three synonyms it means something that will never cease. By using all three terms, the author of the *Tanya* emphasizes that the tzaddik's life and his guidance of his hasidim never cease.

וְזֶה שְׂכָתוֹב בְּזוֹהַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ (חלק ג
עא,ב): דְּצַדִּיקָא דְאַתְּפֹטֵר אֲשֶׁתִּפְּח
בְּכֻלָּהוּ עֲלָמִין יִתִּיר מִבְּחִיּוּהֵי דְהֵיִינוּ
שָׁגַם בְּזֶה הָעוֹלָם הַמַּעֲשֶׂה, "הַיּוֹם
לַעֲשׂוֹתָם" (דברים ז,יא)

And so is it written in the holy *Zohar* (3:71b), “a tzaddik who passes away is found in all worlds more than [he was] in his life-time” that is, even in this world of action, of which it is written, “today to do them” (Deut. 7:11).

13 Heshvan

12 Heshvan
(leap year)

The fact that after the tzaddik has left his physical body he exists in the upper world is easy to understand. But the fact that his soul still exists, even more than when he was alive, in the physical world is hard to comprehend, because the tzaddik now has no physical body with which to act, with which to speak, and with which to be in the world of action. However, even though the tzaddik's life is not in his body, it exists in the bodies of the hasidim connected to him, and so through them he continues to fulfill the purpose of the world of action: “today to do them” (Deut. 7:11).

אֲשֶׁתִּפְּח יִתִּיר כִּי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה (גְּדוֹל)
[גְּדוֹל] וְהוֹלֵךְ, גִּידוּלֵי גִידוּלִין מִן אוֹר
זָרִיעַ לְצַדִּיק בְּשָׂדֵה אֲשֶׁר בָּרַכּוּ ה'

The tzaddik is **present more** than when he was alive. That is because **the action** of his disciples **continuously grows**, producing **successive generations of offshoots**, from “**the light planted for the righteous**” (Ps. 97:11) in “**the field that the Lord has blessed**” (Gen. 27:27).

This is in keeping with our Sages' statement (*Eirubin* 22a) that “today” refers to the world of action, the arena designated for the commandments that can be performed only in a physical body. Therefore, the physicality of the world of action and the fact that it conceals the Divine and expresses God's inner intent is an end in itself and not just a means toward some other goal. One cannot say that physicality is secondary

to spirituality – that the tzaddik had been in the world of action and now, at a more advanced stage, he is no longer there. That is not so. Even after his *histalkut*, the tzaddik is more present in the world of deed.

That is because the deeds that the hasidim perform in this world continuously grow,²⁴ beyond that which the tzaddik did and was able to do while in his body. That indicates not only the growths that the tzaddik grew in his lifetime – his own students – but their successive generations of offshoots as well: their own students and children.

The tzaddik's influence is comparable to a seed planted in the earth. After it disintegrates, it grows into a plant that is much greater than what had been manifest in the seed. And that plant itself goes on to produce its own offshoots. ☞

הַמְאִיר לְאֶרֶץ וְחוּצוֹת **Shining on the Land and on the outside places.**

The light shines down to the land below, that being the Land of Israel, and to the “outside places,” those being the areas outside the Land of Israel.²⁵

Most of Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel of Vitebsk's hasidim lived in the Land of Israel, where he had lived and had been active for the last ten years of his life. But even outside the Land, many hasidim had remained connected to him and stayed in touch with him via messengers and

“IN THE FIELD THAT THE LORD HAS BLESSED”

☞ What is the meaning of this expression, which was spoken by Isaac to Jacob? Is the “field” the Garden of Eden (as implied by Rashi there, based on *Tanḥuma*), the Temple, or, in the language of the kabbalists, the *sefira* of *Malkhut*? Whatever it is, the author of the Tanya is apparently alluding to the inclusive “supernal earth”: a spir-

itual “earth” where the tzaddik exists after his *histalkut*. This spiritual existence is the supernal, rectified and holy aspect of our world. Since the tzaddik is in that spiritual world, it relates to our own world. Since, in his lifetime, the tzaddik lived in “the field that the Lord has blessed,” his link with this earth remains even after his *histalkut*.

24. This phrase is possibly based on I Sam. 2:26: “The lad Samuel was steadily growing.”

25. See the blessing of *Yotzer Or*, and also Prov. 8:26. Rashi interprets “land and the outer places” as referring to “the Land of Israel and the other lands.”

letters. And in a more extended circle, hasidim had a connection to him via the author of the *Tanya* and via giving charity to the author of the *Tanya*, which he sent to the Land of Israel to support the hasidic community there.

וְגַם אֲנַחְנוּ אֵלֶּה פֹּה הַיּוֹם פּוֹלְנֵנוּ חַיִּים
בְּדַרְכָּיו, דֶּרֶךְ הַקֹּדֶשׁ יִקְרָא לָהּ

We as well who are here today,
all of us who live in his ways,
“which is called the way of holiness” (Isa. 25:8).

“We as well... all of us who live” is a reference to Deuteronomy 4:4. “Here” means outside the Land, while “today,” indicates that after the tzaddik’s *histalkut*, every person can receive the tzaddik’s illumination.

The author of the *Tanya* calls the tzaddik’s way “the way of holiness” because the tzaddik’s life in this world has no connection to the things of this world, but it is dedicated entirely to God. “The way of holiness” also alludes to the person who goes on this way. Although he is not literally like the tzaddik, who is intrinsically separate from the things of this world, and although he does not feel the presence of the tzaddik as it was in this world, he nevertheless goes on the tzaddik’s way, a way that is not dependent on and not influenced by the environment that surrounds him.

זֹאת בְּעִבּוּדַת ה' בְּמִילֵי דְשִׁמְיָא. וּבְמִילֵי
דְעֲלָמָא בְּפִירוּשׁ אֲתָמַר בְּזוּהַר הַקֹּדֶשׁ
(חלק ג ע.א.ב) דְּצִדִּיקֵינָא מְגִינִין עַל עֲלָמָא,
וּבְמִיתָתְהוֹן יִתִּיר מִבְּחַיֵּיהוֹן, וְאֵלְמָלֵא
צְלוֹתָא דְצִדִּיקֵינָא בְּהָהוּא עֲלָמָא לָא
אֲתַקִּיִּים עֲלָמָא דְגַעָא חֲדָא

This relates to the service of God in matters of heaven. And in matters of the world, the holy *Zohar* explicitly states (3:71b) that the righteous people protect the world – in their death even more than in their lifetime. And if not for the prayer of the righteous in that world, this world would not last a moment.

The spiritual work of ascending to the upper worlds and to their abundance. This spiritual work does not relate to any revelation of

Godliness, but to God Himself, beyond the existence of all worlds, even the spiritual worlds.

Matters of the world refers to the spiritual work that relates to the worlds overall and to this world in particular, in order to make it a dwelling place for holiness.

The tzaddikim have the power to pray for the world and to guard it from all evil. The *Zohar* here adds that after a tzaddik's *histalkut*, he possesses even more power to protect the world by means of his prayer than he had possessed during his lifetime. ❧

וְכֹל הַקְּרוֹב קְרוֹב אֶל מְשַׁבֵּן ה' בְּחַיָּיו - קוֹדֵם לְבִרְכָה
And whoever was closer to the tzaddik, who is the tabernacle of the Lord during his lifetime, has precedence to receive the blessing.

The tzaddik is called “the tabernacle of the Lord” because he is like a tabernacle, a place where the Divine Presence dwells: “and I will dwell in their midst...” The closer something was to the Tabernacle, the more sanctified it was (the camp of the Divine Presence was more sanctified than the Levite camp, which was in turn more sanctified than the Israelite camp.) So too, a person who is close to the tzaddik receives directly and deeply, whereas a person further away receives indirectly and superficially. In accordance with a person's closeness to the tzaddik in the latter's lifetime, so will he receive from the tzaddik's blessing after his *histalkut*.²⁶ ❧

THE RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE PROTECT THE WORLD

❧ Even when the tzaddik lives in this world, he is not truly a part of it. He is always a little above it. It may be said that he is a stage higher in the chain of cause and effect, that he exists a moment before the trait of judgment determines how the world will be. (In kabbalistic terminology, he is comparable to *Yesod* that influ-

ences *Malkhut*, which corresponds to the world.) From there, he can nullify decrees and change events – to which many descriptions of the tzaddikim throughout the generations attest. This connection of the tzaddik with the world and its people exists even after his *histalkut*. This is the topic discussed in this letter.

