

Elie Wiesel In Hasidism: Zanz and Sadigor

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Elie Wiesel:

(audience applause) Next week, we shall conclude our 20 years of annual encounters. I think there will be a surprise for you next week. (laughs) But for tonight, as always, during the third encounter, we are trying to discover the magnificent, sometimes strange and disturbing world of Hasidism. Tonight, we shall go to two cities. Zanz and Sadigor. Two small cities, we call them shtetlekh, one in Bukovina, Romania, or used to be Austro-Hungary. And the other in Poland, where [00:01:00] Jewish life flourished and blossomed for three centuries until it was stifled by the enemy of the Jewish people, the enemy of humankind, one long generation ago.

Zanz and Sadigor, two capitals of a kingdom created by the Besht, the master of the good name, and his companions. To the glory of God and the honor of his children. Two concepts, two paths, two systems. Both meant to bring Jews closer together to one another and to their creator, and they had so much in common. And yet, and yet, rivers of hate and mountains of anger separated them. What they said of one another has been said about [00:02:00] all of us by the worst of our enemies.

(laughter) So, Zanz and Sadigor. What linked the two cities? What linked the two communities? What was their story, a story of rivalry, of ideological clashes, of personal conflicts? Zanz and Sadigor, a sad story indeed.

I must tell you that I feel embarrassed as I retell it. I love Hasidism. And God is my witness, and so are some of you, that in the course of our 20 annual encounters, I have tried to show the beauty, the magnificence, the splendor, the humanity of the Hasidic experience. I may even have been guilty of glorifying [00:03:00] it. Why not? So many people have said so many bad things about it. Why not balance the picture? Starting with the Besht, I have described the movement's luminous and inspiring aspects. And though I have great admiration for the scholarship of the *mitnagdim*, the learned opponents of Hasidism, I feel a deep, all-encompassing affection for its persecuted masters and disciples. I have been myself always on their side.

Still, sometimes, when they quarreled among themselves, I empathized with both sides. Lublin against Leżajsk, Pshiskhe against Lublin, Medzhybizh against everybody. How could you take sides [00:04:00] against Rabbi Baruch, or the Seer? I tried anxiously to understand and defend all parties in the heated disputes. Some disputes were tragic, but not serious.

Others were serious. The positive effects of the arguments was that both camps felt compelled to study harder, to improve their ways, and to analyze their own world and their inner relationship to it. However, this quarrel between Zanz and Sadigor was different. In the dispute between Zanz and Sadigor, I tell you, as you will see, I oppose both. Their quarrel brought honor neither to Hasidism nor to the Jewish people. Many on both sides claimed that it was *l'shem shamayim*, for the sake of heaven. [00:05:00] And I know that it did not bring me closer to heaven.

And yet, and yet. There were astonishing figures on both sides. Great masters whose charismatic powers influenced thousands and thousands of followers. They found themselves in the midst of a battle that shook the Jewish world, both in Europe and Palestine. Rabbi Chaim of Zanz, and Rebbe Avraham Yosef of Sadigor, were each in his way renowned leaders of their respective schools. Both commanded authority, affection, admiration, and respect. Both were pious and learned. Both remain pillars of Hasidism. What could have provoked the tragic split between them? What turned them into enemies? Personal considerations? Hurt [00:06:00] feelings? A clash of ambitions? Two stories.

Rabbi Chaim of Zanz once visited the city of Ungvár, where a certain Rabbi Menachem, a very great scholar, had invited him to deliver a discourse. Naturally, the whole community came. Rabbi Chaim spoke, and everybody was enchanted. Then, Rabbi Menachem responded, taking the speech apart. Why? Because that was the custom; that still is the custom among scholars. Their disagreements but enhanced the beauty of Torah. We know that when scholars argue, who is enriched? The student. But to everyone's surprise, Rabbi Chaim did not answer the argument of Rabbi Menachem. What was supposed to be a lengthy dialogue remained two [00:07:00] long monologues. When Rabbi Chaimel Zanzler left town, he told the son of Rabbi Menachem, who had accompanied him to the station, "Tell your father to look in such and such a place. He will see that I was right." Well, do you know many scholars who would set aside their pride and opt not to display their erudition publicly? Do you know scholars who are not trying to prove a point? Rabbi Chaim chose to be considered the loser, rather than to hurt another scholar's position in his community. How, then, is one to understand his subsequent relentless appeals to his followers to shame and defeat their opponents, his opponents?

Incidentally, the story in Ungvár [00:08:00] has an appealing sequel, which I like. It is told that as soon as Rabbi Menachem

received Rabbi Chaimel's message, he looked into the books, found the proper place, was convinced, but then right away, he hastened to invite his entire community, all the people who had been present at the discourse, his and the discourse of Rabbi Chaim, had to come back to the house of study. And he said, "I wanted you all to come because I want you to know the truth, and the truth is, that Rabbi Chaim is more learned than I, and more pious than I. For he knew all the answers, but he chose not to embarrass me."

The second story is about his opponent. Rabbi Avraham Yosef [00:09:00] of Sadigor once praised progress to his followers. "One can learn from everything," he said. "From God's creation and man's invention." "Really," a Hasid asked. "What can one learn from a train?" "Not to be late," answered the Rebbe. One minute can make a difference. "What about the telegraph?" another Hasid wanted to know, they had just invented the telegraph. "What can one learn from the telegraph?" "Oh," said the Rebbe, "from the telegraph, we learn that every word counts." (laughter) "And what about the telephone?" a third Hasid wondered aloud. "What can we learn from the telephone?" "From the telephone, we learn to be careful," said the Rebbe. "What you say here can be heard there." Both anecdotes are characteristic. Rabbi Chaim of [00:10:00] Zanz was concerned

with erudition. Rabbi Avraham Yaakov with modern discoveries. The first was pious, the second too. But the second had a practical side as well. Both worked for the welfare of their followers. Both quoted the same sources, and followed the teachings of the Besht. Both worked to help people in distress, victims of misfortune. Both believed in *ahavat Yisrael*, in the love of the Jewish people. Why, then, did they allow a fire of unprecedented violence to spread in their own ranks? Why didn't they teach tolerance and compassion to their own disciples? We shall evoke the famous Zanz/Sadigor dispute during our Hasidic encounter tonight. But first, as always, a few preliminary remarks.

[00:11:00] Remember that disputes are not new in Jewish history. They existed even before history. They existed even among those who wrote history. When God asked the angels whether he ought to create man, they quarreled, as did the higher waters and the lower waters, and the sun and the moon, and Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers, Saul and David, Hillel and Shammai. If a Jew has no one to quarrel with, he quarrels with God, (laughter) and we call it theology. Or he quarrels with himself, and we call it psychology. (laughter) Or he quarrels with [00:12:00] a psychoanalyst and we call it literature.

