

## Zusia Saga of Modern Judaism 2: Mitnags and Litvaks

*“Dad,” I said to him, “tell me, in what way was he a tzadik?”*

*“What is there to tell?” my father said with a shrug, “he was a tzadik.”*

*“But these are American kids,” I persisted. “If I don’t describe him in some way, they just won’t understand.”*

*“Well then,” my father said, “just tell them that he was a quiet man.”*

This anecdote comes from Yechiel Yitzhok Perr, the son of Menachem Perr, who was considered a great Tzadik in early 20th century Litvak Orthodoxy. Menachem Perr spent decades working as a Rov (Rabbi), teaching, deciding matters of Jewish law, and serving the community in a thousand and one ways. Here Menachem Perr is describing his own father.

Perr was a product of Litvak, or Lituanian, Orthodox Judaism, the lineage that descended from the Mitnagdim, or opponents of Hasidism (although they were much more than just that). The classical Litvak tradition viewed *tzidkus* (the quality of a tzadik) as consisting not in ecstatic states, miraculous powers, or charisma, but in kindness, self-restraint, other-centredness, impeccability of behaviour, and serenity of mind.

The emphasis for Litvaks was on mastery of the Torah and mastery of character. Where Hasidut emphasized joy, optimism, song and dance, and mystical intuition, Litvaks emphasized self-control, rationality, groundedness, compassion, carefulness, and being a *klal mensch* (a complete gentleperson). The goal was not so much *d'vekus* (union with God) as it was *shlemus* (wholeness and maturity). Hasidim accused Litvaks of being dour, negative, obsessive and elitist. Litvaks accused Hasidim of being delusional, idolatrous (for worshipping Rebbes), irrational, and overconfident.

If for Hosids the supreme attitude to God was love, to Misnags it was humility. Hosids emphasized human potential; Misnags emphasized human limitations. In actual practice there was much overlap and common ground of course, but the above is a sketch of differences in emphasis.

Although Litvaks and Hosids came to get along, there was still a distinct consciousness of the difference between the two prior to the Holocaust, a difference which came to be seen as much less important afterwards. My Zeyde Meyer, a Holocaust survivor and the son of Rav Shmuel HaLevi of Glembok (in what was Belorus before the Shoah) once said to me, "Remember that our family are not Hasidim. We are Misnagdim."

My Zeyda revered the great hero of the Litvaks, the Vilna Gaon, Rabbi Eliyahu ben Solomon Zalman (1720-1797), who was a genius Torah scholar, had the reputation of a saint, and was also a master Kabbalist. On top of those things, he was fiercely opposed to Hasidut. The village my

Zeyda came from was not far from Vilna, the intellectual centre of the Litvaks and north of what is now central and southern Poland, which were dominated by Hasidim.

Apart from their opposition to Hasidut, the Litvaks had their own rich spiritual culture which ultimately would give birth to the Mussar tradition and the great Yeshiva tradition of Eastern Europe and North America. The best of this tradition was known for its great ethical sensitivity and intellectual fertility and honesty. Here is another story from the Perr Family, from *Tzidkus Stands Forever*, about Menachem Perr's mother Bobeh Henya:

*Bobeh Henya would make grape jelly from the sediments of her husband's wine, and she would bring containers of her jelly as gifts to sick people in town, Jews and gentiles alike. As was usual in a Yiddish shtetl of Eastern Europe, there was a "hekdesch" in Drohichin. A hekdesch was a vacant house, where the many poverty-stricken Jews who wandered from town to town seeking tzedakah would spend their nights. Conditions in the hekdesch were awful. When Bobeh Henya would meet an ani [poor person] in the street, she would say to him, "Please don't go to the hekdesch; come to my house." She would take these poor men home to sleep in her house. They would sleep on mattresses all over the floor.*

*My grandparents continued Bobeh Henya's practice of caring for others. My father told me that in his parents' home in Coney Island, people would simply knock on the door and ask "Is this Perr?" Then without any further ado, they would walk in, sit down at the table, and wait for something to eat.*