26. “Whoever is closer....” See Num. 17:28. Regarding “has precedence to [receive] the blessing,” see *Berakhot* 41a on the laws of blessings on items from

The following is the continuation of the letter:

And that is particularly so when my speech – my prayer and my request – is expansive on behalf of Rabbi Menahem Mendel’s lovely and pleasant son, who is wondrous and outstanding, a stream of God, filled with knowledge and the fear of God: his holy honor, our teacher Rabbi Moshe, may his light shine. That is in keeping with the statement of our Rabbis of blessed memory that a father’s disposition is inclined to that of his son (*Bava Batra* 142b).

Therefore, I pour forth my prayerful speech that those close to Rabbi Menahem Mendel should not distance themselves, heaven forbid. I have heard the speech of the morally impoverished of the flock who speak without knowledge, judging that the son should now receive less money, heaven forbid, from all the sanctified money that people dedicate to God as charity every year regularly, from

AND WHOEVER IS CLOSER...HAS PRECEDENCE TO RECEIVE THE BLESSING

☞ This sentence emphasizes something that could have been understood as well from what was stated earlier regarding the connection between the tzaddik’s influence prior to and following his *histalkut*. Certainly, this has a spiritual meaning, but more simply it may be understood in the context of the next part of this letter, which was not published in *Iggeret HaKodesh*. That continuation of the letter deals principally with the practical and material ramifications of Rabbi Menahem Mendel’s *histalkut* (for which reason it was not published in *Iggeret HaKodesh*), in requesting that the hasidim outside the Land continue their support of the hasidim dwelling in the Holy Land. The hasidim outside the Land were not wealthy, and what they gave

was not from discretionary funds. Therefore (as may be seen in many of the other holy epistles), the author of the *Tanya* had to provide them with a good reason for why they must give. Rabbi Menahem Mendel had been the head of the hasidim (including those outside the Land). Thus, the hasidim had felt that sending charity to him was of benefit to themselves as well. But after his *histalkut*, it was necessary to emphasize that even now they could be connected to the tzaddik, to some extent, via those close to him: His son, the hasidim in the Land of Israel, his successor. That being the case, they must continue to maintain and strengthen this connection, both materially and spiritually.

which one derives benefit. Regarding the seven varieties of praiseworthy produce of the Land of Israel, whatever is mentioned first and is closer to the word “Land” in the verse takes precedence in the order of reciting a blessing.

each person whose heart inspires him, on behalf of our rabbis in the Land of Israel, may it be built and established quickly in our days, amen, who have until now divided their money into equal parts.

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to sit together” (Ps. 133:1). Now as well, so should matters be performed in keeping with their words of the past, their words that are alive and established. Heaven forbid, that we act in a way that will leave “the righteous man abandoned, and his offspring...,” heaven forbid.

This beloved and pleasant son was supported at the table of his father, may his memory be for the life of the World to Come. And almost half of Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel’s expenses went to him and to his family: the minors dependent on him and his wife, “the wife of a colleague, who is like the colleague,” and his grandchildren and granddaughters, these last being the daughters of his daughter, who also require a great deal of money to take care of all their needs, to “raise them to the wedding canopy and engaging in good deeds.” And that which remains will go to repay the debts that are well-known to all, the collateral for which consists of his house and his inheritance, the inheritance of God, which should go to the children and not to strangers, heaven forbid.

Therefore, my request is repeated to all of my beloved and friends: not to diminish, heaven forbid, even by one small coin, heaven forbid, not to give any less to the holy charity, heaven forbid. The amount of money should be complete, all of it, so that it is favorable to God.

Furthermore, I ask and request that you should be swift in performing a mitzva this year: that all the money going up to the Land of Israel from our country should be counted and received by the hand of a faithful agent, may he live, before this Passover coming upon us for the good, to be sent immediately after Passover to the holy community of Brod and from there to Trieste, so that it will rise and come and arrive in our Holy Land in the autumn. Because: know clearly that the extra profit of the money that arrives in autumn constitutes almost half of the entire amount that is sent from our country - as the person who transmits this letter, may he live, will explain my speech.

