

## Vasyl Makhno

### Eternal Calendar

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As soon as the news raced throughout Chortkiv that Yisroel Friedman was marrying off his fourteen-year-old daughter, Chava, to the Zlatopil rebbe Tzvi Aryeh Twersky, the local Hasidim became excited. The anthill got stirred up. There was talk only of the upcoming wedding of Friedman's daughter in all the Jewish shops. The rebbe had weddings nearly every year until he had married off all four of his sons, one after the other. Last year he married off his older daughter Miriam to the son of his cousin, Menachem Nuchemom Friedman, from Ștefănești. Oh, that was some wedding! More than a hundred guests attended the wedding, which was held in the rebbe's palace. Thousands of curious eyes of the townspeople watched them. It was impossible to make one's way through the streets of Chortkiv as they were filled with Hasidim flowing to the tsadik's house, like streams to a river. On such days, the commandant's office of the gendarmerie called up additional forces from Buchach and Husiatyn. Hasidic households of Galicia, Bukovyna, and Volyn sped on horse-pulled *brychkas* in order to arrive in time to see the groom meeting the bride at the Friedman's house and to attest their profound respect for the rebbe. Believers from all over Galicia and Bukovyna gathered at the rebbe's before the Sabbath. The windows were illuminated. The courtyard looked like the fair at Ulashkivtsi. Some people who had just arrived were bringing their small trunks of clothing and books into the house. Others, greeting each other, settled in an adjacent guest house. Chaim knew some of the newcomers. He whispered into Granny's ear that the gray-haired one was the Husiatyn rebbe, and that fat man with the sagging belly was from Buchach, and this one with hair

red like the sun was from Sadhora. If the children of the wheat knew whom they were seeing in the rebbe's courtyard, then one day, they could tell their grandchildren about the blooms and branches of the Hasidic courts that had appeared before their eyes. However, those about whom Chaim spoke with such excitement meant nothing to Pavlo or Nastia. They saw that each of the newcomers had brought presents for the wedding. Chaim smacked his tongue. The boy imagined how lavish the Friedmans' Sabbath and wedding tables would be. The bakeries of Chortkiv produced challah and white buns throughout the entire week. Geese were plucked for the pillows and feather beds that the young lady will take with her when she leaves her parents' home. Blood dripped from gutted chickens and geese, attached to hooks by their wings. Butchers piously adhered to the kosher instructions of the Torah. Goose fat was melted to grease the tins for the roast. A year before the wedding, the Chortkiv weavers wove so much silk and satin for the bride-to-be, and tailors sewed a ton of skirts and dresses that would make the wealthiest young ladies jealous! A few items were purchased in the shops of Lviv and Vienna and brought to Chortkiv. The servants put everything that was arriving at the tsadik's home into trunks. The bride-to-be's dowry rose like yeast dough. The sweet aroma of white bread, baked with select egg yolks, cooed like a pigeon in the townspeople's stomachs. Every morning, gulping down the fragrant air, they mentioned the impending wedding. For centuries Hasidic courts maintained strong ties with one another. Rabbis married off their daughters or sons to close family members. Oak forests multiplied, of course, but the danger of incest might harm the offspring. One thing troubled Chava, the bride-to-be. She had seen her fiancé, Tzvi Aryeh Twersky, only once. And even though Tzvi Aryeh belonged to the Zlatopil dynasty, upon marrying Chava he would be joining the Chortkiv clan. To "Zlatopil" he would be able to add "Chortkiv." The Twersky dynasty was not unknown to Friedman because David Mosheh's first wife was the daughter of Aron Twersky, the Chornobyl rebbe. Of course, no one had forced Chava to choose Tzvi Aryeh for a husband. The girl could have rejected the proposal if she had not liked the groom-to-be. One encounter did not leave any features of her future husband's face in her memory. Chava asked her father if she could visit Tzvi Aryeh's sister. In fact, she was governed by the desire to see her fiancé.

Rebbe Yisroel Friedman presumed Chava's intention; otherwise, he would not have been the great-grandson of Ba'al Shem Tov, and he gave her permission to visit the Twersky home before the wedding. Returning a few days later, Chava was glowing with happiness, and her father understood that the wedding would take place.

*Translated from the Ukrainian by Marta D. Olynyk.  
Edited by Peter Bejger.*