

Tanya - the Masterpiece of Hasidic Wisdom.
Translation and Annotation by Rabbi Rami Shapiro,
foreword by Rabbi Zalman M. Schachter-Shalomi.
Skylights Illuminations 2010.

This valuable series, bringing to life, and to a wider audience than would usually otherwise be the case, texts from all the world's major religious traditions now includes extracts and comments on the Tanya, one of the most challenging and demanding of Jewish texts.

Happily, our guide to the Tanya is a master, Rami Shapiro, whose other works in this series includes volumes on the Zohar, the Ethics of the Sages, Hasidic Tales and the Hebrew Prophets.

Rabbi Shapiro commences with a valuable introduction to the Tanya explaining its provenance, its philosophy and the life and times of its author Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, and the Chabad Hasidism that he founded.

Shapiro extracts short sections from the Tanya, and then translates them and sensitively and helpfully annotates them, something at which he truly excels. Some of the chosen texts are readily accessible, others less so, but each one challenges the reader to give them serious thought, and through that serious engagement, possibly, to find inspiration and enrichment.

This is a splendid addition to a superb series of books.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh