

Foreword by Rabbi Zalman I. Posner, Nashville, Tennessee

The decade of 1930 marked a new era in the development of *Chabad*. It had been a century and a half since 1776, when the Alter Rebbe—Rabbi Schneur Zalman—had first created *Chabad* in Russia. He and his successors had endured hostility, and, at times, imprisonment, under the czarist government; now, however, the Rebbe, Rabbi Yoseph Yitzchak, was finally expelled from the U.S.S.R. Poland and Latvia had large Jewish populations, but the centrality of *Chabad* was limited. The doctrines of general chassidic ideology were widespread and took many different approaches, reflecting that century and a half that we have noted. *Chabad* was a novelty, something unusual and unfamiliar to the local population.

Just as the decade of 1940 began, with the first months of the terrible World War II, the Rebbe and his family, together with a small group of chassidim, started a new life in the United States of America. Over the next sixty years and more, they extended over the entire world. The problems were new, though, since the population in the United States lacked familiarity with the Torah language—especially with the teachings of *Chabad*.

The Hebrew words were familiar enough from Torah study, but the new definitions of these terms was challenging. The huge libraries of chassidic teachings from 1776 on implied a new meaning, making all of this literature impossible to follow without considerable background.

In the past few decades, there have been a few American chassidim who have succeeded in translating those classics of *Chabad* into English. The *Tanya* and a growing number of other vital works are now available in English, and even in other languages translated from English. Rabbi Yitzchok Dovid Wagshul has undertaken the valuable and formidable challenge of making classic works accessible even to those who are not masters of Torah literature. Rabbi Wagshul and those who work with him have earned the gratitude of those who wish to study the classics of *Chabad*.

We look forward to a growing number of these classics, and we salute Rabbi Wagshul and the others who have dedicated themselves to making *Chabad* available in whatever language Jewish people employ all over the world.

--Rabbi Zalman Posner, Nashville, Tennessee