But please, do not read into my words an apology for quarrels. For then, I would quarrel with you. All I mean to say is that Jews have never been afraid of quarrels. Two Jews and three opinions are better than three Jews with no opinions. But can you find a Jew without opinions? Passionate arguments are better than passionless acceptance. Remember the definition of a Hasid, a true Hasid. A Hasid does what other Jews do, says what other Jews say, prays when other Jews pray, but he does so with passion. If that results in conflict, so what? Quarrels come and go, disputes flare up and die. [00:13:00] Doesn't the ethics of our fathers teach us that certain quarrels are destined to be eternal? I am sure that this is what two or three hundred of you today have learned with Rabbi Lavey Derby. And I will simply try to illustrate his point that quarrels, Jewish quarrels, are still a little bit different from other quarrels, simply because Jews are different from other people.

However, let us not be excessively afraid of Hasidic disputations and disputes, although they are not the most pleasant of sights. They were bitter while they lasted. But they did not last too long. The beautiful part of it, and this will be the conclusion tonight, is that they did not last long. The fight between misnagdim and Hasidim, the opponents of

[00:14:00] Hasidism and the followers of Hasidism, a century earlier, lasted much longer. And the Jewish people survived. We survived all the quarrels. We even survived the quarrels about survival. One of the criticisms leveled by the *misnagdim* at the Hasidim -- you remember -- was that their services were never punctual. They either arrived too early or too late, never in between. Well, we are less critical, and those who come here on time are to be blessed, (laughter) but those who are late will simply be blessed later. (laughter) (audience applause)

[00:15:00] (coughs) Hasidism means simplicity, for Hasidism brought simplicity into a complex Jewish existence. The Besht managed to revive Eastern European Jewry because he reintroduced simple concepts about prayer, about study, and especially about song. I confess that in the dispute between Zanz and Sadigor, at first, my sympathies went rather towards Sadigor, for a simple reason. I belong to Vizhnitz, Vizhnitz belongs to Ruzhin, and Ruzhin is [00:16:00] Sadigor. My grandfather was a Hasid of Vizhnitz, so am I. Once a Hasid, always a Hasid.

Especially when some of you may know that the beauty of a niggun of Vizhnitz, the beauty of a melody, the beauty of the melodies, of the prayers, of the *z'mirot*, of the simple nusach, of the

style of a -- what we call a vokhendike shemona esre(. An Amidah prayer in the middle of the week, it is something so enchanting. When I used to drive a car in New York, when I was a journalist, I would go from home to the UN. I would drive the car and -- singing the Shemoneh Esrei of Vizhnitz, simply because it was so long, I needed to do something, and I knew that it's one and a half Shemoneh Esrei, I'm at my office at the UN. (laughter)

We have visited many courts until now, [00:17:00] we have visited many places since we began our pilgrimage to the sources of Jewish inspiration and fervor. We have been to Kotzk, where Reb Mendel meditated in anger. We have been to Lublin, where the holy Seer was consumed by messianic dreams. We have been to Karlin, to Berditchev, to Lizensk. We have met Reb Meir Premishlaner, and the Seraphim of Strzeliska. We have met Rabbi Zishe of Anipoli, and Reb Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of Chabad. Well, let us go to Zanz and Sadigor and I hope that they don't mind that we visit them together.

Zanz and Sadigor differ in many respects. Each is a world in itself. Their leaders' outlook on Jewish life and survival [00:18:00] is different. Furthermore, Rabbi Chaimel built a dynasty whereas Rabbi Avraham Yaakov inherited one. The father

of the first was a rabbi. That of the second, a rebbe. Rabbi Chaim emphasized study and prayer, whereas Rabbi Avraham Yaakov -- where did he place the emphasis? Neither on study nor on prayer. Now, is it conceivable that Sadigor neglected *ahavat Torah*, the love of study, and *yirat shamayim*, the fear of heaven? Inconceivable. Some years ago, we visited Sadigor, and we sought an audience with its great master, Rabbi Israel of Ruzhin, the king of Hasidism.

Well, who was Rabbi Chaim? [00:19:00] His file in Hasidic chronicles is rich with biographical data. Born in a place called Tarnogród, in the year of Poland's second partition, in 1793, he quickly acquired the reputation of child prodigy. His father, a renowned scholar, had served as rabbi in Przemyśl, also in Poland. The Seer of Lublin's brother, a certain Reb Yossele, who also lived in Tarnogród, excited the young boy's interest in Hasidism, which led to a singular situation. The father who opposed Hasidism gave in to his son's relentless pleas and took him to Lublin to see the Seer. The Seer, the holy Seer, made a profound impression on the visitor, who joined the movement [00:20:00] right there and right then, becoming its youngest member. Until the Seer's death, in 1815, he considered himself his disciple. Then, he belonged to the Seer's disciple, Rabbi Naftali of Ropshits, the jester of Hasidism who was known

for his humor, for his wisdom. And later, to Rabbi Zvi Hirsh of Zidichov.

But so far as pure learning is concerned, he recognized mainly the authority of his father-in-law, Reb Boruch Frankel. Rabbi Chaim was 17 when he married Rachel. Many legends circulate in Hasidic chronicles about his wedding. Apparently, Rachel was not too happy about marrying him. Granted, he was a brilliant scholar, but he had one default, one physical default. He limped [00:21:00] badly. According to one version, Rabbi Chaim asked for her father's permission to speak to her. What he told her, we do not know, but we do know that he convinced her, they married. As for her father, he simply commented, and I quote him: "My future son-in-law does indeed have a crooked foot. Oh, but his mind is straight."

Now, was he born like that? One Hasidic source tells us that his leg was injured by an unnamed tutor while he was still in cheder. And therefore, Rabbi Chaim cursed this tutor for years. Only rumors. Especially since we know later on in his life, whenever Rabbi Chaim cursed, the curses became blessings. But more likely, we believe it must have been a birth defect.

[00:22:00] And Rabbi Chaim suffered from it his entire life.

But it did not stop him from learning, quite the opposite. He

stayed one year in a place called Rudnik, spent some time in the Hungarian town of Kaliv, whose rebbe was famous for his Hungarian songs. They were beautiful songs of Kaliv, I remember them to this day, the "Szól a kakas már," or "Sírnak, rínak a bárányok," all of them are actually Hungarian songs that were metamorphized in mystical melodies and songs.