*And it was also continued in my parents' home, where homeless people would sometimes stay for months at a time. My parents always referred to these people as orchim, guests, an appellation of honor, rather than aniyim, the poor.*

This anecdote beautifully encapsulates the selfless and compassionate ideals of that world. Aside from Tzedakah, another ideal was humility and non-attachment:

*Reb Yechezkel later became Rosh Yeshiva of the Yeshiva Ktana "Ohr Yisroel" in Slobodka. I found his sefer, Divrei Yechezkel, among my father's seforim [books]. In those days, the sefer was unobtainable; however, far more important to me than the sefer itself was the dedication on the flyleaf of the volume, a beautiful expression of profound respect and caring from the author to my father. I once lent this precious sefer, with my father's permission, to an "older bochur (student)" who had asked to borrow it. Unfortunately, it was never returned. Much later, I chanced to find it in a pile of discarded seforim. The covers and some pages were missing, and so was the flyleaf, with its precious dedication. Abjectly, I told my father what had happened. He didn't show the slightest interest or concern.*

Although it is hard to imagine now, many of the greats of Litvak Orthodoxy between 1880 and 1930 dressed humbly, even avoiding obvious signs of being Jewish like long peyos, beards, shtreimels, etc. Another story from Perr:

*"Can you tell me something that you yourself heard from the Alter [the Alter of Slabodka, a famous Litvak Rov who was one of Perr's teachers]?"*

*He thought for a moment, and then he said, “Before bein hazmanim [semester break] he used to say to us ‘You are going home now, and you will be among simple, ordinary people in the shuls. Don’t daven long Shmoneh Esrei’s [the personal prayer said standing], don’t shukle [rock back and forth] too much, don’t do things that will seem strange to them.’ Which means,” my father said, “don’t wear your tzitzis [ritual fringes worn beneath one’s shirt] out either.” And with that, he came back to something which he did not fully accept; the custom of American yeshiva bochurim, myself included, who were starting at that time, to wear their tzitzis outside their clothing. This was something which was not done by the European bnei torah [children of Torah].*

*What bothered him was a teaching of the Alter, which permeated all of Slobodka thinking and had shaped my father’s thinking as well. The Alter taught that although “hachitzonius m’orar hapnimius” –the external, when practiced correctly, does indeed become internalized –nevertheless, it is also all too common for the external to become a substitute for the internal. The external can easily seduce a person into believing he has arrived at some elevated spiritual level, when he really has not.*

*For most of his life, my father had no full beard. He did not dress in a beksha or a homburg hat. He didn’t insist on speaking Yiddish. For himself, and privately, he was extremely machmir [stringent] in many things. For others, though, he searched for kulos [leniencies]. He never “dropped” the names of gedolim he knew, or whom he had known; and he never told anyone a story from which the listener could deduce something special about himself.*

Menachem Perr, as well as a Tzadik, was also an “ilui”, one of the most revered figures in the Litvak world. An *ilui* is a naturally gifted Torah scholar who is a prodigy from childhood. They were the royalty of the Litvak world, by which I don’t mean they were rich (they generally weren’t) but that they were revered.

*The Torah’s goal, emphasized by many of the leading Lithuanian rabbis, is to create a deeply sensitive, caring, modest, introspective, and pleasant person. Pleasantness is not a surface characteristic, for it is cultivated within the inner recesses of each person. It is generally accepted that concern for others is the key to being a good person. To the Jew, however, true concern is not expressed in random and sporadic acts of good –no matter how individually noble those acts may be –but in cultivating the governing characteristic and attitude of pleasantness. Good habits and good actions can become habitual, but the platform upon which all of this goodness is built is the individual’s inner pleasantness and serenity of soul.*

- Rabbi Berel Wein

In his book “The Legacy”, a record of the best of the Litvak world, Wein writes:

