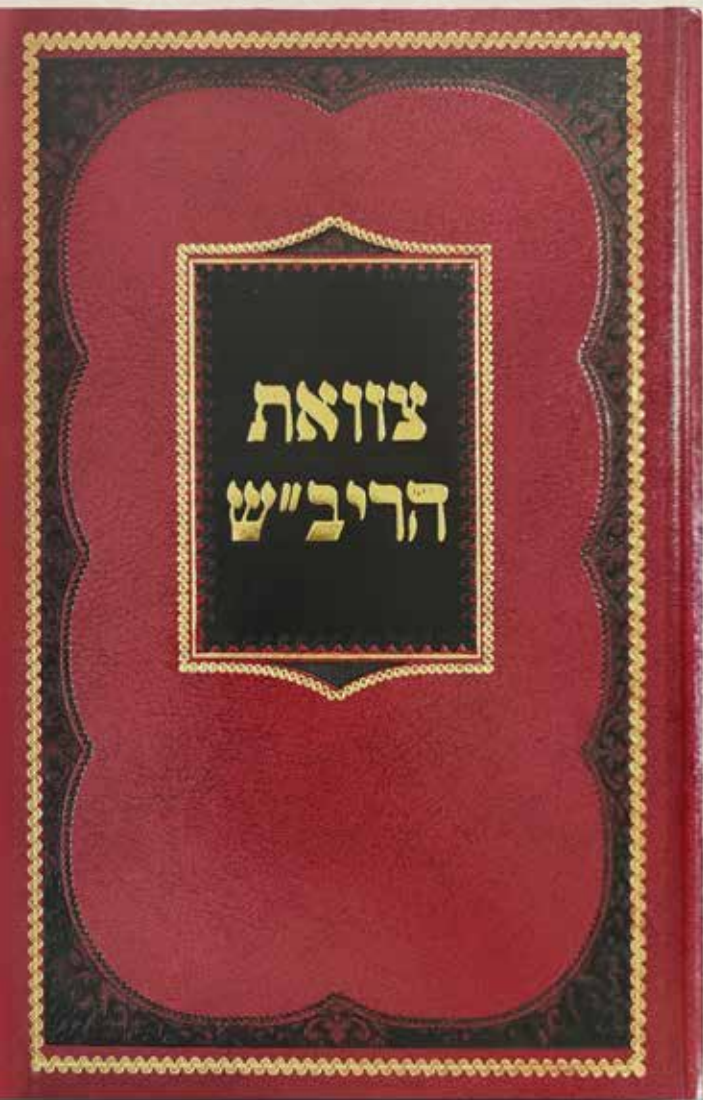


# Timely Titles

By: RABBI MENDY GOLDBERG

לע"נ  
מזכיר כ"ק אדמו"ר  
הרה"ח ר' ירחמיאל בנימין בן מנחם הלוי  
ע"ה קליין  
נלב"ע י"ח סיון ה'תשע"ה  
ת"צ'ב'ה'  
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו

## TZAVA'AS HARIVASH



Shavuot commemorates the *yahrzeit* of the holy Baal Shem Tov, who opened the floodgates to reveal and disseminate the esoteric wisdom of the innermost dimension of the Torah, *Toras HaChassidus*. Among the various compilations of his profound teachings, one work that remains particularly noteworthy is the early Chassidic handbook, *Tzava'as Harivash*.

*Shortly before the dawn of the sixth millennium,  
the Jewish people were in a state of collective  
unconsciousness, in a deep coma of galus.*

Reeling from the devastation of massacres and pogroms, scarred by the emotional turmoil of false messianic hopes and disappointments, Jews were broken in body and spirit. Societal rifts kept Torah from the masses, further depriving them of any chance at revival and condemning them to a lifetime of hopeless ignorance. Until, like a beacon of light in the darkest of nights, the neshama of the Baal Shem Tov was dispatched to this world — to awaken the Jewish spirit from its slumber of centuries. With his arrival, a fresh breath of life was breathed into the Jewish nation, bringing with it relief, hope, and healing. Through his teachings, the Baal Shem Tov revitalized their souls, infusing their lives with the warmth and meaning of the inner dimension of the Torah.