And we know that after being in Kaliv, Rabbi Chaim of Zanz accepted a position in Zanz. We have before us the text of the contract offered to him, what we call the *ketav ha'rabbanut*. And I quote, "On this Friday, the 7th day in [00:23:00] Shevat, 1828, a full assembly was held with the participation of community leaders, spiritual personalities, and certain wealthy members. It was unanimously agreed to hire the great light and sharp mind, Rabbi Chaim Halberstam, the head of the rabbinical tribunal in Rudnik, as a true and just guide for our community, so that he may decide what is and is not allowed to be preached in the synagogue on Shabbat, and establish regular Torah lessons, especially for young students. He will deliver his own sermons in the principal shul. For his subsistence, in great dignity, he will receive four *rheinish* a week, in addition to other income befitting a rabbi." Close quotes.

Possibly because of the [00:24:00] low salary, or for other reasons, Rabbi Chaim hesitated. He accepted the position only two years later, in 1830. But he kept it until he died in 1876. Was he happy in Zanz? We know that he was not happy in his family life -- not that he had troubles in his family, he had tragedies in his family. He became a widower several times and remarried each time. He had, according to chronicles, seven sons and seven daughters. Some died at a younger age. Two sons lived long enough to be killed by the Germans during the Holocaust. When, at the age of 70, he expressed his decision to marry again, for the fourth [00:25:00] time, his son, Rabbi Baruch, tried to dissuade him. "Father," he said. "The Rebbe, Rabbi Zvi Hirsh of Zidichov, became a widower, he refused to remarry, explaining, 'I am married already, to the Torah.'" Rabbi Chaim understood the hint, and replied with tongue in cheek. "If so," he said, "the Torah is already married." (laughter)

From this anecdote, we learn several things. First, that he had been always, and remained, definitely stubborn. That he probably enjoyed married life. And that most certainly, he had a sense of humor. Anyway, thanks to him, Zanz became [00:26:00] a new center of Hasidic communal study and prayer, of Hasidic communal life. His disciple, Reb Yossele Neushtadt was asked,

and I quote, "You have been to Lublin -- why are you going now to Zanz? What can you possibly see in Zanz that you have not seen in Lublin?" And he answered, "Zanz was in Lublin, but Zanz is more than Lublin."

Rabbi Chaim taught Talmud using the enlightened Lithuanian methods, but practiced Hasidism. Hasidic masters said of him that he actually was a combination of both a misnagid and a Hasid. They said of him that he was actually a misnagid like the Gaon of Vilna, and a Hasid like Reb Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the Baal HaTanya. [00:27:00] Even though Rabbi Chaim involved himself totally in his studies, he still ran once or several times a day to the mikveh, like a Hasidic rebbe used to do and had to do to purify himself. Scholars from all over Poland and Russia solicited his views in matters of Halacha, of responsa. But at the same time, Hasidic rebbes and followers came to join him in prayer.

It was said that Rabbi Akiva's soul resided in his soul, and Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's soul, too. And that sometimes he would run from one corner of the room to the other, shouting, weeping, attaining ecstasy with those sacred words in which the higher and lower spheres are united. A disciple asked him respectfully in the third person, in the Hasidic tradition -- one never asks

the rebbe in the second [00:28:00] person, always the third person. "What is the rebbe doing before davening?" And he answered in Yiddish, "faren davenen, daven ich" ",," before davening, I daven." At another time, he said, "I am davening to be worthy of davening." The Rabbi of Radomsk, at times, left his own followers and went to spend Shavuot, the holy day of Kabbalah Torah, when we receive the law, with the old master of Zanz. When asked for a reason, he said, and I quote him, "Only in Zanz do I feel what our ancestors felt when they stood at Sinai, ready to receive the law."

When Rebbe Chaim was praying, he forgot his own body. His wife, the rebbetsin, pleaded with his old master, Rabbi Naftali of Ropshits, and I quote her, "Why do you allow him to hit his wounded leg during services? [00:29:00] Tell him, at least, to hit the healthy one." (laughs) And Rabbi Naftali of Ropshits answered, "Do you really think that when he worships, he knows the difference?" Rabbi Chaim was capable of such concentration that when physicians performed surgery on his leg, he refused anesthesia. For he could concentrate so much on his prayer, on his study, that he wouldn't feel his body. All his thoughts were with God, in God, for God. Already as a child, he would go around whispering to himself, "There is no one but you. No one but you." And he kept on whispering the same sentence over and

over again, even during his old age. He kept on repeating until his last day. "There is no one in the world but you, oh God."
[00:30:00] And he would also whisper, "*Ikh viln tsu farbrenen*, I want to burn," he said. "I want to die on Kiddush Hashem. I want to die for the sanctification of God's name and for the sake of his people." In his prayers, he would enumerate the four ways of dying. And he would say, "For your sake, I accept all four forms of death, always for your sake, and for the sake of thy people."

Constantly on the go, he slept two, three hours a day. When questioned about this, he would refer to Napoleon, who slept little because he didn't want to quote, "sleep away an empire."
"And I," said Rabbi Chaim, "I refuse to sleep away Torah."

Actually, he said, "It's easy. Some people eat fast. Other people learn fast. [00:31:00] Other people still get wealthy fast. I sleep fast." (laughter) But he prayed slowly.

Concentrating on every word, on every syllable, he was so slow that at times, the cantor, the Ba'al Tefillah, would not wait for him but continue the services. Concentration the way he could was an all-encompassing occupation to Rabbi Chaim of Zanz. On one occasion during Rosh Hashanah services, a huge portion of the ceiling dropped in the synagogue. The worshippers fled in panic. Rabbi Chaim alone remained inside the house of prayer,

oblivious to the danger. On another occasion, the table at which he was studying caught fire, and he did not notice it. He went on studying.

As he clung to God, he forgot his own person. [00:32:00] Listen to his statement, and I quote him, "Whoever so much as blinks an eyelid without *kavanah*, without concentration on its meaning, is not human." Consequently, it is said that whenever the Yetev Lev, Rabbi Yekutiel Yehuda Teitelbaum of Sighet, my town, would return from Zanz, he would refrain from talking for 30 days. Rabbi Chaim was also known for his love of singing, and therefore I have a weakness for Rabbi Chaim Zanzner too. From his teacher, the Ropshitzer, he had learned the importance of singing. A Shabbat in Zanz meant an endless song of joy and peace in honor of Shabbat. Composers had a special place at the court of Zanz. Ba'ale Tefillah and [chorus?] would provide highlights during services and festive meals. [00:33:00] Rabbi Chaim loved the Kaliver Rebbe because of his beautiful melodies. Of the Kaliver Rebbe, Rabbi Chaim said, and I quote him, "He is humbler than grass, and quieter than water."