*One is prohibited from doing things that are not nice. Public opinion of the probity of a person’s behavior was always to be taken into account. A good Jew was usually defined in Jewish life in terms of pleasantness and goodness toward others and not exclusively in terms of observance and piety. The common response of Lithuanian Jews regarding the frumkeit [level of observance]*

*of a person was “frum iz a galach,” [“piety is for Catholic priests”] i.e., that superficial religiosity –exclusively concentrating on personal spirituality and punctilious observances of the law –is not the measure of a good Jew.*

“Pleasantness” is one of the central values of the Mussar Movement, founded in Lithuania by Rabbi Yisrael Lipkin of Salant (1810-1883) as a non-Hasidic spiritual movement. Rabbi Salant once described an encounter he experienced on his way to the synagogue on Yom Kippur: A well-known, pious man passed him on the street. The man was weeping and trembling in anticipation of the Day of Judgment. Rabbi Yisrael stopped and asked him for some information that he needed. The man ignored Rabbi Yisrael and made no response to his request; he simply walked away, totally absorbed in his own spiritual experience. Although Rabbi Yisrael forgave the man his rudeness, he nevertheless remarked to his disciple, Rabbi Yitzchak Blazer, “When he hurried away I thought to myself: Why should I be victimized by that person’s fervor to prepare himself for Yom Kippur? What does his concern regarding the Day of Judgment have to do with me? He is obligated to answer me courteously, for that is the way of pleasantness and grace.”

Another example of this rule of pleasantness as developed by the great Lithuanian masters of Mussar is found in a letter written by Rabbi Simchah Zissel Ziv, the “Alter” of Kelm (1824-1898), about which more below. He writes, “How great is the requirement that a person care about the feelings of others, that they should not be pained by him! We see that the prophet Jeremiah, while in great personal mental agony over the prophecy of the impending destruction of the Temple, nevertheless did not forget to greet and bless others whom he chanced to meet on

the way.” In short, the Alter states, “Concern about the welfare of others is in reality the ultimate concern regarding one’s own self and one’s own soul.”

So now let’s back up a bit. How did the Litvak world come into being, and how did the Mussar and Yeshiva movements begin?

### **The Vilna Gaon**

The Vilna Gaon, known for short as the Gra, was said to have memorized the Tanakh by the age of four. As a teenager he went on *gerushin*, wondering as a poor beggar from town to town to mimic the exile of the Shechina. By twenty he was receiving letters from all over Europe requesting his help with halakhic (Jewish legal) problems. By thirty he had made a name for himself as a genius of legal decision making, Torah commentary, Talmudic interpretation, and ethics. He was devoted to using rational methods to study the Torah, and both attempted to establish what the trustworthy texts and traditions were and to analyze the way that the entirety of Jewish thought fit together into one rational whole.

The Vilna Gaon declined to accept the office of rabbi though it was often offered to him on the most flattering terms. He led a retiring life, only lecturing from time to time to a few chosen pupils. The Vilna Gaon supported the excommunication of Hasidim, however, throwing his considerable influence behind such measures, and he also refused to meet with the founder of Chabad, R’ Schneur Zalman of Liadi, when the latter attempted to reach out to him to make

peace. Scholars have generally been bewildered at the depth of his opposition to the Hasidic movement.

The Vilna Gaon taught mostly orally and his written comments are sparse and cryptic and only understandable to advanced Talmudists. This is because he believed that the “oral Torah” should not be written down, as ancient Jewish law asserted. Another example of his abidance by law rather than custom was his not wearing a kippah at home, even when reciting blessings, since kippot are not required by Jewish law but only a minhag (custom).

His main student Rabbi Chaim Volozhin, the Nefesh HaChaim (1749-1821), founded the first yeshiva (residential Jewish religious school for advanced study) in his home town of Volozhin, Belarus. This revolutionized Torah study by departing the centuries of 'informal' study in shuls and shtiblach (small rooms of study). Youth and scholars would usually congregate in local synagogues (*batei midrashim*) and study freely, although it was customary to migrate to towns possessing great scholars as the local rabbi. The Volozhin Yeshivah created a formal structure of study, by providing qualified faculty, meals, and accommodation. The results are now the norm for Orthodox Jewry.