The emergence of the Baal Shem Tov triggered a pivotal turning point in history. It was then that the spark of Moshiach flickered into existence and the world was propelled into a new era of preparation for the final redemption. The proliferation of the Baal Shem Tov's revolutionary teachings, and his legacy of disseminating Chassidus are tangible manifestations of this profound shift, as they offer a taste of G-dly revelation, providing a glimmer of what is to come.

Although the Baal Shem Tov did not personally transcribe any of his teachings, we are left with written records by some of his disciples. These include the *sefarim*: Toldos Yaakov Yosef, Kesser Shem Tov, Likkutim Yekarim, and others. But the first collection of his teachings to be printed, and the only such work to be explicitly acknowledged by the Alter Rebbe,<sup>1</sup> is his bequest to Chassidim, “Tzava’as Harivash.”



**OVERVIEW**



Tzava’as Harivash is a specialized anthology of teachings and instructions attributed to the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid that constitute a manual for the religious life and observance of a Chossid. Many of these teachings were compiled from assorted manuscripts and writings of various disciples of the Maggid. This collection isn't random but an edited selection of teachings with one theme; these are “instructions and rules of proper conduct” — selected passages that form a manual for religious ethics. In the Kehos edition, these passages were divided into individual paragraphs and numbered, with footnotes added for relevant sources, citations, and annotations. Additionally, this edition includes substantial appendices containing comprehensive indexes and other supplementary material.

Presented in a concise and clear instructional style, these 144 passages offer unique insights into essential Chassidic concepts, and practical guidance on their implementation. A dominant theme is the concept of *dveikus*, one's attachment to Hashem in all aspects of daily life. Another central topic is *tefillah*, which features over 40 passages dedicated to the proper manner of prayer, including advice on the correct preparations, the precise intentions, and overcoming foreign thoughts and other distractions. Some teachings cover devotional modes for the study of Torah and observance of mitzvos, and advise how to fulfill them with the right meditations. Others address classic Chassidic ideas such as how to achieve joy while avoiding the pitfalls of pride and pretense, and not yielding to one's desires and impulses. Despite their brevity, these teachings are clear and readable.

👉 **Hosafos: Tanya Iggeres Hakodesh Siman 25:** The Kehos edition also includes the famous letter in Iggeres Hakodesh, where the Alter Rebbe references the *sefer* Tzava'as Harivash to address a mistaken interpretation of passage 120, clarifying the delicate concept of the Shechinah vesting itself in *kelipos*. Like the rest of the *sefer*, this letter is accompanied by extensive footnotes providing sources and annotations. Below is an excerpt from the relevant passages in which the Alter Rebbe discusses the *sefer* Tzava'as Harivash:

*“The book called Tzava'as Rivash, though in fact it is not at all his will or testament, and he did not decree anything before his passing; they are merely gleanings of his pure sayings that were gathered as “compilations after compilations,” and [the compilers] did not know how to phrase his teachings exactly. The connotation,*

*however, of the teachings is absolutely true... As for the compiler [of Tzava'as Harivash] ... he did not know how to determine the precise term, for the Baal Shem Tov, of blessed memory, used to deliver Torah teachings in Yiddish, not in Lashon Hakodesh. The compiler, translating these discourses into Hebrew, transmitted their content, not their precise terminology, and in this case, he erred.”*

(Further elaboration on some of these points will be provided in the section “Background.”)

👉 **Biurim M'kvod Kedushas Admu"r Zy"ra:** Another feature of the recent edition is a selection of 14 relevant excerpts from various *sichos* and *maamarim* where the Rebbe expounds on different passages from Tzava'as Harivash. A significant portion of these were taught in the year 5720\*, during which the Rebbe commemorated the 200th anniversary of the Baal Shem Tov's *yahrzeit*. This collection was originally published as an individual pamphlet and was only later included in subsequent editions of the *sefer*.

👉 **He'oros V'tziyunim:** Following the scheme of the passage divisions from the main text, these are additional notes and source references that were added as an appendix.

👉 **Maftuchos:** These are indexes to assist one in locating concepts, *pesukim*, and *maamarei chazal* that are mentioned in this *sefer*.

👉 **Nisfachim:** A list of the *sefarim* that record the collected teachings of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid from which this work is compiled, and a bibliographic list of all printings of the *sefer* Tzava'as Harivash.

