

## חונן הדעת

The **ברכה** of **חונן הדעת** is unique among the middle **ברכות** in that it begins with a **שבח**, **סידור אוצר** **עיון תפלה** in the place of a **בקשה**. Why? The **תפלה** in the **סידור אוצר** suggests the following answer:

לפי ששלוש ראשונות כלן שבח לכן התחילו גם את האמצעיות בשבח, כדי להסמיך שבח לשבח ולעבור בהדרגה משבח לבקשה (מהרשד"ל). ובשם הגאון ר' אלכסנדר מרגליות ז"ל אמרו שזה נתקן בשביל מוצאי שבת קודש דאמרינן בשבלי הלקט השלם ענין שבת סימן קכ"ט ובאבודרהם ס"ז עמ' ב' וזה לשונם: כשם שאין לו לאדם לעשות מלאכה במוצאי שבת קודש קודם שיבדיל כך אין לו לתבוע צרכיו קודם שיבדיל, ולכך קובע ההבדלה בברכת חונן הדעת שהיא ראש כל הצרכים, והכי איתא בירושלמי אסור לאדם לתבוע צרכיו עד שעה שיבדיל, עכ"ל, ולכך תקנו לנו חכמים להתחיל הברכה בשבח ולהבדיל ואחר כך לבקש וחננו וגו', ומשתקנו נוסח זה במוצאי שבת קודש הניחוהו גם לכל ימות החול.

The explanation by **ז"ל** **אלכסנדר מרגליות** helps us understand why there were early versions of the **ברכה** of **חונן הדעת** that began with words of **בקשה**, the word **חננו**. The difference in language may be based on the following **מהלוקת**:

משנה מסכת ברכות פרק ה' משנה ב'—מזכירין גבורות גשמים בתחית המתים ושואלין הגשמים בברכת השנים והבדלה בחונן הדעת; ר' עקיבא אומר אומרה ברכה רביעית בפני עצמה; רבי אליעזר אומר בהודאה:

It appears that one who followed **רבי עקיבא** and recited **הבדלה** as a separate **ברכה** or who followed **רבי אליעזר** and recited **הבדלה** as a part of **מודים** began the **ברכה** with the word: **חננו** because **הבדלה** was not said within the **ברכה**. For those who recited **הבדלה** within the **ברכה**, the text of the **ברכה** began with the words: **אתה חונן**.

The explanation by the **תפלה** helps explain another textual issue. The third section of **הודאה**, beginning with **רצה** should not contain any **בקשות**. Nevertheless, the first paragraph, **רצה**, is replete with **בקשות**:

**רצה**, ה' אלקינו, בעמך ישראל ובתפלתם, והשב את העבודה לדביר ביתך, ואשי ישראל ותפלתם באהבה תקבל פריצון, ותהי לרצון תמיד עבודת ישראל עמך.

Why? We can apply the same rule. We begin the third section of **הודאה**, **שמונה עשרה**, with a paragraph that continues the **בקשות** in order to create a gradual transition from **בקשה** to **הודאה** just as we begin the section of **בקשה** with a **שבח** in order to create a gradual transition from **שבח** to **בקשה**.

The comment of the **עיון תפלה** also explains why the **ברכה** of **חונן הדעת** begins with the word: **אתה** which mimics the opening word of the second and third **ברכות**. **חז"ל** opened the middle **ברכות** with same word the opens the second and third **ברכות** as part of the textual transition from the section of **שבת** to the section of **בקשה**.

The importance of beginning the middle **ברכות** of **שמונה עשרה** with a **בקשה** for **דעת** can be seen from the following **גמרא**:

תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת ברכות פרק ד' דף ח' טור ב' /ה"ד- היה עומד ומתפלל בשבת ושבת של שבת והזכיר של חול רבי חונא אמר איתפלגון רב נחמן בר יעקב ורב ששת; חד אמר: חותך את הברכה; וחדנה אומר: גומר את הברכה. הכל מודים בחונן הדעת שהוא גומרה. ותא כרבי, דרבי אמר תמיה אני היאך בטלו חונן הדעת בשבת, אם אין דיעה מניין תפילה? אמר רבי יצחק גדולה היא הדיעה שהיא ממוצעת בין שתי הזכרות שנאמר כי א-ל דיעות ה' (שמואל א', ב', ג'); אית דבעי משמעניה מן הדא: אז תבין יראת ה' ודעת אלקים תמצא (משלי ב', ה').