But what was most singular about Zanz was the Rebbe's total commitment to the mitzvah, to the commandment of tzedakah, charity. Whatever he received, he gave away. As we shall see

later, his house was forever crowded with beggars, wanderers, and assorted peoples in need of financial support. No one was ever sent away empty-handed. He deprived his own household in order to help strangers. We are told that one night, a widow came to plead for some charity, so he removed his coat, and he said, "Go and sell it." [00:34:00] When his own money ran out, he took loans from others, and there came a time when people refused to lend him money. Once during the Shavuot holiday, he summoned three of his rich followers. One of them was Rabbi Kalman Kahana from Sighet, and he told them, and I quote him: "When I was young, I used to deliver long sermons. Today, I will give you a short one. I need money." (laughter) "I need money for my poor people. If you do not pledge it to me as soon as the holiday is over, I shall not say kiddush today." Well, with such blackmail, what could they do? A half hour later, the three rich Hasidim assured the Rebbe that he would get what he wanted for his poor people. "I love the poor," he would say. "Do you know why? [00:35:00] I love them because nobody else does, but I also love them because God loves them."

His son asked him for financial assistance to marry off his daughters, and Rabbi Chaim refused. Minutes later, he offered support to a poor man who had come to him with a similar request. And the son wondered, "Father," he said, "Why him and

not me?" And Rabbi Chaim answered, "You are my son. Others will help you. Who will help him?" A man came to see him weeping. His daughter was walking around barefoot. So the Rebbe said to his servant, give him money to buy her shoes. Minutes later, his daughter came into his study crying. She needed shoes, too. She too was barefoot. And the Rebbe answered, "I cannot help you." So his servant wondered aloud, [00:36:00] he said, "Rabbi, why did the Rebbe help the other girl and not his own daughter?" And Rabbi Chaim answered, "Because that girl, I know who she is. I know her father. She is the daughter of a scholar." So, the servant remarked, quietly, "Some people say that this girl, too, is a daughter of a scholar." "Alright," said the Rebbe. "You won. Give her what she needs to buy a pair of shoes."

Hasidic chronicles say that he could have been a rich man. He would receive from his followers a hundred thousand guildens per year, through the mail. And he did not keep a penny.

Naturally, as a result, he was admired and loved by the poor.

He was their best friend. Their protector. Their spokesman.

[00:37:00] Their hope. One day, he saw a woman crying. "Why do you cry?" he said. And she said, "I am a merchant. I sell apples. That's my livelihood. But today I am miserable.

People refuse to buy my apples. They say that my apples are not

good." "Come," said Rabbi Chaim. "I will help you." He left his study, he went with her to the marketplace, took a position behind her barrel, and began yelling, "Who wants to buy good apples, beautiful apples, splendid apples?" Well, who would refuse the Rebbe? Everybody came. And the woman never had so many customers in her entire life. But then, we are back at our first question. If the man was so charitable, so compassionate, so kind, why did he allow so much anger [00:38:00] to penetrate his movement? Why did he provoke so many other Jews, and Hasidim to boot? If Zanz was so generous, why did Zanz persecute Sadigor? Well, let us leave Zanz for a brief moment, and let us proceed to the illuminated palace at Sadigor.

As soon as you are there, you recognize that Sadigor is different. Sadigor is the place where the Maggid's grandson, the celebrated Ruzhiner, established his kingdom, and what a kingdom. The Rebbe behaves like a king, dresses like a king. His house of study is larger than any other, as is his domain. He readily speaks of his royal descent, of his ancestor, [00:39:00] King David. There are many legends about his wealth, probably exaggerated, but the fact that the legends exist prove that the Rebbe had something special, and all of Sadigor was something special. It is said that the Rebbe eats only out of golden plates. That he wears only golden sandals. How a man

can walk on golden sandals, I don't know. It is said that his luxurious carriage is drawn by six white horses, no less, and that an entourage of a hundred servants, cooks, musicians, minstrels, follow him in his travels everywhere.

Oh yes, the rumors are extravagant, and strangely enough, no one is offended. Again, remember the strangeness of the situation. The Hasidic movement is a movement which is poor, destined for the poor, [00:40:00] and actually, it almost extols poverty. Because it came to help the poor overcome their poverty, not with money, which is easy, but with inner strength, with solidarity, with friendship, with spiritual values, with the possibility offered to anyone and everyone, to overcome all the misery simply by being what a person should be. And yet, Ruzhin, which was the antithesis of poverty, was accepted by the Hasidic movement. Most masters worked with the poor. Most masters were themselves poor. And yet, even they, these very masters, viewed the Ruzhiner as a prince of whose power and glory they were proud. None of them considered Hasidic luxury in Ruzhin or Sadigor a contradiction in terms. [00:41:00] No one considered Ruzhin and Sadigor a Hasidic scandal.

The Rabbi of Ruzhin was above reproach, beyond criticism. The greatest of the great would come to visit him and leave deeply

impressed. Was it because the Ruzhiner represented the living link with the architect of the movement, the Maggid? Or because he had endured jail and persecution? Or because he was unanimously loved and respected, so even the masters accepted that respect? Who followed whom? Rabbi Chaim of Zanz himself came to Sadigor and was won over by Rabbi Yisrael's sense of grandeur and magnificence. But asked why he went to Sadigor, Rabbi Chaim answered, and I quote him, "Why was the temple built on Mount Moriah, [00:42:00] and not on Mount Sinai? Because a place where a Jew is willing to sacrifice himself for the sake of heaven is more important to the Almighty than a place where the law was given, and I am ready to testify to the Ruzhiner's willingness and readiness to sacrifice himself for the sake of heaven at every minute of his life." End quote.

So, as long as the Ruzhiner was alive, Sadigor enjoyed a spotless reputation everywhere in the Hasidic world, and in Zanz, too. He was quoted at every court. His comments were sharp, brilliant, penetrating examples. "How is one to distinguish the silent sage from the silent fool?" he asked. "The sage doesn't mind being silent." And this one. He said, "Look around you. Works of art [00:43:00] are cherished and honored, while man, God's masterpiece, lies in the dust." And this prediction, which is a frightening prediction. He said, "A

day will come when all nations will begin hating Jews. They will hate them so much, with such passion and violence, that the Jews will have no choice but to go to the land of their ancestors. And then, woe unto us, and woe unto them, for it will be the beginning of redemption." And this one, and I quote again. "A day will come when man will stop hating others and will begin hating himself. A day will come when all things will lose their coherence, when there will be no relation between man and his face. Between desire and its object. Between people and [00:44:00] their appearance. A day will come," he said, "when there will be no connection between question and answer, between parables and the meaning of the parables."