### **The Nefesh HaChayyim**

Rav Chaim of Volozhin was known for his own focus on intellectual mastery of the Talmud, ethical sensitivity, and deep study of the Kabbalah. He wrote the Nefesh HaChayyim (soul of life) a complex Kabbalist work many saw as a response to the Hasidic work the Tanya, laying

out a complete cosmology and ethical path for the Jew from a Misnag point of view. The Nefesh HaChayyim teaches that in creation God gave over his power to us, making humans “the soul of life.” It is our good deeds or bad deeds that repair or damage the cosmos, bringing *shefa* (divine blessings) or damage and suffering. Rav Chaim taught the supreme purpose of life was intellectual union with God through Torah study, an act which itself blesses the whole world by releasing cosmic bounty from the higher worlds.

Another influential movement among Litvaks was started by Israel Lipkin of Salant, the Salanter Rebbe (1820-1889): the Mussar movement. The Hasidim emphasized *dvekus* partially as an antidote to the elitism and intellectualism of the Judaism of the time. The Mussar movement was a response to the same thing from a different angle. The Mussar movement's answer was to propose a program of ethical self-improvement that could be practiced by any Jew regardless of their level of Torah mastery, thus attempting to replace both elitism and dry intellectualism with fervent moral passion and the attainment of a beautiful character.

The Salanter Rebbe was a student of a student of Rav Chaim of Volozhin (the Nefesh HaChayyim). He was a great Torah scholar, Talmudist, and Rabbi, famed for fighting against Cantonism (the forced conscription of Jewish boys into the Russian army). He also was very active during a cholera epidemic, in which he forbid weakened Jews from fasting on Yom Kippur. In order to get compliance he himself ascended the bima and ate in front of the congregation. He arranged to have classics of Jewish ethics reprinted and popularized them in Vilna, and began teaching his unique method of ethical self-improvement.

## Mussar

The Hebrew term musar (מוּסָר) is from the book of Proverbs 1:2 meaning instruction, discipline, or conduct. According to the Salanter, adhering to the ritual aspects of Judaism without developing one's relationships with others and oneself was unpardonable, a parody of Jewish life. There are many anecdotal stories about him that relate to this moral equation, such as his refusal to use more than a tiny bit of water to ritually wash his hands before dinner so as to avoid placing a burden on the maid who brought water to the house.

For Rabbi Salanter, one must become aware of both conscious and subconscious processes and the role they play in psychological, emotional and moral functioning. He writes of the "outer" [*chitzoniut*] and "inner" [*penimiut*] processes, or the "clear" [*klarer*] and "dark" [*dunkler*] processes. They form a fundamental building block of many of Rabbi Salanter's letters, essays and teachings. He would write that it is critical for a person to recognize what his subconscious motivations [*negiot*] are and to work on understanding them.

Rabbi Salanter would teach that the time for a person to work on not allowing improper subconscious impulses to affect him was during times of emotional quiet, when a person is more in control of his thoughts and feelings. He would stress that when a person is experiencing an acute emotional response to an event, he is not necessarily in control of his thoughts and faculties and will not have access to the calming perspectives necessary to allow his conscious mind to intercede.

Given that a person's subconscious motivations are often not apparent or under the control of a person and are likely to unseat conscious decisions that they may make, how is it possible for a

person to modify their own actions in order to improve their actions? If the basis of a person's actions are not controlled by them, how can they change them through conscious thought?

Rabbi Salanter writes that the only possible answer to this quandary is to learn ethical teachings with great emotion [*limud hamusar behispa'alut*]. He taught that a person should choose an ethical statement [*ma'amar chazal*] and repeat this over and over with great feeling and concentration on its meaning. Through this repetition and internal arousal, a person would be able to bring the idea represented in the ethical teaching into the realm of his subconscious and thus improve their behaviour and "character traits".