**חונן דעת ברכה** of **לשון** **נוסח ספרד** and **נוסח אשכנז** differ concerning the **לשון** of the **ברכה**. **חוננו מאתך דעה בינה והשכל**: **נוסח אשכנז** in **ברכה** of **לשון** **חוננו**: **נוסח ספרד**. In **חוננו מאתך דעה בינה והשכל**: **נוסח אשכנז** in **ברכה** of **לשון** **חוננו**: **נוסח ספרד**. How did this difference develop? This is the **לשון** **חוננו**: **נוסח ספרד**. **חוננו מאתך דעה בינה והשכל**: **נוסח אשכנז** in **ברכה** of **לשון** **חוננו**: **נוסח ספרד**. **חוננו מאתך דעה בינה והשכל**: **נוסח אשכנז** in **ברכה** of **לשון** **חוננו**: **נוסח ספרד**. **חוננו מאתך דעה בינה והשכל**: **נוסח אשכנז** in **ברכה** of **לשון** **חוננו**: **נוסח ספרד**.

**סדר תפילה-אתה חונן וכו'.** **חוננו מאתך דעה ובינה והשכל.** **ברוך אתה ה' חונן הדעת.**

We begin to see a change in the **לשון** **חוננו**: **נוסח ספרד**.

**חוננו מאתך דעה וחכמה ובינה והשכל.** **ברוך אתה ה' חונן הדעת.**

One of the sources for including the word: **חכמה** is the following **פסוקים**:

**שמות פרק לא - (ב) ראה קראתי בשם בצלאל בן אורי בן חור למטה יהודה: (ג) ואמלא אתו רוח אלקים בחכמה ובתבונה ו בדעת ובכל מלאכה:**

The use of the words: **חכמה בינה ודעת** did not spread until after the time of the **א"ר**. It appears that the change developed without official sanction. The **תקון תפלה** explains:

והגאון הרב שניאור זלמן (הרש"ז) ז"ל הנהיג לומר חוננו מאתך חכמה בינה ודעת, ויש אומרים שכן היתה גם נוסחת הא"ר ז"ל . . . מכל מקום לא אבו גם הספרדים גם האשכנזים לשנות על פיה את הנוסח המקובל מכל הקודמונים ז"ל כאשר זכרנו. ונראה בעיני שגם הא"ר והרש"ז ז"ל לא קבעו זה בשביל הציבור, אלא לעצמם על פי השגתם ברוח קדשם, ואילו באו הציבור ושאלו את פיהם איך לומר, היו מורים בלא ספק שלא לשנות מן הנוסח המקובל, וכדרך שעשו הגאונים הגדולים ר' נתן אדלר ובעל ההפלאה ז"ל רבותיו של הגאון חתם סופר ז"ל שהם בעצמם היו מתפללים על פי נוסח הא"ר ז"ל ולציבור הניחו להתפלל נוסח אשכנז, כדי שלא לשנות ממנהג אבותיהם.

## TRANSLATION OF SOURCES

**עיון תפלה**-Because the theme of the first three Brachot of Shemona Esrei is praise, Chazal began the second section of Shemona Esrei with words of praise in order to create a smooth transition from the theme of praise to the theme of requests (Rashdal). In the name of Rav HaGaon Alexander Margolius it was said that the Bracha of Chonain Ha'Da'At begins with words of praise because of our practice at the conclusion of Shabbat as we learned in the Shibbolei HaLekket, matter of Shabbat, Siman 129 and in the Avudrohom Section 67 side 2 and this is what they wrote: just as a person may not return to his weekday activities at the conclusion of Shabbat until he makes Havdalah so too a person may not begin to make requests for his needs until he says words of Havdalah. As a result the prayer of Havdalah was placed within the Bracha of Chonain Ha'Da'At which represents the request for the primary personal need. Similarly we learned in Talmud Yerushalmi: at the conclusion of Shabbat, it is prohibited for a person to request help for his personal needs until he makes Havdalah. As a result Chazal chose to begin the section of requests in Shemona Esrei with words of praise and then to have us recite Havdalah. After reciting Havdalah, we begin our personal requests by reciting the words: V'Chaneinu. Once Chazal created that practice for the recital of Shemona Esrei at the conclusion of Shabbat, they continued the practice for all the recitals of Shemona Esrei during the week.