Oh yes, Rabbi Yisrael Ruzhiner was a great master. And Sadigor, during his reign, was a unique center of attraction in the Hasidic universe. After his death, things changed. At least as far as Zanz was concerned, Sadigor no longer represented sublimation in Hasidic life, but came to represent degradation instead. A seven-year feud began in 1869, and it ended only with the passing Rabbi Chaim of Zanz. What motivated it? The story goes that Rabbi Chaim came to visit the Ruzhiner's youngest son, Rabbi Mordechai Feivish, who for some unexplained [00:45:00] reason, did not rise to welcome him and did not even offer his hand to greet him. The son of Rabbi Chaim, Reb

Boruch, was bitter about it, we are told. And he said, "Father, even if you were not the great scholar that you are, shouldn't he, the young man, have shown more respect for your white beard and old years?"

That is the beginning, or that is supposed to have been the beginning, of the feud. Others lay the blame on more principled questions. Nothing personal, theories, ideas, ways of life, lifestyles, you would say today. Others blamed Sadigor's modern ways, ways that were considered anathema in Zanz. That Rabbi Chaim opposed modernism is known. Conservative, [00:46:00] even ultra-conservative in his views, Rabbi Chaim radically and vehemently rejected anything that evoked the winds of emancipation, enlightenment, and reform that were blowing across Europe at the time. Women were forbidden to wear hairpieces and hats in Zanz, only kerchiefs were allowed. Children were forbidden to study secular languages and sciences. Jews, according to Zanz, were duty-bound to follow in the footsteps of their fathers and forefathers, and nothing else. Times had changed. So what? Too bad for the times. Jews must not change. Jews must remain faithful to their tradition, and not succumb to the temptations, to the seductions of their surroundings.

Sadigor was, or at least seemed, different. Sadigor did not [00:47:00] reject modernism. As befitted the members of a royal family, the Rebbe's children dressed elegantly. Unlike other Hasidic masters, the Rebbe of Sadigor did not daven together with his followers. He worshipped in an adjacent room. Only on special occasions would he mingle with the crowd. One of the Rebbe's brothers, Reb Berenyu of Leova, to whom we shall return later, wore gloves when greeting his Hasidim. Wild rumors began spreading about Sadigor, and Hasidism is great about? About wild rumors. Rumors that the Rebbe denigrated study, which was silly. Rumors that his daughters engaged in indecent exposure by dressing according to the latest fashion, or by practicing horseback [00:48:00] riding. And lo and behold, rumors that they were smoking cigarettes in public. Worst, there were rumors that they were seen in the theater.

Fact or fiction, genuine concern or gossip, these rumors lit a fire that eventually split the Hasidic movement in Galicia and shook the Jewish world from Russia all the way to Palestine. Now, to understand the situation better, for a very brief moment, we must see what Hasidism looked like then in the world. It seems to reflect the state of the world at the time. All over, political upheavals, social revolutions, and military adventures that had marked the 19th century. Kingdoms were

rising and falling. Napoleon's [00:49:00] astonishing conquests were only matched by his no less astonishing defeats. In philosophy, metaphysical quest had given way to economical supremacy. In literature, the Romanticists were taking over from the Classicists. Emancipation was the key word among intellectuals, both non-Jewish and Jewish. Enlightenment had become both goal and way of life. Strangely enough, the Hasidic world was, for a while, quiet. Gone were the quarrels between Lublin and Leżajsk. Gone were the disputes between Lublin and Pshiskhe. Gone were the bitter fights of a century earlier between Hasidim and their opponents, gone was the visionary of Kotzk. His celebrated outbursts against complacency, self-righteousness, and serenity no longer aroused fear and trembling in the thousands of young Hasidim whose thirst for knowledge and truth, [00:50:00] whose total opposition to compromise gave the entire movement new intensity and new meaning.

Now in the second half of the century, there were still Hasidic masters, some of them endowed with greatness. But there were too many centers, too many leaders. Too many opportunities for clashes and conflicts. When the Ruzhiner died, he left six sons and three daughters. The oldest, Reb Shalom Yosef, also died soon after. Of the surviving five, four established courts in Galicia, Moldavia, and Bukovina, creating new dynasties. One,

Rabbi Avraham Yaakov, stayed in Sadigor. Rabbi Dovid Moshe went to Potok, and then to Chortkiv. Reb Berenyu became Rebbe of Leova, in Moldavia. [00:51:00] Reb Nochum settled in Ștefănești, in Romania. And Rabbi Mordechai Feivish in Husiatyn.

But the wall between Zanz and Sadigor did not start in any of those towns. It erupted in Rzeszów, where in 1869, followers of Zanz and of Sadigor began fighting each other so seriously that they eventually had two different houses of study and prayer. The Hasidim of Zanz sent a complaint to their master, urging him to speak up against their opponents. The letter, signed by two rabbis and several other prominent members of the community, was answered by Rabbi Chaim in person. But what were the accusations? The same ones that a century earlier, the opponents of the Hasidim leveled against the Hasidim.

[00:52:00] That they constituted a sect apart. That they spent too much time drinking and rejoicing. That they showed disrespect towards learned men. And that they were doing, quote, "hair-raising," unquote, things during nights of festivities.

The Zanz Hasidim, therefore, requested their Rebbe's permission to take measures against the Sadigor followers,

including denunciation to local authorities, which was rare. Jews rarely did that. Jews would always accept infighting, but they rarely denounced other Jews to the non-Jewish authorities. At the beginning, there were people at Sadigor who urged the Rebbe to answer the attacks. One version has it that the Rebbe of Husiatyn himself [00:53:00] advocated counteroffensives. However, the Rebbe of Sadigor and his brother, the Rebbe of Chortkiv, refused to go along, and I quote them, and it's a beautiful saying. They said, "Yelling wears one out. Silence does not."

The Zanzler camp was not monolithic, either. Of course, the majority followed the Rebbe, and even tried to outdo him. At least one source tells us that the Rebbe's eldest son, Reb Yechezkel of Shinove himself, was not happy with the situation. He disagreed with the smear tactics so many of his father's followers used against another Rebbe, in whose greatness as Rebbe, as Tzadik, he believed. A pro-Sadigor text affirms that as a result of the son's disagreement with the general Zanz line, [00:54:00] Rabbi Yechezkel stayed away or was pushed away from his father for several years. The war could not remain limited to Rzeszów. It quickly spread through Galicia and beyond. And it flared up with heightened force when a new

scandal -- the so-called Reb Berenyu affair -- added fuel to the fire. Now, listen and judge for yourself.

Reb Berenyu, the Ruzhiner's fourth son, was according to many sources, the most erudite, refined, and intellectually curious of the brothers. At the age of 14, he married Sheindel, the daughter of Rabbi Motl of Chernobyl. But theirs was not a happy married life. Perhaps [00:55:00] as a result of this, Reb Berenyu devoted more time and more passion to study. Some adversaries of Sadigor maintained that his study was not only limited to Jewish sacred sources, but also encompassed secular sources. Some sources, some texts say that he befriended Jewish and Christian freethinkers, and even discussed philosophy and science with an engineer who had left Judaism and converted to Christianity.