## BACKGROUND

The manuscript of Tzava'as Harivash first surfaced in 5553\*, discovered in the saddlebag of Reb Yeshayah of Yanov.<sup>2</sup> While its precise literary origin remains unknown, it is clear that Tzava'as Harivash is a collection of the Baal Shem Tov's teachings that had previously appeared in various

manuscripts attributed to different disciples of the Maggid. It appears that an anonymous editor compiled this work, carefully selecting from these manuscripts to create a manual for divine service. However, due to the delicate process of copying from one manuscript to another, typographical mistakes

and inconsistencies inevitably crept in. Nonetheless, once Tzava's Harivash was published, it quickly gained widespread popularity and was distributed by Chassidim far and wide.

Due to its availability and accessibility, the pamphlet Tzava's Harivash eventually made its way into the hands of the *misnagdim*, which opened up a Pandora's box of troubles for Chassidim. The *misnagdim* perceived Tzava's Harivash as the foundational doctrine of Chassidus and they caricatured it as a subversive, anti-Torah manifesto, making it a prime target of their attacks. In their efforts to discredit the Chassidim, the *misnagdim* combed through the pamphlet and singled out approximately 11 passages as objectionable and blasphemous. One passage that was deemed especially problematic was section 120 which states that when a gentile disrupts one's prayer, he should realize that it is *hashgacha pratis* and that this disturbance is only possible because the *Shechinah* dwells in the mouth of the gentile — in order for him to overcome it. This assertion outraged the *misnagdim*, particularly the Vilna Gaon, who claimed it was heretical to suggest that the *Shechinah* could reside in a place of impurity where mentioning Hashem's name is forbidden. Since then, this passage served as a chief ammunition in the arsenal of talking points *misnagdim* would use to antagonize Chassidim.

When confronted with this objection, the Alter Rebbe composed a detailed response to the Vilna community, demonstrating the legitimacy of this principle. He acknowledged that the term "*sharsah*" (dwells) is inappropriate, blaming it on the incorrect translation into Hebrew of the Baal Shem Tov's Yiddish (the language in which he taught), and should be amended to "*nislabsah*" (is vested in). There is a significant difference between these expressions: *Hashra'ah*, "indwelling of the *Shechinah*," implies a complete and revealed manifestation of G-dliness which occurs strictly in the realm of *kedushah*. In contrast, *halbashah*, "investment of the *Shechinah*," implies no more than a flow of divine light and vitality from the *Shechinah* that is limited by *tzimtzum* and concealment. This can occur even in the realm of *kelipah*, where the *Shechinah* is trapped in exile.<sup>3</sup> The Alter Rebbe noted, however, that this does not appear to be the *misnagdim*'s major objection: It seems that they question the very notion that the *Shechinah* can be vested in the *kelipos*, notwithstanding the fact that this is stated clearly in Kabbalah in general, and in the teachings of the Arizal in particular. This reply appears in Tanya, Iggeres Hakodesh, *siman* 25 (see above in "Overview").

But the *misnagdim* in Vilna were not appeased. Upon the insidious counsel of Avigdor Chaimovitch, the rav of Pinsk and the informant who orchestrated the Alter Rebbe's imprisonment, the Vilna Gaon consented to a drastic move. On Erev Pesach of 5556\*, copies of Tzava's Harivash were ceremoniously burned alongside the *chametz* in a public

bonfire on the streets of Vilna, in a brazen display of protest.

In an effort to end this ongoing dispute, Chassidim attempted to arrange a meeting between the Alter Rebbe and representatives of the Vilna Gaon, during which the latter could articulate their grievances and two respected figures would mediate the discussion. In response to his Chassidim's concerns about the conflict, the Alter Rebbe penned a letter acknowledging that he was aware of the tensions and the Vilna Gaon's stance, and regarding the burned book, he cautioned his Chassidim that it is unwise to wage the war of the Baal Shem Tov and incite harsh judgements on the *misnagdim*, for that is not the path Hashem desires.