**משנה מסכת ברכות פרק ה' משנה ב'**-We mention G-d's ability to produce rain (Mashiv Ha'Ruach) in the Bracha of Techiyat Ha'Maisim. We make our request for rain in the Bracha of Mivarech Ha'Shanim. We recite Havdalah in the Bracha of Chonain Ha'Da'At. Rabbi Akiva says: we recite Havdalah as an independent fourth Bracha. Rabbi Eliezer says: we recite Havdalah as part of the Bracha of Hoda'Ah (Modim).

**תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת ברכות פרק ד' דף ח' טור ב' /ה"ד**-If the prayer leader was leading the services on Shabbat and forgot the Shabbat middle Bracha of Shemona Esrei and instead started reciting the weekday middle Brachot, Rav Chuna says that there is a dispute between Rav Nachman Bar Yaakov and Rav Sheishes as to how the prayer leader should proceed. One says: he stops in the middle of the Bracha and one says that he finishes the Bracha. However, if he realizes his mistake within the Bracha of Ata Chonain, he must complete the Bracha. This rule is in accordance with the opinion of Rebbe. It was Rebbe who said: I am surprised that Chazal did not include the Bracha of Ata Chonain for the Shabbat Shemona Esrei because if a person does not have the power to understand, what value is there for his prayer. Rav Yitzchak said: understanding is very important because it is a word that is found in Tanach situated between two references to G-d's name as it is written: Ki Ail Dayot Hashem (Samuel 1; 2, 3). Some others cite a different verse: Oz Tavin Yiras Hashem V'Da'At Elohim Timtzah (Proverbs 2, 5).

תקון תפלה - It was the practice of HaGaon HaRav Schneur Zalman (the Ba'Al Ha'Tanya) to say the words: Chochma, Bina and Da'Eh within the Bracha of Chonain Ha'Da'At. Some say that it was also the practice of the Ar"i to do so. In any event neither those who followed Nusach Sepharad nor those who followed Nusach Ashkenaz wanted to deviate from the text that had been followed for hundreds of years. It appears to me that neither the Ar"i nor Rav Schneur Zalman wanted the general public to change the text that they recited despite the fact that they themselves changed the text based on their understanding which was influenced by prophetic inspiration. I am sure that if any of their followers approached them and asked them which text to follow that they would have told that person not to deviate from the standard text. This was the way several Torah greats such as Rav Nassan Adler and the Ba'Al Ha'Hapla'Ah teachers of the Chasam Sopher conducted themselves. They followed the Nusach Ar"i but they permitted their congregations to follow Nusach Ashkenaz in order not to deviate from the customs of their forefathers.

## SUPPLEMENT

### חכמה בינה ודעת

It is difficult to determine with any certainty when the practice of reciting **והננו מאתך** **סידור** (חב"ד) began. The words do not appear in some versions of the **סידור** of **רב יעקב מ'עמדין** (1697-1776) which would have it predate **הנאון הרב שניאור זלמן** (1745-1813) --Rav Shneur Zalman, Ba'Al Ha'Tanya father of Chabad Hasidism. Nevertheless, it can be argued that it was Chabad Hasidism that inspired the change in **נוסח** to spread.

Since we are trying to better understand how the words of the **סידור** evolved, it may be helpful to know more about Chabad Hasidism. To that end, I am providing the concluding chapter of the book: **HABAD, The Hasidism of R. Shneur Zalman of Lyady** by Roman A. Foxbrunner published by The University of Alabama Press in 1992

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### Conclusions

The teachings of the Besht, the Maggid, and Rabbi Shneur Zalman continue to evoke heated controversy, both among adherents and opponents of Hasidism and among scholars trying to analyze the movement and its significance. Because it remains a major force in Jewish life, it is not readily amenable to objective examination. Even outstanding scholars have allowed personal bias to cloud their approach and tendentious judgments to vitiate their conclusions. Standard critical and philological criteria have been ignored in favor of superficial study, plausible assumptions, and an essentially visceral theory relating early Hasidism to late Sabbatianism.