1869 was a sad year for Reb Berenyu. Of the four brothers, he loved Reb Nochum of Ștefănești, who died. And Reb Berenyu, at 52, fell into a deep depression. Had he spent too much time with proselytizing elements [00:56:00] in his town? Was he really in danger of falling prey to missionaries, the Ruzhiner's son? The fact is, that his wife, Sheindel, and his brothers, decided to take action. Drastic action. A physician was called

and the physician put Reb Berenyu to sleep, and when the young Rebbe awoke, he found himself in his brother's house in Sadigor.

Somehow, the story of the kidnapping reached Haskalah circles, the emancipated intellectuals who alerted the authorities. The affair escalated when the police came to the court of Sadigor, and freed the prisoner. He was transferred to Chernovitz, where he stayed with the deputy leader of the community, a certain doctor Yehuda Leib Reitman, [00:57:00] and you can imagine the scandal. The Ruzhiner's son among the enlightened, among the emancipated, among the freethinkers. Hasidic communities everywhere, what could they do? They did the only thing that they could do, they gathered to pray for his return to sanity. In Berditchev, a day of fasting was proclaimed.

But in Zanz, people were jubilated. Reb Berenyu's behavior corroborated their charges, especially since the court of Sadigor officially refused to turn against Reb Berenyu. Worse was yet to come. Soon after Reb Berenyu arrived in Chernovitz, the maskilim, the emancipated Jews in Kishinev, published a letter thanking and praising him for his move, and I quote the letter. "Our heart is glad that you tore the rabbinic mask [00:58:00] off your face, which now radiates wisdom and knowledge. You have cast away the throne of the rebbe and

removed the Hasidic crown from your head. You have said, Let truth reign over us. We thank you for coming to help your brothers, who are sinking in mud and dirt. We thank you for fighting fanaticism." The reaction in Hasidic circles -- (laughs) pain, embarrassment, and shame. Their only explanation? Yes, Reb Berenyu must have lost his mind.

To counteract this accusation, the Chernovitz maskilim published an open letter, allegedly signed by Reb Berenyu himself, in which he explained what had happened to him, and I quote that letter. "In my heart, I kept my faith in God, and will always keep it alive. I remain faithful to the Torah and to the sages of Israel, [00:59:00] who go forward and not backward. I have not ceased fearing God, but I have separated myself from the crowd of silly people who observe full stupidities and who turn darkness into light and light into darkness." This letter, advocating progress at the cost of tradition, provoked anger in all Orthodox circles. Protests were heard and organized, with Zanz leading the way. The attacks were directed not only against Reb Berenyu, but against Sadigor as such. And once again, Sadigor chose not to respond. The Rebbe kept his dignity, wrapping himself in silence. He and his entire family, though hurt, disregarded the insults, [01:00:00] and they chose to stay above the tempest.

As for the chief protagonist, Reb Berenyu, he did not remain with his emancipated friends very long. Fourteen days after publishing his letter, he returned to his family, published a new letter, retracting his earlier views, and entered an existence of total seclusion and meditation. Followers of Sadigor celebrated the event with their customary exuberance, meaning drinking, l'chaim, hoping that now the chapter had been closed for good.

I like the image of Reb Berenyu. He is the subject for a great novel. For his prestige grew immeasurably after his adventure, among his own followers. All of a sudden, [01:01:00] they besieged his door, waiting to be admitted to receive his blessing. But he refused to be Rebbe. Maybe that is why he would be a subject of a great novel. The Rebbe did not want to be Rebbe. He sought solitude, and after a while, he found it. His wife left him and returned to her family in Chernobyl, and he stayed with his brother in Sadigor, isolated in his room, studying day and night, night and day, searching for answers to eternal questions, realizing perhaps that the search itself contained an element of eternity. And strangely enough, he passed away five months before Rabbi Chaim of Zanz. But let us not go too [01:02:00] far, and not get ahead of ourselves.

Let's see what was happening in Zanz, while Sadigor was celebrating Rabbi Berenyu's return. In his letter to his followers in Rzeszów, Rabbi Chaim had openly and clearly stated, and I quote him, that "the wicked sect ought to be expelled and chased away from your community with the help of the laws of the land." Meaning, the police. He classified Reb Berenyu as, quote, "convert," unquote, and quote, "atheist," unquote. Therefore, in the words of Rabbi Chaim Zanz, I quote, "The scribes of Sadigor are renegades. Their mezuzot and tefillin are impure. Their teachers ought not be allowed to teach Jewish children. Their ritual slaughterers are unworthy." And Rabbi Chaim continued, and I quote again: "Separate [01:03:00] yourselves from the tents of the wicked. Do not talk to them. Humiliate them in public. Uncover their shame. And if, like the mute, they come silently into our house of study and prayer, stay as far away from them as possible," unquote.

Why such harshness? Rabbi Chaim explains. Quote, "They," meaning the Hasidim of Sadigor, "are to be compared to the Sabbateans and the other false prophets. It is absolutely essential not to feel pity for them," unquote. Were it not for the Austro-Hungarian law in effect forbidding excommunication, Zanz surely would have excommunicated Sadigor and all its

members. Still, official excommunication or not, Rabbi Chaim's orders had almost [01:04:00] the weight of excommunication. A collective hysteria swept through the Hasidic communities in Europe. Families were divided. Fathers rejected sons. Husbands left their wives. Parents disowned their children. Friendships were broken. Partnerships betrayed. There were homes where parents mourned, sat shiva, for their children, if they belonged to the opposing camp. One (sighs) doesn't understand. I do not. Oh, I believe in Hasidic fervor. But fervor in hatred?

On the other hand, one could easily get the impression, then, that Zanz and Sadigor would never unite again. That they would never again recognize [01:05:00] each other as being all sons and daughters of the Jewish people. But as I told you earlier, their fight lasted seven years. Seven long, endless, pitiless years. With Rabbi Chaim always on the offensive, while the rebbes of Sadigor manifested restraint. As for the other Hasidic rebbes and non-Hasidic scholars, they preferred to stay on the sidelines, at least most of the time. The rare exception was Rabbi Aharon of Chernobyl, who wrote to Rabbi Chaim of Zanz a very strong and severe letter, and I quote him. "I am 93 years old," wrote Rabbi Aharon of Chernobyl. "I am feared both in heaven and below. Were it not for your learning, I would do

things to you," and he went on. Other masters said nothing.