In regards to the proposed debate, the Alter Rebbe concurred with the sentiment of pursuing peace, but he pointed out that all previous attempts to settle the dispute were for naught. He suggested that, given that there was no comparable authority in Lithuania who could challenge the Vilna Gaon, it would be more prudent to seek out prominent *gedolim* from other countries to adjudicate the matter. He proposed that the Vilna Gaon should send a letter outlining all his problems, and the Alter Rebbe would respond in kind with clear and concise answers to each point. Both letters would be widely circulated to influential leaders near and far, and the Alter Rebbe was confident that the majority would recognize the rightness of his position. However, by the time the letter with this proposal reached the Vilna Gaon, he was already mortally ill and passed away shortly thereafter, thus preventing the debate from ever taking place.

The polemic against Tzava's Harivash flared up once again when Avigdor leveled a series of slanderous accusations against the Alter Rebbe before the Czarist regime, resulting in the Alter Rebbe's second imprisonment in 5561\*. His official claim to the government was that the Alter Rebbe was promoting a new religion that posed a threat to the state and needed to be stopped.

To support his allegations, Avigdor submitted two depositions which decried the objectionable passages in the *sefer* Tzava's Harivash. One addressed to the authorities and the other to be presented to the Alter Rebbe for his response. However, there were notable differences between the two, with Avigdor toning



THE SPECIAL PRINTING OF TZAVA'S HARIVASH IN 5735\*.

\*☎ 5556-1796, 5561-1801, 5735-1975

down his criticism in the latter deposition, presumably realizing that many of his supposed refutations were absurd and would be easily dismissed. Still, both depositions were rife with misquotations and distortions. The Alter Rebbe exposed these distortions, and offered clear and convincing explanations which vindicated Tzava'as Harivash and the Chassidic philosophy, and brought about his acquittal and liberation from imprisonment.

Over a century later, the year 5720\* marked a great milestone — 200 years since the passing of the Baal Shem Tov. To commemorate this auspicious anniversary, the Rebbe began to promote the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov with renewed vigor and encouraged Chassidim to redouble their efforts to disseminate these teachings. To this end, the Rebbe announced that Kehos would undertake to republish the classic work of the Baal Shem Tov's teachings, Tzava'as Harivash. Indeed, shortly thereafter Reb Avrohom Chanoch Glitzenstein was charged with the task of making new paragraph divisions in the main text of Tzava'as Harivash, and was instructed to add footnotes as he saw fit. Throughout the year, the Rebbe discussed selected passages from Tzava'as Harivash at many farbrengens, offering new insights and explanations.

When the Rebbe renewed the initiative of publishing the *sefarim* of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid in 5735\*, Kehos published the new edition of Tzava'as Harivash, which was expertly revised by Rabbi Immanuel Schochet. This edition was meticulously researched and involved extensive textual comparisons of various manuscripts and *sefarim* of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid. It stands out for its exceptional quality and academic standard, with an abundance of cross-references, comprehensive annotations, indexes, and citations to other works. In the introduction, Rabbi Schochet presents an elaborate discussion to determine the provenance of the work, concluding that it is a compilation culled from the collected works of the Maggid's disciples. He also discusses the possible identity of the figure who compiled and edited the collection, initially entertaining the idea that it was the Maggid himself. However, he retracts this hypothesis after receiving a response from the Rebbe upon seeing the first draft of this introduction: The Rebbe asserted that the Alter Rebbe would certainly not have referred to his teacher, the Maggid, as a mere compiler, and thus it could not be him.

Over the years, the Kehos edition of Tzava'as Harivash underwent several reprints, with Rabbi Schochet adding corrections and supplementary material to subsequent editions. In addition to this, he also authored a complete English rendition of Tzava'as Harivash, replete with sources, commentary, and notes on the passages that were perceived to be controversial, which was published by Kehos. **T**

## A Word On The Title:

As previously mentioned in the “Overview,” the Alter Rebbe writes clearly and emphatically<sup>4</sup> in *Iggeres Hakodesh* that Tzava'as Harivash cannot be considered the Baal Shem Tov's “last will” because “he did not decree anything before his passing.” Therefore, the term “*tzava'ah*” should be understood metaphorically,<sup>5</sup> referring to the Baal Shem Tov's legacy and testament to his Chassidim in the form of his instructions and guidelines for ideal religious conduct.<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, the title of the *sefer* appears to be derived from its opening passage, which reads “*Tzava'ah me'Rivash*.”<sup>7</sup>

1. See *sichas Chai Elul 5742*, where the Rebbe affirms that this was deliberate, despite the availability of the *sefer Toldos Yaakov Yosef*.