Rabbi Salanter felt that people would be embarrassed to study ethical teachings [*limud ha'musar*] in such a way in a normal study-hall [*bet ha'medrash*] and he therefore invented the idea of a "house of ethical teachings" [*bet ha'mussar*] that would be located next to an ordinary study hall and that would be designated for learning ethics in this way. He also famously said that really the whole world is a bet hamusar and every person a sefer musar.

One of the more popular teachings of Rabbi Salanter is based on a real life encounter he had with a shoemaker one very late night. It was Motza'ei Shabbat (Saturday night after Shabbat) and Rabbi Salanter was on the way to the synagogue to recite Selichot (penitential prayers). Suddenly he felt a hole in his shoe, so he looked around to see if there was a shoemaker still open for business at that late hour. Finally he found a shoemaker sitting in his shop working next to his candle. Rabbi Salanter walked in and asked him, "Is it too late now to get my shoes repaired?"

The shoemaker replied, "As long as there is still light, it is still possible to repair." Upon hearing this, Rabbi Salanter ran to the synagogue and preached to the public what he had learned from the shoemaker.

## **Cheshbon HaNefesh and Menahem Mendel Lefin of Satanov**

A very popular method of Musar since the time of the Salanter Rebbe has been the method of “cheshbon ha-nefesh” or “soul accounting.” In this method one chooses a list of traits (middot) that one wants to develop. One makes a chart of the traits and then works on each one for one week. In the morning one meditates on a phrase teaching that trait, and at the end of each day one notes how one succeeded or failed in developing that trait. If choosing 13 traits, in one year one would review each trait four times.

This method stems from the book Cheshbon HaNefesh, published in Lvov in the Ukraine in 1812 by Menahem Mendel Lefin (1749-1826). The Salanter Rebbe loved the book and had it reprinted in his town in 1845. This is interesting and even commendable, because Mendel of Satanov was neither a Hosid nor a Litvak, but a Maskil- a “modernizer” who sought to reform Judaism by reviving the rationalism of Maimonides, teaching science and medicine, and being open to the insights of the non-Jewish European world. His method in Cheshbon HaNefesh was not his own invention, but something he learned from Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), who developed a method of soul accounting that Mendel of Satanov reworked for Jewish purposes.

Mendel of Satanov wrote several Maskilic texts in Hebrew and Yiddish, but saw himself as a “moderate” between Hasidic anti-modernism and the radical rationalism, atheism, socialism and hostility to Hasidism breaking out among the more radical wing of the Jewish Haskalah. Perhaps

that's why the Salanter was comfortable using his text. In any case, Lefin's method became one of the most popular practices in Musar.

### **The Chofetz Chaim**

Israel Meir Kagan (1839-1933) became one of the most revered Rabbis of the Litvaks, and one of the last great pre-Holocaust figures of traditional Jewish life in Europe. Some consider him the most important European Orthodox Rabbi of the 20th century. He was born in Belorus and died in Poland. He created a Yeshiva in Radun, Lithuania, which he was head of, and was and is an extremely revered figure in the Orthodox world, especially in the Litvak world. In 1873 he published a book called *Chofetz Chaim* (Desiring Life) which was the first comprehensive guide to the laws of speech (and about which I am teaching a class at Peretz this month). It became a revered text and launched a movement in the Orthodox world to eliminate harmful ways of speaking such as loshin hora (speaking negatively of others), rehilus (tale-bearing), ona'as devarim (speaking hurtfully), and divrei sheker (slander and falsehood). It also resulted in him being known as the Chofetz Chaim to the grave and beyond.

*[At the] the first-ever gathering, in Vienna, of the Agudat Yisrael, the groundbreaking [anti-Zionist] political representative organization for Orthodox Jewry founded in 1913, and formally launched in 1919. Anyone and everyone in the Orthodox world was going to be at that momentous conference. Everyone except the Chofetz Chaim.*

*On Friday Sept. 14, 1923, Gedaliah Bublick wrote gushingly about the Chofetz Chaim's unexpected attendance at the Vienna conference in Yiddishe Tageblatt, at that time one of New York's most popular daily Yiddish newspapers:*

For the orthodox Jewish masses, the Chofetz Chaim is the most pious man alive today. Most don't even know his name. Those who do, never use it. His entire persona has become synonymous with the name of his celebrated ethical work.