[01:06:00] Evidently, Rabbi Chaim was shielded by his scholarship and piety. After all, he was and remains the Gadol Hador, the greatest Halachic authority of his generation. Even the Sadigor Hasidim themselves refrained from attacking him. They attacked his followers, but never him.

That was the situation in Europe. In Palestine, things were different. In Palestine, (laughs) it's always different. In Palestine, tempers ran high, very high. The Sadigor Hasidim in Jerusalem, Tsfat, Safed, and Tiberius, were less tolerant and surely less passive than their fellow disciples in Galicia. Upon getting the news of the persecutions Sadigor Hasidim were subjected in Poland, they decided to respond in kind. Sadigor Hasidim were beaten [01:07:00] up in Galicia? Zanzler Hasidim would be beaten up in Palestine. Jewish blood was shed in Poland? Jewish blood would be shed in the Holy Land, too. Sadigor followers were discriminated against in Poland? Only one thing to do; Zanz would be excommunicated in Palestine.

And an official excommunication ceremony took place in the old city of David, near the Kotel Hamaaravi, near the Western Wall. A few days later, similar ceremonies were held in Tiberius and Safed. The synagogues were draped in black. Black candles were

lit. The shofar was blown. Ancient maledictions, the *Tokhekhah* were invoked against the Rabbi of Zanz himself, whom the participants formally excommunicated from the household of Israel. These [01:08:00] events took place two weeks after Passover, 1869. And when the news reached Europe, it stunned its Jewish communities. This time, even neutral rabbis felt the need to intervene and defend the honor of Rabbi Chaim Zanz. This time, the Palestinian Hasidim had gone too far. One does not excommunicate a man such as Rabbi Chaim.

So four weeks later, during the holy day of Shavuot, hundreds of Hasidic leaders and their disciples numbering two thousand gathered at the Zanz synagogue, where the secretary of the rabbinic tribunal read the text of excommunication against all their fellow Hasidim, who in Poland, had betrayed the Hasidic idea and ideal with their words and deeds. It wasn't legal, officially, from the Polish viewpoint or in [01:09:00] Austro-Hungary. It didn't matter, they went ahead nevertheless. And thus, the war between Zanz and Sadigor acquired new impetus. Now the two camps were enemies for life and death. What they had in common was only one thing: their hatred for one another. The violence subsided only when Zanz lost its leader in 1876. Reb Berenyu, as we said, had died five months earlier. But afterwards, it changed. And afterwards, what happened in

Hasidic life is something that we can take pride in. The hatred turned into mere animosity. The animosity into mild antagonism. The antagonism into criticism. The criticism [01:10:00] into difference. And finally, today, Zanz and Sadigor have made peace. It even happens that their children marry one another.

At this point, let us return to Rabbi Chaim. I don't want to leave him on an angry note. I like him too much, nevertheless. What about his intolerance? What about his fanaticism? They surprise me. They surprise me for, as I already hinted at, he also possessed a marvelous sense of humor, which often blunts the edge of fanaticism. People who know how to laugh sometimes also laugh at themselves. People who can laugh at themselves tend to be tolerant toward their fellow man. A story. One day, Rabbi Chaim could not control his cough. So, [01:11:00] his son, Reb Boruch, offered him a cup of tea. And the father said, "Boruch, don't you see I am studying? My mind roams the higher spheres of *atzilut*, the spheres of nobility, and I can tell you, my son, that in the sphere of nobility, one does not drink tea." And the son said, "May I humbly draw your attention father to another simple fact: that in the world of *atzilut*, of nobility, one doesn't cough, either." And so, Rabbi Chaim accepted the tea.

Another story. Once on Yom Kippur afternoon, a wealthy man in Zanz, known for his avarice, could not take the fast. He fainted. Rabbi Chaim was asked what to do. And he said, "Give him water. But tell him that for each time he swallows water, [01:12:00] he will have to give charity tomorrow." And the man barely touched the water. (laughter) He once sat with Reb Hersh of Dinov and talked about Hasidim and Torah. In honor of his respected guest, he asked for drinks to be served. And the Rebbe of Dinov said, "Reb Chaim, hasn't the doctor forbidden you to drink?" "Yes," answered Rebbe Chaim. "But the doctor is asleep." (laughter)

The older he grew, the more stories he told. Marvelous stories. Beautiful stories, always with moral dimensions, philosophical reverberations. Listen. He said, "A man was lost in the forest. After many days, he encountered another man. He ran towards him, and shouted with joy, 'Thank God you are here. Now you will show me the way out.'" [01:13:00] "I am sorry," answered the second man. "I too am lost. All I can tell you is, come with me. I will show you where not to go." And after a long silence, Rabbi Chaim commented, "Let us find a new way together, for the road we have taken heretofore leads nowhere."

Another of his parables. A poor woman was desperate. She was a widow with many small children. They were hungry, and she had no one to turn to. One morning, she found an egg. "Children," she yelled. "We are saved. Stop worrying, look, see this egg. We shall not cook it. Instead, I will ask a neighbor to allow me to use one of her chickens for incubation purposes. And so, my egg will become a chicken. But remember, don't eat the chicken. Instead, we must wait until the chicken will lay more eggs. They in turn will become chickens, [01:14:00] who will lay still more eggs. Don't eat the chicken. Don't eat the eggs. We shall sell the chicken and use the money for the purchase of a cow. And we are going to have milk. Don't drink the milk. We will sell the milk and buy more cows. Then, we shall sell a few cows and buy a piece of land. And then, we are going to be so rich, and not one of us will ever be hungry." As she spoke, the egg fell from her hand and broke. And Rabbi Chaim said, "You see, her plans were good. What she forgot was that hunger must be dealt in the present."

A third story. In a faraway kingdom, a prince sinned against his father, the king who exiled him from the palace. As long as the prince was near his city, people treated him well, for they knew who he was. But as he wandered farther away, people mistook him [01:15:00] for a beggar, and treated him

accordingly. Since he had to work for his living, he eventually became a shepherd, and he forgot that once upon a time, he had been a prince. He ate and drank and sang like all the other shepherds, and he was happy, except for the fact that all the other shepherds had their own huts, and he had none. Just then, he heard that the king had arrived in the region. Thousands of peasants and workers and shepherds flocked into the city to see the king, to greet the king, to praise the king, and to assure him of their loyalty. The king, then, saw fit to reward them, and they all filed by the throne that had been erected for him, asking for favors. When the prince's turn came, he simply asked for money to build himself a hut. And Rabbi Chaim concluded, "Woe unto us. Woe unto us when we forget where we come from and who we are. [01:16:00] We are princes. We are all princes. And we could ask for redemption."