2. Also referred to as Reb Yeshayah of Dinowitz, where he moved later in life.

3. For the broader theological context of this debate, see *Derher Av 5780*, “*Reality — Tzimtzum Kipshuto?*”

4. For alternative *nuschaos* of this phrase which can alter its meaning drastically, see “*Tanya B'tziruf Marei Mekomos Likkutei Pirushim V'shinui Nuschaos*”.

5. When Rabbi Schochet noted this in his introduction to the new Kehos edition, the Rebbe commented (in the response mentioned above) that from the statement of the Alter Rebbe it is clear that he understood the title to refer to a last will and therefore negated that assumption. (Implying that he only rejected the literal interpretation of “will” and not a metaphorical one.)

6. However, there is still some confusion regarding this matter because two sources present information that appears to contradict this conclusion. 1) In the transcript of the Alter Rebbe's interrogation during his second imprisonment, he testified to the authenticity of Tzava'as Harivash, stating that “it was compiled by an individual who was present at the time of his passing.” This suggests that Tzava'as Harivash is not merely a collection of instructions, but because of the context of its transmission, it is more closely associated with an actual will in a literal sense. 2) Among the documents discovered in the Cherson Geniza, there is a letter from the Baal Shem Tov addressed to Reb Yeshayah of Yanov which contains an amendment to an earlier version of a will that was drafted by — Reb Yeshayah of Yanov. This shows that the Baal Shem Tov did, in fact, have an actual will that was incidentally composed by the person in whose possession Tzava'as Harivash was discovered.

Several have attempted to answer these questions, but the matter remains unresolved.

7. In his introduction, Rabbi Schochet notes that although the original title as it appears in earlier prints is “*Sefer Tzava'as Harivash V'Hanhagos Yesharos*” he utilized editorial discretion and dropped the second part of the title to avoid confusion with the similar *sefer* called “*Hanhagos Yesharos*” (*Darhei Yesharim*) by Reb Mendel of Premishlan.

# A LEAF FROM THE BOOK

## TZAVA'AS HARIVASH Sections 11 - 13

### ה צוואת הריב"ש (ספן אייט)

יא

ובכל דבר שיעשה יחשוב בזה שהוא עושה נחת רוח לבוראו ית', ולא לצורך עצמו אפילו מעט. אפילו אם עשה שיהיה לו תענוג בעבודתו זהו לצורך עצמו:

יב

ואל יאמר בלבו שהוא גדול מחבירו, שהוא עובד ברביקות [חיי]. שהוא כשאר הנבראים שנבראו לצורך עבודתו ית', והש"ת [לא] נתן לחבירו שכל כמו שנתן לו שכל. ובמה הוא חשוב יותר מהתולעת, שהתולעת עובר להבורא יתברך בכל שכלו ובחו. והאדם ג"כ רמה ותולעת, כמ"ש ואנכי תולעת ולא אש, ואם לא נתן לו הש"ת שכל לא היה יכול לעבור רק כמו תולעת, וא"כ אפילו מתולעת אינו חשוב במעלה כ"ש מבני אדם.

ויהחשוב שהוא [ותולעת ושאר] בריות קמנות הם חשובים כמו חכמים בעולם, שכולם נבראים ואין להם יכולת רק מה שנתן להם הבורא יתברך, ודבר זה יהיה חסיד במחשבתו:

יג

אם מתאוה לאיזה עבירה [חיי], או יאמר הפסוקים של העבירה ההיא בטעמים ובנקודות, בדחילו ורחימו, ואז תלך ממנו [האמת]:

מקבילות ומראה מקומות

יא

הח"י. אחיא ק. ב. לקיא ט. ב.

יב

הח"י. אחיא ק. ב. לקיא ט. ב.  
ואנכי חזתת נו - תהלים כב. ג.

יג

אחיא קו. א. לקיא ט. א.

