

JEWISH VALUES

**ELIEZER STEINMANN**

**THE GARDEN  
OF HASSIDISM**

THE ORIGINS OF HASSIDISM  
THE SECRET OF ITS SUCCESS  
THE HASSIDIC DOCTRINE  
THE BESHT'S COMPANY AND  
DISCIPLES  
THE HASSIDIC HERITAGE  
OBITER DICTA OF HASSIDIC SAGES

The Department for  
Education and Culture  
The World Zionist Organization  
Jerusalem

ELIEZER STEINMANN

# THE GARDEN OF HASSIDISM

*Translated from the Hebrew*

by

HAIM SHACHTER

PUBLISHED BY

THE WORLD ZIONIST ORGANIZATION

THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

*Our Sages said that when balm is poured from one flask into another, the oil easily passes, but the perfume evaporates (Midrash Rabbah, Canticles 1, 3).*

*I am painfully aware of the fact that Steinmann's unique and inimitable Hebrew must lose much in translation, for while I have tried to adhere as closely as possible to the original wording, avoiding paraphrase, I have at the same time tried to render the text comprehensible to the general reader. Yet, rendering Steinmann into a non-Hebraic language is a responsibility greater than is usually believed. It requires one to be both thoroughly acquainted with the spirit of the author and soaked in the true spirit of the subject. It remains for the reader to judge to what extent I have succeeded in my task.*

H.S.

1961

Printed in Israel

under the Supervision of the  
Publishing Department of the Jewish Agency  
at the Central Press, Jerusalem

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### HASSIDISM'S LADDER OF DEGREES

I	The Ancient Origins of Hassidism	9
II	Who is a Hassid?	18
III	The Birth of Hassidism	30
IV	The Secret of the Success of Hassidism	39
V	The Fundamentals of Hassidism	55
VI	Personal and General Redemption in Hassidism	64
VII	The Miracle and the Narrative	75
VIII	The Besht's Company	88
IX	The Besht's Disciples	100
X	Schools of Thought in Hassidism	116
XI	Hassidism and Melody	131
XII	The Heritage of Hassidism	138

### OBITER DICTA OF HASSIDIC SAGES

Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov	147
Reb Nahum of Czernobel	155
Reb Yaakov Yosef, Author of "Toledot"	158
The Maggid of Mezritz	162
The Parables of the Maggid of Mezritz	169
Reb Pinchas of Koretz	172
Reb Baruch	175
The "Old Man of Shepola"	176



Reb Michel of Zlotchov	179
Reb Shmelke of Nicholsburg	182
Reb Nachman of Bratzlav	184
Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev	186
Reb Bunem	191
Reb Menachem Mendel of Kotzk	194
The Author of "Hiddushei Ha-Rim"	200
Reb Zusiah	202

#### SHORT EXTRACTS FROM HABAD TEACHINGS

The "Holy Jew"	204
Reb Shneur Zalman	209
Reb Duber Ber, the Middle Admur	212
Reb Menachem Mendel, Author of "Zemach Zedek"	214
Reb Shmuel, Known as "Moharash"	215
Reb Shalom Dov Ber, Known as "Rashbav"	216
Reb Yoseph Yitzhak	217

Thy people Israel? At every moment of the day Thou levellest complaints against Thy people Israel; at every moment of the day Thou sayest: "Speak unto the Children of Israel" or "Say unto the Children of Israel" or "Command the Children of Israel" . . . Thou hast many nations in the world. There are the Babylonians, there are the Persians, the Edomites, the Ishmaelites, and every nation says: No, but my god is the true god. The Russians say our Czar is the King of the earth; the Germans say our kingdom is the kingdom of the earth; the British say, our king is master of all the world. But I, Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev, say: *Yitgadal veyitkadash shemei rabbah* (May the Name of the Holy One be magnified and sanctified). And I shall not move from here, no, I shall not stir from this place until the king Messiah come and appear before our eyes.

#### *The Tune of the Thou*

Rabbi Levi Yitzhak used to say: I shall sing Thee, Master of the Universe, the "Thou" song.

Wherever I go, there art Thou, and wherever I stand there art Thou. Only Thou and again Thou and for ever Thou, Thou, Thou, Thou. If I feel good, Thou hast caused it; and if, Heaven forbid, I feel bad, again it is Thou. Only Thou and again Thou and for ever Thou, Thou, Thou, Thou. In Heaven Thou art, and on earth Thou art. Above and below only Thou and again Thou and for ever Thou, Thou, Thou, Thou.

## REB BUNEM

### *What Is a Hassid?*

Reb Bunem said: Who is accounted a Hassid? He who does more than the strict requirements of the law. It is written in the Torah: "And ye shall not wrong one another", whereas a Hassid interprets it: Ye shall not wrong even every man himself.

### *Understanding and Deeds*

Understanding is light while deeds are the inner secrets. Hence, understanding is greater than deeds.

### *Against Pride*

It is written: "And all these blessings shall come upon thee, and overtake thee".

The meaning is that these blessings shall overtake thee while thou art in the same grade as thou wert before they came to thee, lest, God forbid, thou be overtaken by pride and thy heart become haughty and thou forget thy God.

### *The Yetzer Hara Flares up*

The *yetzer hara* nowadays, before the advent of the Messiah, may be compared to a candle during its last flickers, before becoming finally extinguished. It flares up in a great and deceiving light.

### *The Foundation of Judaism*

The foundation of Judaism is: "Lift up your eyes on high and see who hath created these".



no heed to Moses' words, and framed their report according to what they actually saw. That is why Moses preceded his request by the word "and strengthen ye." In Eretz Israel one needs strengthening in order that he may not fall short of the required status.

## THE AUTHOR OF "HIDDUSHEI HA-RIM"

### *Open Thou Mine Eyes that I May Behold*

Whatever man stands in need of is ready prepared for him. All that a man needs is that he may be regarded meritorious, and the Lord will open his eyes to see Him, just as we read in regard to Hagar (Genesis XXI, 19): "And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water and gave the lad drink." It is this that David said in Psalms CXIX, 18: "Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold."

### *A Journey to the Rebbe*

It is good if one leaves the house to make a pilgrimage to the Rebbe, but generally the Hassidim travel *with* the house (with the household needs) to the Rebbe. One is in need of a livelihood; another in need of joy in his household; another wants children. The essence is lacking. Everything becomes routine.

### *The Innermost Point*

When a Jew becomes a leader of the community he finds everything ready prepared for him: a prayer house, tables and chairs, a warden and a beadle, and all the other things necessary for the assump-