The past two decades or so have seen some improvement in this situation. Israeli scholars such as M. Piekarz, Z. Gries, and A. Rubenstein have begun to lay the foundation for a sound analytical approach. Long-accepted assumptions and conclusions advanced by Dubnow, Scholem, Tishby, Weiss, and Schatz have finally been questioned or repudiated. One can no longer confidently maintain, with Dubnow, that the Hasidic movement resulted from a widening of the gap between the intelligentsia and the masses; that eighteenth-century Polish Jewry felt unusually oppressed by its communal leaders; that it suffered from an unusually benighted cultural milieu and longed to break out of its constricting halakhic and cultural confines. One can no longer maintain, with Tishby, Scholem, and Weiss, that Hasidism was an offshoot of Sabbatianism. One can no longer affirm, with Weiss, the existence of non-Beshtian Hasidic groups on the periphery of early

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Hasidism; of a marked tendency in the Besht's teachings toward pantheism, religious anarchy, and antirabbinic values; or of an obsession with ecstatic devekut (communion with G-d). Nor can one continue to maintain, with Schatz, that early Hasidism repudiated remorse for sin.

The present study argues that it is impossible to determine the specific historical factors and religious trends that gave rise to eighteenth century Hasidism. Nor is a purely phenomenological analysis of its teachings particularly illuminating. It is, however, possible to examine its innovative ideas or new emphases and relate them to the contemporaneous ideational revolution known as romanticism. Both emphasized G-d's immanence rather than transcendence; the positive aspects of diversity and change; the importance of sensation, emotion, optimism, and confident action. Both were oriented toward subjectivity, organicism, and individualism. Both pointed to intuition and the unconscious as supreme sources of knowledge. Both were particularly conscious of the contrast between man's potential greatness and his actual weakness, and particularly fascinated with genius, energy, and power. Both represented a shift of values and concerns; from metaphysics to psychology, from the world to man; from being to becoming, actuality to potentiality; from achieving -- or, in the case of G-d, comprising -- a state of serene uniform perfection, to an everrestless striving for a dynamic, ever-increasing perfection encompassing real contradictions in constant dialectical tension.

These ideas and values, introduced or emphasized by the Besht and Maggid, were adopted or adapted by Rav Shneur Zalman, who saw himself as the third in a single line of succession of Hasidic masters. His Hasidic thought was articulated primarily in a series of discourses spanning about two decades (to 1813) and varying greatly in length, style, and content, depending on the period, the audience, and the need of the hour. His purpose was to inspire, not to fashion a system of religioethical thought. It is unlikely that he ever intended all the discourses to be compared for the purpose of analyzing his view on any given theme. Trying to pour his teachings into conceptual molds -trying, in other words, to solidify what was intended to remain fluid -as I have done here, yields the conclusion that the outstanding features of Rav Shneur Zalman's Hasidic thought are syncretism, tension, and paradox. Nevertheless, only by making this attempt can one arrive at some basic, valid generalizations that emerge from the apparent discord.

Rav Shneur Zalman, the man, combined great intellect, diligence, and discipline with a smoldering religious emotionalism, sincere humility, profound compassion, and a gift for organization. His Hasidism naturally reflects these traits. It was axiomatic to him that every Jew was created for the sole purpose of serving G-d. This much was clear from the Bible and rabbinic teachings. It was equally clear from these and later sources that wholehearted devotion to Service could be motivated only by Love and Fear. It was an almost imperceptible step from these universally accepted beliefs to the principle that constitutes the foundation of Rav Shneur Zalmans' Hasidic philosophy: Service without Love and Fear is not really Service at all. Although perfunctory or habitual fulfillment of the

commandments generally satisfied one's halakhic obligation, it does not satisfy one's existential obligation. One could be devoted to halakhah without being devoted to G-d; indeed, this was precisely what most Mitnagdim had achieved.

