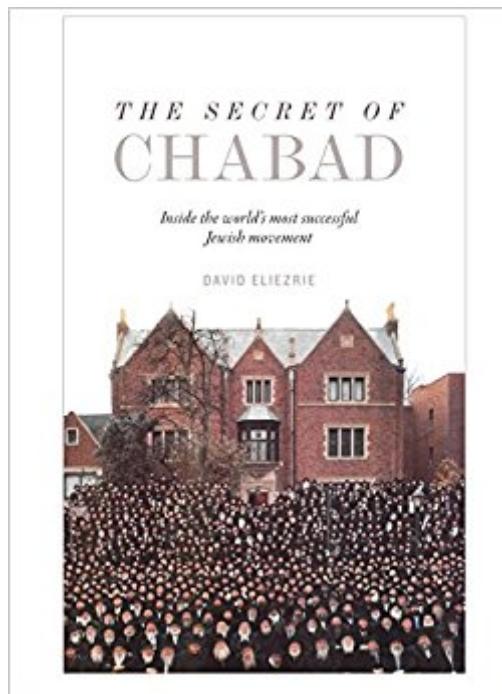


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# The Secret Of Chabad



## Synopsis

Considered one of the most influential movements in modern Judaism, writers have speculated for decades about the unparalleled success of Chabad Lubavitch. In *The Secret of Chabad*, Rabbi David Eliezrie depicts the events, philosophies, and personalities that have made Chabad Lubavitch a worldwide phenomenon. From his unique style weaving together narrative and fact, history and philosophical insight, interviews with shluchim and Chabad leaders from across the globe, and personal recollection emerges a world rich in tradition and the enormous love for fellow Jews that is embodied by the shluchim. In this book, Rabbi Eliezrie combines the insider's perspective of a long-time Chabad shaliach with the storytelling flair of a prolific writer.

## Book Information

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"I have often urged the Harvard Business School to teach the remarkable success of the Chabad movement as a case study in innovation, commitment, and determination. The Secret of Chabad is that case study written by a brilliant insider who really understands ... "Alan M. DershowitzAuthor of *Abraham: The World's First (but Certainly Not Last) Jewish Lawyer*"David Eliezrie's *The Secret of Chabad* is probably the first book by a Chabad insider - and a major one at that - telling the incredible story of what has clearly become the most dynamic Jewish force in the contemporary world ... After reading the *Secret of Chabad* you will never see your local Chabad rabbi in quite the same way. He and his remarkable wife will be more real - and therefore, even more remarkable."Dennis PragerNationally syndicated radio talk show host, NY Times best-selling author, co-founder Prager University"An insightful, compelling guide to Chabad, one of the great success

stories in modern Jewish history. David Eliezrie has the perfect ear for the telling anecdote - and as a highly regarded Chabad insider truly understands Chabad from within. What is the Chabad secret? Read this book and you will know."Joseph TelushkinAuthor of Rebbe: The life and Teachings of Menachem M. Schneerson, the Most Influential Rabbi in Modern History"I have found Chabad, almost everywhere I have gone in the world. This book is the remarkable story of how a small Chassidic group reaches out to Jews all over with love and purpose. David Eliezrie takes us deep inside the Chabad world for an extraordinary view ... All over the world, 4,000 Chabad shluchim are doing good deeds, educating people, taking care of children, providing opportunities to approach Judaism in a positive way. They turn up everywhere. The Secret of Chabad tells us what makes these dedicated men and women tick."Senator Joseph I. Lieberman"The puzzle of the century is the phenomenon known as the Shliach. We have always marveled on how the Rebbe inspired ordinary average young men and women to a life of selfless dedication. But this book deepens our respect and admiration for Shluchim and Shluchos who alone bear the responsibility for Jewish life of today. It's a book to read and re-read. I hope he has another book coming."Rabbi Manis FreidmanDean Beth Chana Women's International"I have often urged the Harvard Business School to teach the remarkable success of the Chabad movement as a case study in innovation, commitment, and determination. The Secret of Chabad is that case study written by a brilliant insider who really understands ... "Alan M. DershowitzAuthor of Abraham: The World's First (but Certainly Not Last) Jewish Lawyer"David Eliezrie's The Secret of Chabad is probably the first book by a Chabad insider - and a major one at that - telling the incredible story of what has clearly become the most dynamic Jewish force in the contemporary world ... After reading the Secret of Chabad you will never see your local Chabad rabbi in quite the same way. He and his remarkable wife will be more real - and therefore, even more remarkable."Dennis PragerNationally syndicated radio talk show host, NY Times best-selling author, co-founder Prager University"An insightful, compelling guide to Chabad, one of the great success stories in modern Jewish history. David Eliezrie has the perfect ear for the telling anecdote - and as a highly regarded Chabad insider truly understands Chabad from within. What is the Chabad secret? Read this book and you will know."Joseph TelushkinAuthor of Rebbe: The life and Teachings of Menachem M. Schneerson, the Most Influential Rabbi in Modern History --Submitted by the publisher."I have found Chabad, almost everywhere I have gone in the world. This book is the remarkable story of how a small Chassidic group reaches out to Jews all over with love and purpose. David Eliezrie takes us deep inside the Chabad world for an extraordinary view ... All over the world, 4,000 Chabad shluchim are doing good deeds, educating people, taking care of children, providing opportunities to approach Judaism