*Bublick (1875-1948), born in Grodno, Lithuania, was a well-known Yiddish journalist who lived in New York and was in Vienna for the Agudat Yisrael event. He described the scene in Vienna as the Chofetz Chaim—who he noted dressed in simple clothes, not in rabbinic garb—arrived at the congress:*

A panic broke out in the convention hall—"the Chofetz Chaim is coming." Everyone jumped up onto their seats and focused their gaze onto the point [of his entry].

*The militantly socialist Yiddish daily, The Forward, reported the Chofetz Chaim's attendance with uncharacteristic respect, writing: "When you first see the tiny ninety-year-old [sic] man he makes a strange impression—you feel a shudder of awe and love, an enormous boundless respect. When you look more closely you see the face of an angel, a servant of God—the Divine Presence rests on that face and you must close your eyes because of the brilliance that shines from the small, gray, wise eyes. When he stands at the rostrum to speak ... everyone stands to listen to him. His voice is soft but clear. He calls Jews to unity, to peace, to goodness, to piety, to love, and to action. His small, bent frame shakes as he speaks. His small white beard glows like*

*freshly fallen snow, and from his eyes glows an entire world of wisdom and goodness. ... This is how I imagine Hillel the Elder must have appeared.”*

Two of the programs initiated that week in Vienna, considered radical in 1923, remain mainstays of Orthodox Jewish life to this day. One was the Agudat Israel’s establishment of formal schooling for girls under the banner of Sarah Schenirer’s Beit Yaakov movement. The other was the launch of Daf Yomi, a coordinated schedule for ordinary laypeople to study one page of Talmud each day, so that wherever you would be in the world you could slot in to a local Daf Yomi group and complete the 2,711-page cycle together with other participants each seven-and-a-half years. Today the siyum (celebrations of completion) for Daf Yomi draw hundreds of thousands of people. These programs would never have gained widespread acceptance had it not been for the Chofetz Chaim.

The Chofetz Chaim also wrote the Mishnah Berurah, the most revered guide to Jewish law outside of the Shulkhan Arukh. The Mishnah Berurah takes an Ashkenazi look at the Sefardic Shulkhan Aruch, going into greater detail and threading in Kabbalistic rationales for why to practice the laws in certain ways (for example, the laws of *negelvasser*, or washing hands in the morning while still in bed). He also wrote many other books on ethics and halakha.

The Chofetz Chaim was an opponent of the Haskalah, and one of his main activities consisted in trying to inspire Jews back to observance of Jewish law. He was famed for his great personal integrity and fine ethical sensitivity, as well as his unworldliness. When an American visitor to his home saw how empty his living quarters were, he asked him, “Where is your furniture?”

“Where is *your* furniture?” the Chofetz Chayyim asked the man.

“I am only a visitor here,” was the reply.

“I, too, am only a visitor here [in this world],” replied the Chofetz Chaim.

After his marriage, he and his wife owned a shop in the Lithuanian town of Radin, she serving the customers and he keeping the books. Numerous stories are told of his scrupulous honesty. He once discovered that a non-Jewish customer had paid for a herring but had not taken it with him. The Chofetz Chayyim had forgotten the man’s identity, so for a time he gave every non-Jewish customer a free herring. The Chofetz Chaim also became well known as a passionate anti-Zionist, as were almost all of the great Rabbis of his time (and on which we will talk more in our fourth class this semester, on early Zionism).

## **Daf Yomi**

The Daf Yomi, which has been called the “world longest running and largest book club” was started at the first meeting of Agudat Yisrael by Rabbi Meir Shapiro (1887-1933). It was launched in 1923, and grows every year. The last *siyyum* (party celebrating completion of the 7.5 year long cycle) saw a million people attend in New York. The current cycle restarted in 2019 after which it will start again at the beginning.