The key issue was therefore not how to fulfill the commandments, for which the Talmud and *Shulhan 'Arukh* provided adequate guidance, but how to attain Love and Fear, for which no written guide existed. Maimonides had advanced the view that Love must be intellectual and contemplative, from which it apparently followed that only an intellectual elite could attain it. Rav Shneur Zalman fully accepted Maimonides' premise but rejected this conclusion. Service was every man's duty; Service without intellectual Love was impossible; G-d would never oblige man to do anything beyond his capacity: Therefore, intellectual Love must be within every Jew's grasp. All that was needed was the training in how to reach for it, and this was the function of Jewish leaders from the time of Moses. Under Rav Shneur Zalman's leadership this training consisted primarily of diligently studying the Hasidism he taught and meditating on it, especially before and during the prayer.

The potential ability of every Jew to attain Love and Fear collided with the obvious fact that most did not actually attain them, at least not to the extent that true Service demanded. This for Rav Shneur Zalman merely reflected the necessary struggle between the average Jew's divine soul, which constantly strives to spiritualize and bring him close to G-d, and his animal soul, which joins with the body it animates to coarsen his character and thereby alienate him from G-d. Consequently, although intended ultimately to elicit Love and Fear, the immediate purpose of studying and contemplating Hasidism was to refine -- which for Rav Shneur Zalman meant to spiritualize -- one's character.

The first and most important character trait to strive for was absolute humility before G-d. The animal soul, which closely approximates the ego, operates by setting itself up as a real entity opposed to its divine counterpart. Accepting it as such is man's first step toward allowing it to entice him away from G-d, since this acceptance is tantamount to recognizing the existence of a reality other than G-d.

Whereas the divine soul is actually a spark of Divinity and not a separate entity, man's "self"-his ability to refer to himself as "I" -- stems from this animal soul, and the key to resisting its blandishments is humility to the point of self-nullification. This religioethical imperative is for Rav Shneur Zalman a corollary of those seminal commandments that require affirmation of G-d's absolute unity. Full and continuous perception of this unity, of the truth that nothing but G-d exists, is granted only to disembodied souls, but one is obligated to approach it on earth by continuously uniting the three "garments" of the animal soul -- thought, speech, and action -- with the thought, speech, and action of G-d as revealed in the Torah and its commandments. Although the animal soul itself generally retains its secular character, it nevertheless becomes an indispensable vehicle for serving G-d and acknowledging His unity.

While the basic theory that Love and Fear are attainable through meditation is Maimonidean, Rav Shneur Zalman took this rarified intellectual approach and transformed it into a way of life for every Jew. His teachings provided Hasidim with abundant meditation material, as well as high-minded topics for discussion whenever they met. His personal guidance illumined the path for individual Hasidim who consulted him on spiritual problems. He taught them to love each other as brothers, share their joys and sorrows, meet periodically for local gatherings (*farbrengen*), during which a little food, a few drinks, and many moving melodies smoothed the way for mutual encouragement and exhortation. The goal was selfless Service, but along the way one also attained faith in G-d's absolute goodness and the joy of dedicating one's life to Him amid the fellowship of a like-minded brotherhood of votaries. This rare fusion of the intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual facets of Judaism provided Habad Hasidim with the fortitude to withstand the perennial persecution to which Russian Jewry was subject.

Rav Shneur Zalman's Hasidism is based on a worldview taken primarily from the Talmud and Midrash, the works of Maimonides, the Zohar, and Lurianic kabbalah. Maimonides' nonhalakhic works were validated by his unsurpassed stature as a halakhist, while the rabbinic and kabbalistic works were for Rav Shneur Zalman divinely inspired sources that revealed different but complementary truths about G-d, man, and the world. Since Rav Shneur Zalman did not subscribe to the "double truth" theory, this meant that all the teachings about all the fields discussed in these works -whether religion, science, metaphysics, or psychology -- had to be consistent. It also meant that one could legitimately take a concept treated in the *Guide* and reinterpret it in terms of Zoharic or Lurianic kabbalah. The chain of being, which for Maimonides started with the physical world and ascended to the celestial spheres and Active Intellect, was extended to include the Zohar's sefirot and the many other divine manifestations that constitute Lurianic metaphysics. Maimonides' creation *ex nihilo* was reinterpreted to mean creation through or from the first sefirah. This approach predated Beshtian Hasidism, and Rav Shneur Zalman accepted it as a given.

