

P R E F A C E

by the

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Chassidus in general, and Chabad Chassidus in particular, is an all-embracing world outlook and way of life which sees the Jew's central purpose as the unifying link between the Creator and Creation.¹ The Jew is a creature of "heaven" and of "earth," of a heavenly Divine soul, which is truly a part of G-dliness,² clothed in an earthly vessel constituted of a physical body and animal soul, whose purpose is to realize the transcendency and unity of his nature, and of the world in which he lives, within the absolute Unity of G-d.

The realization of this purpose entails a two-way correlation: one in the direction from above downward to earth; the other, from the earth upward. In fulfillment of the first, man draws holiness from the Divinely-given Torah and commandments, to permeate therewith every phase of his daily life and his environment—his "share" in this world³; in fulfillment of the second, man draws upon all the resources at his disposal, both created and man-made, as vehicles for his personal ascendancy and, with him, that of the surrounding world. One of these basic

1. See also *Tanya*, chaps. 36-37.

2. *Ibid.*, beg. chap. 2.

3. *Ibid.*, chap. 37.

resources is the vehicle of human language and communication.

As the Alter Rebbe, author of the *Tanya*, pointed out in one of his other works,⁴ any of the "seventy tongues" when used as an instrument to disseminate the Torah and Mitzvoth, is itself "elevated" thereby from its earthly domain into the sphere of holiness, while at the same time serving as a vehicle to draw the Torah and Mitzvoth, from above downward, to those who read and understand this language.

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In the spirit of the above-mentioned remarks, the volume presented here—the first English translation of the *Tanya* (Part I) since its first appearance 165 years ago—is an event of considerable importance. It brings this basic work of Chabad philosophy and way of life to a wider range of Jews, to whom the original work presents a language problem or even a barrier. It is thus a further contribution to the "dissemination of the fountains" of Chassidus which were unlocked by Rabbi Israel Ba'al Shem Tov, who envisaged Chassidus as a stream of "living waters," growing deeper and wider, until it should reach every segment of the Jewish people and bring new inspiration and vitality into their daily lives.

The translation of such a work as the *Tanya* presents a formidable task. As a matter of fact, several unsuccessful attempts had been made at various times in the past to translate the *Tanya* into one or another of the European

4. *Torah Or*, Mishpatim, beg. "Vayyiru . . . k'ma'asei livnas hasapir."

languages.⁵ It is therefore to the lasting credit of Dr. Nissan Mindel that this task has been accomplished.

Needless to say, translations are, at best, inadequate substitutes for the original. It is confidently hoped, however, that the present translation, provided as it is with an Introduction, Glossary, Notes and Indexes, will prove a very valuable aid to students of Chassidus in general, and of Chabad in particular.

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5. A translation of all the parts of the *Tanya* into Yiddish, by the late Rabbi Uriel Zimmer ז"ל was published by Otzar Hachassidim Lubavitch and Kehot Publication Society in 1958. An English translation of the second part of the *Tanya* appears in *The Way of the Faithful*, by Raphael Ben Zion (Los Angeles, 1945), which leaves much to be desired. A new and revised English translation of it, together with the other parts of the *Tanya* is in preparation by the Kehot Publication Society.