But what about the father? What about the king? How can he bear to see his children go hungry? Rabbi Chaim of Zanz never allowed himself to ask such questions. His faith in the Almighty God and in his compassion was absolute and without fail. A man once complained to him, "Rabbi," he said, "I am a father. My children are hungry." And the Rebbe said, "You are not the only father. God is our father, and he knows that we are hungry." Did he believe in miracles? He said, "If I really

try, I could prevail in heaven." But he said, "One must be clever about it." Occasionally, he would say, and I quote him, "I never said [01:17:00] that those stories about miracles are true. All I said was that it important to tell those stories."

Towards the end of his life, he seemed more withdrawn. He often referred to himself with a kind of self-deprecating humor.

"When I was young," he said, "I decided to improve the world. But then I discovered that the world is so big, so vast. I better begin somewhere. Where? I decided to improve the country I live in. But then I realized, the country is so huge, so huge. So, I decided to improve the city I dwell in. But the city itself is so large, so large. Well, I decided to improve the street I live on. But then the house I live in, then the members of my community, then the members of my family, but then I decided -- why not better improve myself?" And Rabbi Chaim sighed. [01:18:00] He said, "When will I begin? When will I begin to improve myself?"

Did the quarrel with Sadigor have a lasting effect on him? Granted, he had won the battle. But what about the scars? Granted, most rabbis and leaders had taken his side against the radicals of Sadigor in Palestine. But had the victory improved the image and the faith of the Hasidic movement? Now, we know

the Talmudic debates rarely degenerated into personal disputes. We saw it last week, Rav and Shmuel had respected one another and had felt a profound affection for one another. The same was true of all the masters, who illuminated the Talmudic universe, either in Palestine or in Babylonia. "*Talmidei chakhamim marbim shalom ba-olam.*", we are told. Learned men increase peace, or at least the chances for peace in the world.

[01:19:00] Ideological opponents found a way to transcend themselves and lift their discussion to higher levels. Reb Yochanan, Reish Lakish, Abbaye v'Rava the Shammai and Hillel. All could serve as examples of tolerance. What made Zanz and Sadigor different? How could they remember their Talmudic studies as they did and not be consistent with their ethical and social implications and duties, of fostering understanding among people?

Having spent months and months researching material for tonight's encounter with Zanz and Sadigor, I still fail to completely understand the deep motivation for the dispute. More precisely, I fail to comprehend its violence. What was it about Sadigor [01:20:00] that infuriated Rabbi Chaim to such a degree? The importance accorded to wealth; the exhibitionist attitudes of certain dignitaries. I don't know. But as we said earlier, the dispute itself is shocking and painful. But let us also

remember that it ended quickly, and that is amazing. And what is amazing, and rewarding, is that it left no lasting bitterness in either camp. Obviously, great scholars and rebbes of the time intervened, and saw to it that the episode be concluded without blaming or shaming either side. And they succeeded.

Today, one can tell the painful story of that quarrel without risking the fury of Zanz or Sadigor. Zanz [01:21:00] loved the poor. Did that mean that Sadigor did not? There are documents providing evidence that in Sadigor too, like in Zanz, the poor were helped and looked after by the Rebbe's court. In fact, by the rebbetsin herself. The difference between Zanz and Sadigor? In Zanz, everything was public. Whereas in Sadigor, everything was discrete. Didn't Rabbi Chaim know that? Didn't he know that charity, tzedakah, is fundamental to Hasidism, for it is fundamental to Judaism? Why then was he so angry? Because of the craving for luxury he thought he detected in Sadigor's rabbinic homes? Did he fear that they might be imitated by the ordinary Hasidim as well? It hardly seems a good enough reason to wage such a war with such painful consequences.

At the end of our exploration, more than a hundred years later, I confess, [01:22:00] that I like both masters. Although I am closer to Sadigor's silence than to the Zanz's thunder, I like

both. Both reflect moods and passions of our people. Both find their place in history, and why not say it -- they find their place in our contemporary history. Open any newspaper, and you will find proof: fanaticism, violence, deplorable polarization are regrettably to be found in the entire world, with the fundamentalism on the rise. And they can even be found here, in our Jewish community, and in Israel, and everywhere else. A few months ago, we were all shocked when we read about the burning of the bus stations. And when we read about the counter-attacks, [01:23:00] the shameful burning of synagogues. Never before has Israel faced such a threat from within, not from without. Religious wars can be more dangerous, more destructive than others. May we hope that the situation will improve soon, that the idea of pluralism would prevail. May we hope that it will not last seven years, or even seven months. Every day it lasts is one day too long.

I prefer to remember Zanz, even Zanz, not as a center of warfare, but first of all, as a center of learning, a center that generates a passion for study and learning. And I even prefer to remember it as a center of *ahavat Yisrael*, in its own way, a source of purity, of puritanism. [01:24:00] I prefer to remember it as a *heichal haNefesh*, a place where words turn into

melodies. A place where friendship inspires so much song in so many hearts. Listen.

Hasidic chronicles tell us that the famous author, Kol Aryeh, used to spend Shavuot in Zanz. One day, on the eve of the holiday, he went to the house of study. And since it was too early for services, he opened a masekhet, a Talmudic treatise, and began studying. An hour later, he was joined by a wealthy Hasid, a certain Rebbe Yosef Leib Kahana from my town, from Sighet, who looked at him and looked and looked. And all of a sudden, this wealthy man began to dance and sing in ecstasy. "What's the matter with you?" asked the Kol Aryeh, surprised. "Why such rejoicing?" [01:25:00] And Reb Yosef Leib Kahana answered, "As I was looking at you, I said to myself, had God almighty not given us his Torah, his law, where would we be today, you and I? You would be holding some position of honor in some important community, and I, a simple peasant who wouldn't even know what he was missing, what would I be? Where would I be? So, I who now see the Torah and see someone studying Torah, how can I not rejoice?"

At that point, his friend was so moved that he closed the Talmud and also began dancing. By that time, services were about to begin. Hundreds of worshippers appeared in the synagogue. As

they saw the two friends dancing, they joined them without asking why, not needing to know why. And then Rabbi Chaim Zanzler appeared. And without a word, he entered the circle [01:26:00] and danced with the others. And when Rabbi Chaim of Zanz danced, the gates of heaven opened, so that all prayers were received. All favors granted, and all perils vanished. And this is how I would like to remember Rabbi Chaim Zanzler. Dancing. For at the same time, the Hasidim and their Rebbe on Shavuot danced in Sadigor, too. After all, once upon a time, before the quarrels and before the disputes, they all stood at Sinai together to receive the same law together. They? They alone? All of us. So why not sing? Why not sing of our faith in both Zanz and Sadigor, and what they represent. And why not sing of our faith in faith, [01:27:00] you know? When people sing, they do not quarrel. Why not sing? (audience applause)

M:

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