From his Hasidic mentors Rav Shneur Zalman adopted the method of explaining theosophical concepts in psychological terms. This was justified by the belief that man was G-d's corporealized reflection, and particularly by the fact that the moving force behind a Jew's desire and ability to serve G-d was his divine soul. Since the soul's workings were considered far more accessible than its Source, they were the ideal medium for achieving some understanding of G-d's nature and unity. Meditating upon that understanding would eventually lead to the Love and Fear of G-d that were the basis of selfless Service.

Rav Shneur Zalman's Hasidic thought underwent considerable development between the year *Likute Amarim (Tanya)* was published in 1796 and his death in 1813. It is therefore not surprising that the discourses delivered during these years depart frequently from the teachings embodied in this work. Similarly, as he matured and acquired more confidence in



his own religioethical conclusions, Rav Shneur Zalman parted ways with the Besht and the Maggid on a number of their key doctrines, such as Zaddikism, the elevation of profane thoughts, and the nature and purpose of Torah-study. These differences, which appear even in *Tanya*, were never acknowledged as such, for Rav Shneur Zalman apparently remained convinced that he was merely continuing and elaborating the teachings of his Hasidic masters.

So, too, despite his professed allegiance to the teachings of R. Isaac Luria, Rav Shneur Zalman in fact differed with Luria in several fundamental areas of religious thought and conduct. The key to the nature of these differences, as well as to the differences between Rav Shneur Zalman and his Hasidic masters and colleagues, lies in Rav Shneur Zalman's more faithful adherence to classical rabbinic attitudes and values. Thus, contrary to Luria as mediated by R. Hayyim Vital, Rav Shneur Zalman retained the supremacy of Talmud-study, particularly as it relates to halakhic decisions, in his hierarchy of studies; and he retained the positive assessment of Talmudic dialectics. Contrary to his Hasidic masters and colleagues, Rav Shneur Zalman reaffirmed the validity of petitionary prayer, and, as previously noted, he taught that for most men emotionalistic *devekut*, or Love-Fear, was the basis, not the consummation, of proper Service; indeed, the emotionalistic aspect of Love-Fear, although desirable, was not really necessary, for only intellectual conviction and volitive commitment were indispensable. Contrary to both Luria and his Hasidic masters, Rav Shneur Zalman emphasized Service for the sake of revealing Divinity in the world, rather than for the sake of elevating, perfecting, or purifying one's soul. Although very much a mystic, he was, uniquely perhaps, a *this-worldly* mystic. In theory, at least, he democratized kabbalistic Judaism, opening it to every man who would personally strive to achieve its goals. And more than any of his mentors, he succeeded in fusing these goals with those of classical rabbinic Judaism.

Nevertheless -- and here the paradoxical in Rav Shneur Zalman's thought is seen in sharp relief -- in a number of discourses he went beyond the most radical teachings of his mentors by portraying G-d as, in effect, the Supreme Manipulator, Who arranges for either good or evil to triumph in accordance with what amuses Him at the moment, and for Whom man's actions and efforts are otherwise inconsequential. Such religioethical nihilism is utterly at odds with Rav Shneur Zalman's other teachings and, indeed, with all of traditional Jewish thought, which generally posits, at least implicitly, that G-d desires the good to triumph because He is the essence of goodness. Similarly, Rav Shneur Zalman ignored in practice his own halakhic decisions regarding the curriculum and method of Torah study in favor of a less demanding and more practical program; and, while occasionally echoing the invidious descriptions of both the exoteric Written and the Oral Torah found in his kabbalistic sources, he nevertheless repudiated their practical conclusions.

