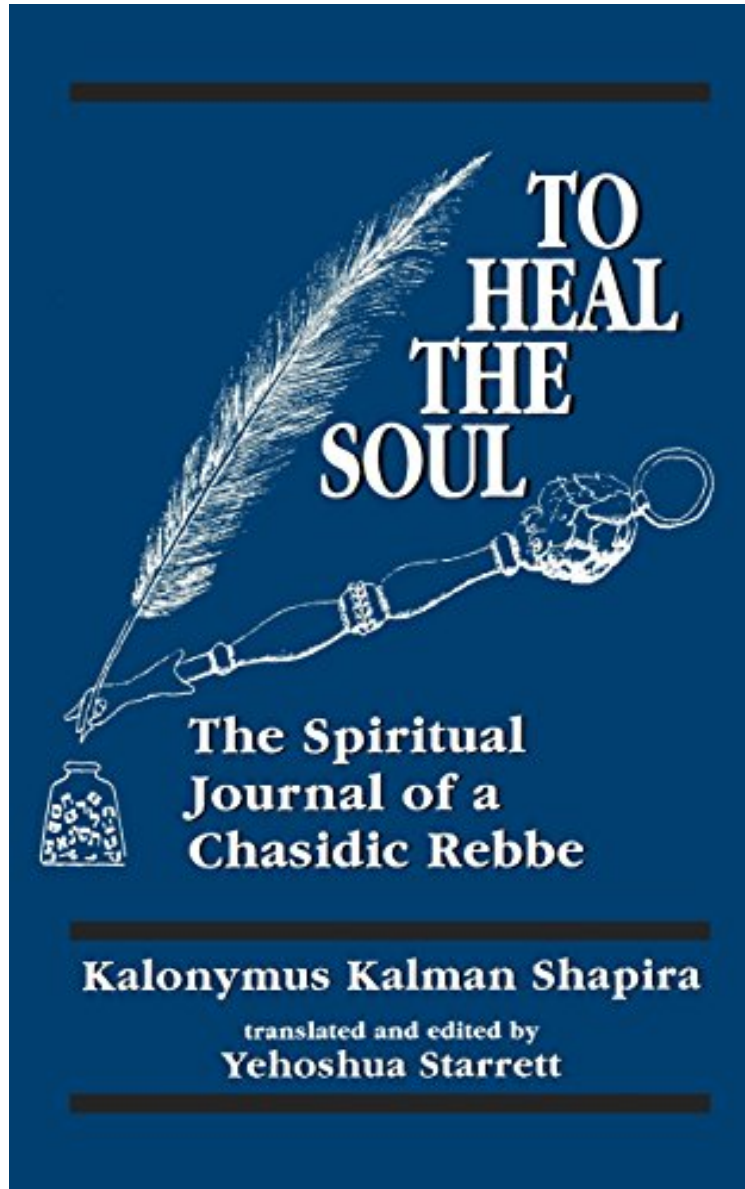


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Within the vast and varied body of chasidic literature, rarely does one find a chasidic rebbe writing about himself. Those rebbes who did choose to put pen to paper tended to write expositions on biblical or rabbinical texts, and in many cases it was their students and followers who copied down their teachings. Thus the modern reader is left with works that tend to be impersonal, esoteric, and often complex. The journal of Rabbi Shapira is unique in its use of first-person narrative to relay the inner thoughts, fears, and struggles of this bold leader as he responds to the pains of life. It offers guidelines for spiritual progress and several meditations based on an active imagination. Rabbi Shapira tells us that the purpose of this work is to bequeath a journal of his personal struggles and triumphs to posterity. Some entries are indeed very revealing; the Rebbe is not afraid to disclose his moments of self-doubt, his anger, his fears, and his fervent hope that his soul will remain strong as his body grows old. The more one reads of Rabbi Shapira's journal, the more insight and inspiration one will glean from its message. Young and old will find personal, spiritual guidance in these pages and be able to reap from the maternal fulfillment.