And so, my beloved, my brothers and my friends, do you not

know, have you not heard about the precious beauty of the greatness of the commandment of strengthening the settlement of the Land? This commandment is great. Even for the sake of acquiring of just one house in the Holy Land, the Sages set aside the severe commandment of the Sabbath in terms of a rabbinic decree. And certainly we should be equally dedicated, in order to give life to quite a number of clean souls who serve God with holiness and purity, who sanctify themselves and purify themselves, drawing from the sanctity and holy purity of the holy rabbi, our master, teacher and rabbi, the master, Avraham HaKohen, the greatest among his brothers, may he live, who has succeeded our holy rabbi, Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel, may his memory be for a blessing of the life of the World to Come, with wisdom and fear.

And when a person considers in his heart with his knowledge and understanding, saying, “How fortunate we are, how good is our portion, and how pleasant our fate,” his heart will rejoice in God and he will be glad with gladness and song. And the donors will rejoice in God as they remit the debts of the hasidim, in keeping with the saying of our Rabbis of blessed memory, “My sons have borrowed on My behalf, and I will repay.” If you do so, as we are commanded, God will give you goodness in all matters that benefit soul and flesh. “Be good, Lord, to the good, and to the upright in their hearts.”

In resonance with their soul and every soul that seeks their wellbeing, loving their soul from my heart and my willing soul.

Shneur Zalman, son of my master and my rabbi,
Rabbi Barukh, may his light shine.

This marks the end of the author of the *Tanya*'s condolence letter to Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel's bereaved hasidim. This short letter touches on fundamental concepts of Kabbala and emergent Hasidism regarding the connection that transcends time and space between the rebbe and his hasidim. Since the letter was written at a time of emotional distress, its principal purpose was to console the hasidim. Therefore, the author of the *Tanya* wrote succinctly, without employing kabbalistic and hasidic terminology, since such terminology is not universally understood and also, because it would have been out of place. However, at a later stage and for a broader audience of hasidim,

it was necessary to discuss this topic more extensively, and in the author of the *Tanya*'s later hasidic language. And so, he penned an “explanation,” of this letter, which was published in *Iggeret HaKodesh* directly following this letter.

A commentary by the author of the *Tanya* on his own hasidic teaching is unusual in the *Tanya* and in *Iggeret HaKodesh*, although it is often found in other works. One might have expected that such a commentary would be a restatement of the original in easier and less specialized language. But on the contrary, these commentaries, which focus on certain points in greater depth than the original teaching, are written using more kabbalistic language. The commentary here is not typical, because it does not come to analyze a characteristic hasidic teaching but rather to explain a hasidic teaching that was written succinctly and poetically (without using hasidic terminology) presenting it in the common language of later hasidic teachings. ❧

14 Heshvan

13 Heshvan
(leap year)

אִתָּא בְּזוּהַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ דְּצַדִּיקָא
דְּאַתְפִּטֵּר אֲשֶׁתַּפַּח בְּכֻלָּהוּ עֲלָמִין
יְהִיֵּד מִבְּחִיּוּהֵי כּוּ

So is it written in the holy *Zohar* (3:71b), “a tzaddik who passes away is found in all worlds more than he was in his lifetime ...”

These words appeared in the letter, and constitute its essence. Therefore, the author of the *Tanya* will explain them here at length. ❧

EXPLANATION

❧ In order to understand why this article is called an “explanation,” one must bear in mind the background of the hasidim whom the author of the *Tanya* was addressing. This was the period of the inception of Hasidism in general and Chabad Hasidism in particular. The hasidim had no tradition of hasidic life and doctrines. Every hasidic topic (and in particular the doctrine of Chabad) was new: the concepts, the direction of thought, and so forth. On the other

hand, the members of the author of the *Tanya*'s close circle had already learned a great deal of both the revealed Torah and Kabbala. When such a person heard hasidic teachings for the first time, it was hard for him to understand them and how they fit into what he already knew. Therefore, the author of the *Tanya* provided an explanation of how the elements of a hasidic teaching were derived from kabbalistic doctrines or sayings of the Sages.