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RABBI DAVID ELIEZRIE is a veteran Chabad shliach in Yorba Linda, California, and was previously the Jewish chaplain at the University of Miami. He is the president of the Rabbinical Council of Orange County and Long Beach, sits on the board of the Jewish Federation and Family Services of Orange County, and is active in local and national Jewish affairs. Rabbi Eliezrie is a noted writer and lecturer. He is married and the father of six children and an ever-growing number of grandchildren.

Where Telushkin's best-seller "Rebbe" ends, this book begins. The Secret of Chabad is the story of the men and women who have made Chabad the largest Jewish movement in the world. It's compelling reading by a master storyteller with many stories have never been told before. The book opens with an hour-by-hour account of the tragic terror attack in Mumbai. Beautifully told but very sad. Other chapters cover the daring escapes of Chabad leaders and followers out of the fire of WWII and Communist Russia. The book reveals the clandestine Chabad networks that kept Judaism alive in the former USSR, the same networks the Mossad would later rely upon. The book has an entire chapter on "The Menorah Wars", the decades long fight in the US to hold public Chanukah celebrations. Another chapter discusses the Chabad rabbi as entrepreneur, the sink-or-swim financial situations that consistently demand their time and attention. If you ever wondered what compels a 28-year-old rabbi to decide to raise a family and spend the rest of his life in Siberia, Nepal, or Montana, this is the book to read.

This is one of the best books I've read in a while. Pacey writing. Fascinating history. Great life lessons. Useful in conversations. Highly recommend. No doubt, the book is biased toward Chabad. If I were so inclined, I could find lots of books and articles critical of the movement. That said, I'd rather take away key life-enhancing lessons and messages. My

favorite chapters are “Gable and Rivkie” and “The Menorah Wars” discussing Chabad’s interaction with American Jews in the 2nd half of the 20th century, “Dancing with the KGB” which discusses Chabad’s role in the USSR, and “Every Shliach Is an Entrepreneur”. I was hooked by the end of chapter 1. The author, a Chabad insider working in California, tells the story of the 2008 terrorist attack on Mumbai Chabad House. The writing is journalistic and compelling, introducing readers to the characters who become Chabad shluchim, the Chabad global family turning out for a tragic funeral, and Chabad’s global influence/organization as the “Chabad Command Center” often had better information than US, Indian, or Israeli authorities attempting to rescues hostages. What is Chabad? We think of Chabad today as a worldwide Jewish movement enabling travellers to get a Kosher meal and maintaining Jewish communities around the world. It has been, and remains spectacularly successful in bring Jews to Judaism. The book documents in far more detail the ideological elements of the movement. I like the characterization attributed to Moshe Feller (Minnesota in 1952) “In Torah Vodaath [more traditional] it was Ÿœus and Ÿœthem and the small yeshiva world was Ÿœus Ÿœthem and the rest of the community was Ÿœthem. In Chabad Lubavich, all Jews were Ÿœus Ÿœthem and Ÿœyou can change the world” but first you must attend a farbrengen (page 98). The farbrengen is a free-flowing combination of song, learning, and inspiration hosted by Chabad Rabbis and leaders. Philosophically, I take away (i) consistency of message, (ii) a focus on individual Jewish souls, and (iii) spiritual pursuits rather than purely academic. “the Rebbe told young people Ÿœyou can do something that has cosmic implications” (119). “When a young man goes off to a classical style Lithuanian-style yeshiva in Israel or the US, he will be told that his greatest inspiration is to become a great Torah scholar. In Chabad yeshivas, this attitude is frowned upon. The purpose of learning is to become closer to G-d by studying torah. Aspiring to be great could be driven by ego.” (273) The lessons of this book go far beyond Jewish thought. The Rebbe is a business genius with scalable lessons across commercial enterprises. The 7th Rebbe taught the value of thinking BIG, developing a vision that drove Chabad to the ends of the Earth. He didn’t micro-manage, rather leaving his