## **Closing Ranks**

The European Litvak world was, according to many witnesses, a more tolerant place before it's move to America and Israel in the wake of the Holocaust. Even some famous Rabbis went without beards, external tzitzis were rare- in other words, it was more common to dress simply and humbly and to blend in with mainstream customs. In the early 20th century some led a rebellion against this, provoked by the massive assimilation and liberalization of Jews and a desire to resist it on all levels (the Chofetz Chaim, for instance, launched a campaign against shaving your beard off).

Once Litvaks found themselves surrounded by a secular culture hostile to tradition and more extreme religious lifestyles, this tendency only increased and both the Litvak and Hasidic worlds became more insular, conservative, and repressive.

In the 20th century, the Litvak world split into two factions over the issue: Modern Orthodoxy and Ultra-Orthodoxy (Haredism). The Modern Orthodox took their inspiration from moderate Orthodox Rabbis who proposed "torah umadda" (Torah together with worldly sciences) like Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888) and his successors (like Joseph Soloveitchik and Moshe Feinstein). Yeshiva University and the Orthodox Union in the US are both from this lineage, as is Schara Zedek Synagogue here in Vancouver. The Modern Orthodox have again recently split into Modern and "Open" Orthodoxy, a more liberal wing which is in favour of ordaining women, engaging more with social justice issues, and confronting difficult topics such as LGBTQ+ inclusion and historical scholarship on the Torah.

The other faction of Orthodoxy withdrew in the world of Yeshivas and Orthodox neighbourhoods in the US and Israel and gradually grew more and more insular and resistant to modernity, creating what is now called “Ultra-Orthodoxy” or “Haredi” Judaism together with the Orthodox Hasidic world.

Today’s Modern and Open Orthodoxy are arguably more in keeping with the Litvak world of the 19th century, and Haredism represents a blend between Hasidic and Litvak fundamentalism. We’ll tell the story of the split of the Jewish world into all of the current denominations over the next few classes. Next class we look at the 18th-19th century Haskalah and the birth of the two types of secular Jew: the Zionist and the cultural/political Jew.

## **Bibliography for Class One and Two**

### **One**

**Tzava’at Harivash: Teachings of The Ba’al Shem Tov**

[https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/145202/jewish/Tzavaat-Harivash.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/145202/jewish/Tzavaat-Harivash.htm)

**Sichot HaRan: Conversations With Rebbe Nachman**

[https://www.sefaria.org/Sichot\\_HaRan](https://www.sefaria.org/Sichot_HaRan)

**Tales of The Hasidim**

Martin Buber

**Deathbed Wisdom of The Hasidic Masters (The Book of Departure)**

Binyamin Mintz

## **Hasidism: A New History**

David Biale, David Assaf, Benjamin Brown, Uriel Gellman, Moshe Rosman, Gadi Sagiv, Samuel Hellman, Moshe Rosman, Marcin Wodzinski

For Further Reading on Socio-economic nature of Hasidic movement:

## **Men of Silk: The Hasidic Conquest of Polish Jewish Society**

Glenn Dynner

## **Class Two**

### **Tzidkus Stands Forever**

Menachem Perr

### **The Legacy: Teachings for Life From The Great Lithuanian Rabbis**

Berel Wein , Warren Goldstein

### **Sharing The Burden: Rabbi Simchah Zissel Ziv and The Path of Mussar**

Geoffrey D. Claussen

### **Yiddish Civilization: The Rise and Fall of A Forgotten Nation**

Paul Kriwaczek

### **The Earth Is The Lords: The Inner World of The Jew In Eastern Europe**

Abraham Joshua Heschel

**Climbing Jacob's Ladder**

Alan Morinis

**Nefesh HaChaim**  
**(abridged by Avraham Yaakov Finkel)**

Rav Chaim of Volzhin