שינויי נוסחאות

ג) ו"א: ובכל דבר שיעשה יחשוב נחת רוח בזה להשכינה. ולא יחשוב במחשבתו אפילו מעט לצורך הנאתו כי הכל וי"ש ולמה יעשה להנאתו. וגם אם עושה כמה דברים והכנות כדי שיוכל לעבור ברביקות ויהיה לו תענוג בעבודתו, זה גם זה עובר לצורך עצמו. רק עיקר שיהיה כל עבודתו לצורך השכינה. אפילו מעט לא יהיה לצורך עצמו.  
ג) [נלתיא בשו"ת ק"ש]

11. Whatever you do, have in mind to give gratification to your Creator, blessed be He, and do not think even a little of your own needs. Even the expectation of personal delight from your service of Hashem is an ulterior motive for one's own concerns.

12. Do not think that by worshipping with *dveikus* you are greater than another. You are like any other creature, created for the sake of His worship, blessed be He. Hashem gave a mind to the other just as He gave a mind to you. What makes you superior to a worm? The worm serves the Creator with all its mind. Had Hashem not given you intelligence you would not be able to worship Him but like a worm. Thus you are no better than a worm, and certainly no better than other people.

Bear in mind that you, the worm and all other small creatures are considered as equals in the world. For all were created and have but the ability given to them by the blessed Creator. Always keep this matter in mind.

13. When tempted to commit a sin, Heaven forbid, recite the *pesukim* pertaining to that sin. Recite them with their intonations and punctuation, with fear and love of Hashem, and the temptation will leave you.

# A LEAF FROM THE BOOK

## TZAVA'S HARIVASH

Sections 50 - 52

**כא צוואת הריב"ש (סימן מט"ב)**  
 ולדי נבות משכחת (ניא שמשכחת) הבורא ית', וארז'ל שתקתו של אדם  
 (יפה מתיבחו שודא) מביאתו לידי ענה:

ג

**גנ** לא יסחכל בפני בני אדם, אפילו כשמוכר עמרים, אם מחשבותיהם  
 אינם לבורא ית' תמיד דבוקה, כי יהיה לו פגם בנפשו מחמת  
 ההסחכלות.

**זכבני** אדם כשירים, שמתחבתייהם דבוקה (ומיד) בהבורא ית', יסחכל  
 דוקא, ויקנה קדושה בנפשו (ניא שמכח זה יקנה קדושה נשמה  
 בנפשו):

כא

**הלימוד** יהיה בכח ובשמחה גדולה, וזה מנעם מחשבות זרות:

כב

**כשארם** עובד תמיד את (הבורא) ית' בכל רגע אין לו פנאי להתנאות  
 ולאחזוב את הגאווה ושאר מדות הרעות:

### מקבילות ומראה מקומות

שחיבתו של אדם יפה מתיבוחו – מגילה ית', א (מלה בסלע כ"ג). שודקתו של אדם מביאתו ליד  
 גוה – בו תובא (בלשון הוה) בשערי קדושה להרחיבו ח"ב שיה (בערך שיחה כשילה) כשם וארז'ל,  
 ויקרו צ"צ. וראה ר"ח שער הקדושה פ"יא (מביאו לידי ענה ויראה כאחד כ"ג). להעיר ממדרש תהלים  
 כ"ג: כל מי ששומע קולתו ושוחק נטרא חסיד. וצ"ח ע"ז כ, ב: אמר רשב"י כי ותיפי דיה ענה ודיה  
 חסידים (ושי"ג וראה ג"כ נח"ג קמח). א"כ והקמטת תקריז ה, ב דיה המינאה. ועיין בסי תוס' דבורה  
 ירמ"ב פ"ב. ר"ח שער הענוה פ"ג – דיה עוד מעלה ח' וסי (תובא בשליה, שער האמונות את העל).

ג

תהיי, אוהיא עט, ב לקיא בת, א.

כא

אוהיא בת, א.

כב

לקיי סי' גו. אוהיא קב, ב.

50. Do not gaze at the face of people whose thoughts are not continuously attached to the Creator, blessed be He, even when speaking to them; for that gaze will blemish your soul.

As for fit people however, i.e., those whose thoughts are attached to the Creator, blessed be He, you ought to gaze at them and thus accrue holiness to your soul.

51. Torah-study must be with intensity and great joy. This will diminish alien thoughts.

52. When one serves G-d every moment, there is no opportunity to be arrogant, to love pride or other character traits that are evil.