delegates to identify and address local problems within the context of broader goals and approaches. He embraced the free market, forcing the shluchim to program within their own budgets and fund-raise largely independently. Ultimately, the fact that the organization remains so strong without a living Rebbe is a testament to its staying power. For what its worth, Chabad also does pretty well on real estate, moving into neighborhoods, making them more attractive places to live, and therefore owning relatively valuable property. Within American Jewry, Chabad has certainly faced its challenges. I was shocked to learn that the giant menoras that we see today in city centers and even on top of minivans only date back to the 1980s. The book details Chabad's challenges from both left and right. The left primarily feared loss of funding among finite resources from the likes of Jewish Federation and Birthright Israel. In the early days Chabad camps and schools, for example, received far less funding per child than other groups. In addition, the left feared mingling of religion/state (like menorahs in public squares) for fear that public schools would use this to justify becoming increasingly Christian in practice. The right also had concerns. They feared Chabad was making it too easy for people to participate. "Celebrating a bar or bat mitzvah in synagogue should require preparation and serious training" (174). There was also a financial motive with other traditional synagogues afraid of losing paying members. Chabad also has profound global influence. Benjamin Netanyahu quoted the Rebbe at the UN in 2011 (252). George W Bush credited Chabad for amazing work after Hurricane Katrina. When Golda Meir and Mossad wanted better access to Russia and better understanding of Russian Jews trapped behind the iron curtain, they found a clandestine Jewish network already in place, directed by the Rebbe in Brooklyn. (189) The book spends a lot of pages as well on the detailed history of Chabad in Russia, escaping in the early 1900s and setting up in Brooklyn. Personally, there was a bit too much detail to keep me interested but the core message is powerful: "Shaped by years of battle against the Soviets, Chabad policy was not to retreat when faced with pressure" (139). The shlochim are fascinating in themselves. They move as young married couples far from family in exchange for the opportunity to change the world one Jew at a time. They often struggle to find funding, schools for their children and Kosher meat for their tables. Yet, they (almost always) persevere and succeed. Sometimes, they get creative (internet learning for the kids). Sometimes they get lucky (finding an unlikely patron). In any case, the numbers speak for themselves. From zero after WWII, there were 1242 shluchim couples in the world by 1994. By 2004, it was 2,097 with demand for placements far outstripping viable communities. Bottom-line: Read this book.

Rabbi David Eliezrie's book, "The Secret of Chabad", is a very important resource for anyone interested in Judaism. It is easy to read, filled with stories and anecdotes, yet delves into deep philosophic and religious issues while providing a thorough history and background to the Chabad movement. Eliezrie explains how many Hasidic groups pursue what they consider to be their holy purpose by turning inward, protecting themselves from outside influences, in contrast to Chabad's philosophy that holiness is pursued by turning outward, so that G-d's light is spread throughout the world. He explains the relationship of Jews with Israel in a unique way, noting that "the diasporic state of the Jewish people, is not just a physical removal of the Jews from their land, but a spiritual one." In the 20th Century, Zionism has addressed the bridging of the physical diaspora, but not the spiritual diaspora. The bridging of the latter chasm has been at the core of Chabad's mission. This is pursued by Chabad, one Jew at a time, one mitzvah at a time, with the expectation that each little step increases the holiness of our material world, enhances the recognition of G-d's presence, and hastens the coming of Moshiach and redemption. Because any movement closer to G-d makes a difference in our world, Chabad never gives up on a Jew, He cites author Yossi Klein Halevi for reasons why Chabad seems to be viewed positively, even by those Israelis who resent religious Jews. Among the reasons given by Halevi is that Chabad has the courage to confront the real issues, including the transformation of the Jewish world in the last century by four upheavals: the Holocaust, seventy years of Communism, Zionism, and the emergence of a self-confident American Jewish community. Eliezrie also explains the difference between the classical Lithuanian type yeshiva where the prime object is to become a Gadol (great scholar of Torah) versus Chabad's prime object to learn Torah in order to form a spiritual bond with G-d. How this came about, and how Chabad has grown into what Rabbi Eliezrie describes as "the world's most successful Jewish movement" is all part of the secret of Chabad, revealed in an intriguing, captivating way by Eliezrie's delightful book.

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