Ultimately, each of the main traditional components of Service underwent a significant shift of emphasis in Rav Shneur Zalman's thought, so that there were clear differences between the way Habad Hasidim performed a mitzvah and the way contemporary

Mitnagdim or even other Hasidim performed that mitzvah. Torah-study remained for Rav Shneur Zalman the supreme commandment, but proper study now required far more than diligence and intellect; it required spiritual preparation through contemplative prayer and refinement of character. Understanding the text was no longer the end of study but the means for uniting man's intellect with the intellect of G-d. Moreover, it enabled man to determine G-d's will in every contingency. Since pleasure generally motivates will, determining G-d's will is tantamount to determining what gives Him pleasure. With the proper preparation, this determination is accompanied by the conformity of man's will and pleasure to G-d's, so that one desires and enjoys only what G-d desires and enjoys. Fulfilling His will through a commandment as dictated by halakhah then becomes both an act of selfless devotion and a supremely joyous and pleasurable step toward self-fulfillment. Hence, Rav Shneur Zalman's emphasis on studying with an eye toward the halakhic decision, since this revealed G-d's will, whereas the discussions leading up to the decision were reflections of His wisdom, and "the purpose of wisdom is teshuvah and good deeds" (*Berakhot*, 17a) -- returning to G-d through the commandments.

The commandments that received Rav Shneur Zalman's closest attention were Torah-study, prayer, and tzedakah. Torah-study was for Rav Shneur Zalman the vehicle for revealing, or "drawing down," G-d's will and uniting with His wisdom; prayer, the vehicle for ascending to Him through the Love and Fear born of intense meditation; and tzedakah -- sustaining the needy -- was the act that most closely approximated G-d's own primary activity: sustaining all creation. It also dovetailed with the Besht's emphasis on compassion for, and brotherly love among, all Jews and was indispensable in maintaining the impoverished Hasidic community in the Holy Land. Indeed, most of Rav Shneur Zalman's pastoral letters consisted of impassioned appeals for tzedakah for this community, buttressed by erudite kabbalistic explanations of the supernal significance of such support. These letters formed part of a well-organized system of fund-raising that occupied a good part of Rav Shneur Zalman's time and spared few, if any, of his followers. Whatever a family did not require for bare subsistence could not legitimately be withheld from those who had even less.

Although these commandments, like all the commandments, were to be heteronomously fulfilled simply because they were G-d's will, the joy and vitality that should accompany Service were of paramount importance. The traditional supremacy of Torah-study in the hierarchy of religious values had made Judaism intellectually top-heavy. Emotional development, both religious and personal, was largely overshadowed by the quest for intellectual achievement. Great scholars and rabbinic leaders were too often cold and condescending. Relations with family, friends, community, and even communion with G-d during prayer were frequently neglected for the sake of singleminded devotion to Torah. Feelings of elation or depression, as well as spontaneous or extreme emotional outbursts of any kind, were considered to be contrary to the basic rabbinic values of sobriety, self-discipline, and moderation.

Following the Besht and Maggid, Rav Shneur Zalman taught that every natural emotion could be channeled toward Service, and that, indeed, perfect Service required full emotional, as well as intellectual development. His goal was to educate truly spiritual men who were nevertheless not aloof or otherworldly, but warm, concerned, vital, and sensitive. The Habad Hasid, like the Mitnagdic scholar, was expected to be highly disciplined, diligent and persevering in his studies. He was expected to master and strictly adhere to every halakhah in the *Shulhan 'Arukh* that pertained to his daily life. If sufficiently capable, he was expected to master the entire Biblical and rabbinic corpus -- the entire Torah. But in addition, the Habad Hasid had other demands made of him. He would not be admired for living a cloistered life, regardless of how great the resulting scholarly attainment. He would, however, be admired, as one wealthy Hasid was, for contemplating a discourse dealing with G-d's unity while engaged in a large-scale business transaction. Ideally he developed an open, well-rounded personality. The study of Hasidism coupled with contemplative prayer refined his character, while Rav Shneur Zalman taught him how to manage such emotions as depression, which could not be refined. Scholarly yet sociable; reticent yet a capable singer of Hasidic melodies and relater of Hasidic tales and traditions; austere and somewhat ascetic, yet possessing a refined appreciation of this world's pleasures; earnest but not humorless or somber; deeply religious but not unctuous or pietistic; modest but self-confident; devoted to Rav Shneur Zalman but fully capable of thinking for himself: this Hasid personified the profound and paradoxical system that came to be known as Habad Hasidism.

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