

Today is a historic day. Not only because it commemorates someone and something that occurred in history, but because it indicates a figure that is still relevant to this day. Rabbi Szapiro, the Piaseczno Rebbe, is a role-model and an inspiration in his death more than in his lifetime – to Jews and non-Jews alike. His writings, housed in the Ringelblum Archives in Warsaw, are masterpieces of Jewish mysticism, and exemplary writings for non-sectoral leadership, for positive attitudes toward material and the body, for liberal education, and for egalitarian attitude towards women and Gentiles. His nearly 100-year-old approach attributed spiritual qualities to Matter and Human-Body, which indicate the Divine and the transcendent in man. He believed that women *could* and *should* reach the same spiritual levels as men, and perhaps even more. In his writings during the Holocaust, he shares with the reader - his intimate vacillations and doubts, thus blending these sermons into a uniquely moving document that takes its readers on a jarring spiritual-religious journey.

His image is no less relevant today than it was in the 1920s and 1930s in Warsaw, and perhaps even more so. I thank the Historical Jewish Institute for unveiling and exposing the Rebbe's image to the general public and to the next generation in Poland, and indeed to the entire world.

Gratulacje,
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