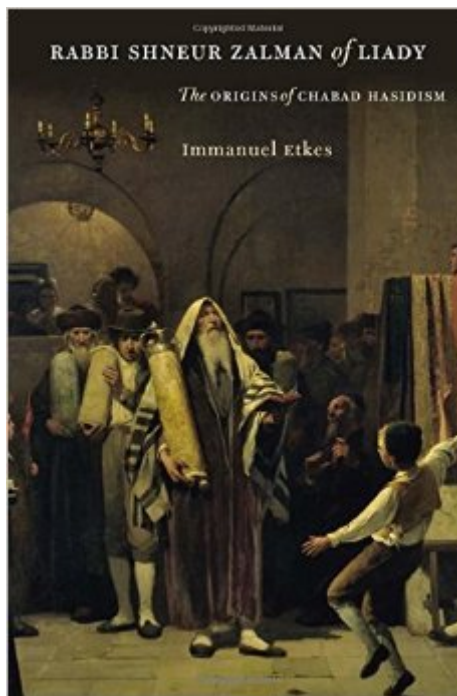


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# Rabbi Shneur Zalman Of Liady: The Origins Of Chabad Hasidism (The Tauber Institute Series For The Study Of European Jewry)



## Synopsis

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liady (1745–1812), in imperial Russia, was the founder and first rebbe of Chabad, a branch of Hasidic Judaism that flourishes to the present day. The Chabad-Lubavitch movement he founded in the region now known as Belarus played, and continues to play, an important part in the modernization processes and postwar revitalization of Orthodox Jewry. Drawing on historical source materials that include Shneur Zalman's own works and correspondence, as well as documents concerning his imprisonment and interrogation by the Russian authorities, Etkes focuses on Zalman's performance as a Hasidic leader, his unique personal qualities and achievements, and the role he played in the conflict between Hasidim and its opponents. In addition, Etkes draws a vivid picture of the entire generation that came under Rabbi Shneur Zalman's influence. This comprehensive biography will appeal to scholars and students of the history of Hasidism, East European Jewry, and Jewish spirituality.

## Book Information

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A recent search on Hasidic tales returned 231 books. These tales of righteous Hasidic leaders are meant to make a point, tell a story, inspire the listener, and much more. A problem is that some of these stories are conflicting and self-contradictory. When used as a biographical vehicle, these stories are often more hagiography than biography. In *Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liady: The Origins of Chabad Hasidism* (Brandeis University Press, ISBN 1611686776), author Immanuel Etkes, Professor of Modern Jewish History at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, has written a masterful

and brilliant biography of the founder of the Chabad-Lubavitch Hasidic movement. The 9 chapters focus on Râ™ Shneur Zalmanâ™s adult life, with the narrative starting from his ascent as a Hasidic leader, ending with his death fleeing with the Russian Army from Napoleon:1. Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadyâ™s Rise to Leadership2. A Leader of Hasidim3. Between Center and Periphery4. Sefer Shel Beinonim: The Book of Average Men5. On the Front Line against the Mitnagdim: Excommunications and Prohibitions6. At the Front versus the Mitnagdim: The First Imprisonment7. At the Front against the Mitnagdim: The Second Arrest8. Zaddikim as Human Beings: The Conflict with Rabbi Abraham of Kalisk9. Between Napoleon and AlexanderWhat makes this biography unique is that Etkes uses documents written by Râ™ Shneur Zalmanâ™s himself. This is in addition to other historical documents and letters related to him. Etkes is able to create a critical analysis, yet not lose focus of the human element.

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